CHAPTER V

Section I

KRISHAN AND THE NEW WORLD

This chapter traces the significant points of Krishan Chander's life as portrayed in the autobiographical novel, The Bubble. The focus of this study will be to examine his individual response in the western society, in the context of his concept of freedom. Accordingly, this section attempts to articulate the aspects of his life in England, which bear upon his crusade for individual freedom as an alternate way of life.

First Day in England:

Krishan arrives in London and is startled by the strangeness of this new world. He is also depressed by the loneliness of his situation, and pours forth his feelings in letters to Noor: He expresses doubts about himself and wonders whether he has come away to fulfill 'a secret desire... for the English style of life' by pretending to be a philosopher; but he cautions himself not to 'forget the secret urge to live the life of poetry, of the search for dreams... as taught by poet Iqbal.'
Krishan seeks help from his former collegemate, Mr. Trilochan Singh (Tochi), to find his bearings in this new world. He visits Tochi's rooms and is attracted to the landlady's daughter, Lotika. He borrows Goethe's *Faust* from her and is enchanted by the book. Krishan writes to Noor that *Faust* will be his bible in the future, as the *Asrar-i-Khudi* has been for the last few years. He also admits to have 'already replaced Yasmin's image with that of the nymph Lotika'. He feels guilty that he has so soon betrayed Yasmin's memory but finds that he cannot help the 'irrepressible desire for happiness welling up in me' (p. 10).

Krishan is very happy to be accepted as a research student by Professor Dicks. It is, clear that under this guide he will not be able to pursue his desire to study the 'concept of the Self in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal'; since Professor Dicks believes that 'philosophy now-a-days is criticism of the sciences'. Accordingly, he asks Krishan to study the 'development of thought of ... Locke, Berkeley, Hume - and Bertrand Russel'. Krishan realises that research in this topic will not lead him to the answers he is seeking to the questions 'which Guru Nanak also asked'.
"What is life? How is one to live it? And what is one's place in the Universe? And what happens after death?". (TB, p. 46)

Nevertheless, he decides to 'study the systems, but I shall also follow my own idea of the Self'. (TB, p. 49)

Krishan's Relationship with Evelyn:

Krishan, finally, succeeds in engaging lodging rooms, after being turned away from many a door because he is an Indian. He becomes friendly with the landlady's daughter, Evelyn, who offers company and friendship in the first days of loneliness. Krishan sensitively perceives that 'homely' Evelyn is unhappy about her home situation, since her father has deserted them for another woman. He also perceives that she is getting close to him and feels that he 'did not want to get involved with a semi-literate landlady's daughter'; since he senses that Evelyn wanted from him the 'kind of love which leads to marriage'. However, he becomes physically involved with her in moments of his own weakness.

Meanwhile, Krishan is asked by Professor Dicks to take up lodging in a quiet village, and make an intensive study of western thoughts, as a preliminary to the research work. This
news takes Evelyn by surprise and she breaks down since
Krishan will be vacating the rooms. In despair, she says that
she knew all along that 'I shouldn't love you.... I know you
would leave me'. She tries to find reasons for being rejected
and feels that she is not intellectual enough for Krishan.
Krishan cannot console her and feels that 'No explanations will
satisfy her'. He makes physical love to Evelyn to 'reassure
her', and says by way of consolation:

"... Forgive me, Oh forgive me, dear Evelyn, if
I have wounded you and left a scar. But I shall love
you in my own way and think of you as an angel who
lifted me from my loneliness' "(TB, p.63)

-Some Impressions of Western Society:

Krishan's letters to Noor also contain his first
impressions of western society. His opinions arise out of his
personal experiences and he finds that he is often critical
about this way of life: He experiences discriminations against
him as an Indian and notices that in the west there is much
colour prejudice beneath the surface politeness. In the sphere
of academics, he finds very rigid attitudes of mind and feels
that only some are broadminded. He also sees how troubled the
family was here, whereas the Indian families quarreled but
never broke up. He is surprised that even in the western
society a woman is considered 'inferior though the men raise
their hats to her ...'

Krishan's Stay at Dolgelly:

In accordance with Professor Dicks arrangement, Krishan
leaves for village Dolgelly to stay with Reverend Thomas and
his wife. He feels a pride 'being a Hindu' and counters Reve­
rend Thomas's Christian attitudes to India and her religion.
This pride is superficial because Krishan feels that the 'Hindu
may have had faith but no morals'. Krishan spends most of his
time with his books preparing for his research studies.

Later, Mrs. Thomas introduces Lucy Gray, an Anglo-Indian
teacher, working at the local school. Krishan is drawn to her
and desires intimacy, as he realises that 'she was well read
and highly intelligent'. However, Lucy is engaged to the Head
master, Robert Peel and doesn't appear to reciprocate Krishan's
feelings. Krishan is disappointed but wonders why he cannot
'attain God' in his adoration of Lucy as he had risen to the
'world of poetry in Beas by making love to Yasmin?'. 
Krishan's Relationship with Irene:

On Christmas day, a lonely Krishan decides to climb the nearby Mount Snowdon. Here, he accidentally meets a charming girl and is attracted to her. He impetuously introduces himself and the girl, Irene, responds to his attention. She then, invites him to visit her home the next day.

Krishan meets Irene's parents, her stepfather Professor Rhy's, is quite genial to him but her mother shows disapproval. Irene is very critical of her mother's attitude and says that she is 'like a policewoman all the time'; she resents her mother's moral strictures against her free behaviour. On the other hand, Irene totally agrees with the attitude of her stepfather, who clearly states:

"'I am against all prohibitions'... 'Mothers and fathers! Always restraining the young!'"(TB,p.162)

Accordingly, Irene, wishes to be 'Free, Free, Free, Oh! so free...' believing only in the 'aesthetic of new sensations'. She is an artist and a votary of 'art pour l'art', and treats life as an 'aesthetic experience'. Krishan is amazed at Irene's family background and says that 'she is lucky to grow up in a household with no don'ts'.
Krishan is also completely confused by the 'sudden happiness at the free love offered by Irene, by her magic look, by her frank, gay, unbridled body, by the impulsiveness and the spontaneity'. In his happiness he tells Irene of his desire to write a novel about his family like James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Irene promises to marry him if he can get it published. This surprises Krishan and he is taken aback by her suddenness and enthusiasm; he is held back by the inhibitions of his upbringing, though he wishes to be free to express his 'strange stirrings'. Krishan's hesitation prompts Irene to say 'we will live together', if he is frightened of marriage. She however, takes the marriage vow when Krishan explains the Gandharva form of marriage. This makes him enchanted with Irene and he is overcome by happiness seeing the 'freedom of her person being given to me'.

Krishan's happiness is also beset by a lurking fear that the beautiful and independent Irene may attract many lovers and leave him: 'Was he not taking a risk?' he feels. Krishan understands that in Irene he has met a self-willed woman, free and equal to him, who will give herself but not yield completely. On another plane, Krishan wonders what the poet Iqbal would say to his come down from 'philosophy to the
vague restiveness of epicureanism'. Finally, he decides to be
distracted from his studies by Irene and fight 'against the
 taboos ingrained in him'. Accordingly, he resolves to give in
to the 'urgings to make love', but cautions himself to abstain
from inhibiting Irene from her sense of freedom.

Krishan, decides to accompany Irene to London, where she
is a student of the Slade school for Arts. In London, they
spend a day by themselves, in complete freedom leaving behind
all restrictions in a world of romantic and desire fulfilment.
Krishan feels that with Irene, he is a part of love itself and
this enables him to experience the 'beyond' and go 'towards
light'. In this euphoric happiness Krishan accompanies Irene
to the Chelsea fancy dress New Year's Ball. It is his sugges­
tion that she should dress as Radha to his role as Lord Krishna.
At the Ball, Irene meets Soloman her former boyfriend and
becomes engrossed with him. Later Krishan tries to locate her
in the maze of dancing couples and finds her moving away with
Soloman. He immediately understands that Irene will not join
him despite their relationship and quits the hall in disgust,
'eves with near tears filled'. Krishan tosses in bed with
'suppressed anguish' and 'murmurs of anger'. He believes he
can go and stab Soloman but feels guilty of 'harbouring
un-Gandhian violence. The noise of the New Year's party downstairs brings forth an image of 'millions of kisses shared and shared again with others'. He wonders whether this in itself may lead to many changes in relationships and whether this life of 'casual aesthetic sensations is not a world of self-indulgence'. Krishan despairs that he will never be able to communicate his 'depth of love' to the lovers of this world of which Irene is a part. Finally, he urges himself as a thinker, to be mature enough not to want Irene for himself, but to allow her, her freedom:

"Freedom was perhaps the need for her to begin to be herself, so that she may have the self will to choose her way of life". (TR, p.193)

Ultimately, he realises that he is really fighting to overcome his attitude of 'the world of Amritsar, where women were inferior, to accept Irene as equal and free'. (p.194).

The next day Irene, returns to Krishan, who finds her 'irresistable' and forgets his disenchantment. He begins to feel that he is 'capable of the kind of flirtatiousness which was love among the artists'. But immediately his earlier insecurities return, when he notices that Irene is attracted
to his lodgemate, Mr. Mehta. Once again, he is not able to appreciate the free behaviour of Irene's friends, and almost forces her to come away. Irene understands Krishan's misgivings and explains:

"Our love is an aesthetic adventure". (TB, p. 198)

She confesses that she wants to end her 'philanderings' but asks him not to 'judge her all the time'. Krishan realises that the happiness he experienced with Irene, on the first day, is a part of her aesthetic experience. Thus, her attitude to love is a complete opposite to his and he prays to the Gods to "let us two remain together". He, nevertheless, knows perfectly well that Irene will seek 'fresh sensations every day'; he then confronts this bitter reality and decides to 'surrender to Irene's pulsations ...' (p. 199)

Krishan, thus makes up his mind to 'teach' himself to accept Irene. Unfortunately, he is jolted from his happy world when he learns that Mehta was dancing with Irene. He feels that he had 'just decided on pursuing all experience through the lust for life' and he was shaken again. He wonders how Irene could have become so familiar with Mehta whom she had met only for a second; he torments himself with the thought of Mehta
seducing Irene. He again prays to the Gods, this time to secure the downfall of the 'handsome seducer'. Disgusted and hurt, Krishan, tries to face the fact that Mehta's conquering of Irene 'left him wounded'. He finds his faith in Irene, this time much lessened, than in the previous occasion, and is contemptuous about her philosophy of life. He wants to hide himself from the whole world, thinking that Irene has no use for his kind of love, but wants philanderings with seducers like Mehta. He finds consolation in the thought that even Mehta cannot take her for granted. In this moment of loneliness and hurt Krishan remembers his own betrayal of Evelyn's love and trust; he realises that he has not even visited her despite staying close by.

Irene's betrayal sets him thinking and his mind traverses through a whole gamut of feelings: He remembers the love of Yasmin, the texture of their feelings, and the permanence of her devotion; he remembers the marriage of his homeland and the social restrictions that were prescribed for a woman. In contrast, here, he finds Irene his equal, a woman free to choose her way of life; he recalls her logical arguments asking why she alone should be waiting for him, when he could have involvements with Yasmin and Evelyn. He confronts the truth
that despite all this logic 'secretly, he wanted her to be Maitreyi'; he wonders whether he should expect 'so bright a Sladie to grow into his austeres life'. Finally, he sees the difference, his 'love' against Irene's 'free love', and conjectures whether this is the 'tragedy of passionate love' - that it entails the curbing of the other's freedom.

Next morning, Krishan finds that he is unwell and cannot get up or walk about. He receives a telegram from Irene informing him that she has gone back to her home, and expresses that she is a 'trifle guilty'. This semblance of an apology, restrains him from further censoring her, and he hopes to make up with her. But the loneliness and hurt is deep and Krishan opens his broken heart to Tochi, who knows Mehta and therefore understands his chagrin. Tochi consoles him and says that 'free love like free thought can cripple one'; but, Krishan who knows of Tochi's secret desires for an affair or two, feels that the argument is hypocritical. On the other hand he prefers the 'discontent of his freedom', to Tochi's 'joy of the repressed'.

In the same conversation Tochi upholds the Indian marriages, saying that they become 'a part of religion continuing the race - by having children...', as against the western system
where 'everything changes' if a man 'gets bored or is over-sexed or becomes rich - and the old wife is divorced'. However, Krishan stubbornly refutes Tochi's point of view, by placing emphasis on the 'soul murder of the woman on the first night', as an argument against the arranged marriages, but agrees that 'the temporary relationship here ended after the first pleasure of sex'. (TB, p.235).

In the course of time Krishan receives a letter from Irene, informing him that she is going to Ireland. In a series of letters that they exchange, both try to explain themselves. Irene clearly states that she wishes to be free to give herself to anyone, and thereby express herself. She also feels that by his attitude to want her for himself, he is threatening her freedom and their love. Krishan explains that his reaction to her stems from the indoctrination in India by Arya Samaji uncles and Gandhi, that 'every Hindu youth should be a Brahmachary - until he marries'. He tries to explain that he too understands and believes in freedom and sensations, and would have lived a similar life in India but 'there were no opportunities'. However, he makes it clear that while Irene's was a need for only sensation his was for a sensation pressed deeper and deeper and I want my pleasure in you to be part of
grace at the same time as it is physical intoxication'.

Krishan, argues with Irene that just as her fight is against her mother's 'anti-nature attitude', his is a reaction against his 'father's hypocrisy'. He concedes that he was behaving like a prig when she 'genuinely wants to be free and equal—to be a creative artist in her own right'. Krishan feels that Irene is correct in accusing him of having 'inherited the power mania of the patriarch' and realises:

"Who am I to resent her escapade after desiring women from my boyhood years onwards?".(TB, p.220)

Further Krishan tries to explain that he does not expect her to be a 'Hindu wife', nor does he believe in the 'stupid institution of marriage', but he wants her to be Radha since 'her love play was to be a part of our love play'. Krishan tries to convey his desire to attain 'the ultimate love' and go beyond mere sensations and physical satisfaction. Finally, with these letters and explanations, Krishan and Irene bridge the gap caused by her 'aesthetic moment' with Mehta.

In her next letter Irene writes to say that she is coming to London and seeks Krishan's help to get rid of her unwanted pregnancy. She takes objection to his idea of
'ultimate love' and says that he 'mistakes a physiological condition for the mysticism of love'. On the other hand, Krishan is very happy to receive Irene and helps her to abort her pregnancy. Once again, after the first moments of togetherness he begins to have misgivings about his life with her and wonders whether she was 'merely experimenting' with him. He is inclined to practise Tantra yoga so that Irene will stay with him forever. Finally, he decides to love with intensity so that their differences will be completely obliterated. However, he also resolves to remember that he had come on a 'quest similar to young Nanak'.

After a short time Krishan's happy life with Irene is disrupted by the arrival of an envelope from Mehta, inviting her to a dinner-dance at a nightclub in Soho. Krishan also happens to go to the same club and is taken unawares to find Irene with Mehta. His spite rises to the fore, and Krishan rushes at Mehta to avenge himself in a physical fight; but he is full of remorse for 'forgetting Gandhi completely'. In this context Krishan remembers Lord Krishna's Gita message, that such is the 'fate of all who mistook the flesh for the spirit'. He wonders why he had 'become a mere hedonist waiting for smiles from a girl'. However, he is calmed only when he
assuages his many feelings by physically forcing himself on Irene.

Krishan visits Paris with Irene where he is introduced all over again to her attitude of life as an 'aesthetic experience'. Once again Krishan is confronted by his hesitation towards such a life arising from his Indian upbringing. He labels his attitude as 'inbuilt puritanism' against the 'emancipation' of this new life style and resolves:

"'I must be spontaneous, I must free myself from every moral laceration, even of Gandhi, exonerate every weakness, crush every prejudice and perceive every nuance of the secrets of my body-soul'. (TB, p.324)

Thus, Krishan enjoins himself to accept the meaning of freedom in Irene's scope. Their stay in Paris, is cut short when Irene receives news of her stepfather's death.

Alone and sad in London, Krishan still asserts that he will not give up 'faith in one's ability to shape one's life even if death was the inevitable destiny'. He continues to study for his thesis and engages in conversation about philosophers with his friends. Krishan counters the traditional
Indian emphasis on soul by saying that man is 'both body and soul'. He also hopes to find the 'inner ecstasy' that one experiences through 'writing or painting or dancing'.

Krishan receives a letter from Irene, informing him that she has joined the Irish freedom struggle under Maud Gonne. She asks him to visit her and Krishan goes to Ireland. He is 'exalted by the euphoria of freedom' in Maud Gonne's house, and agrees with Irene that they should not have any sort of strictures on each other. He admits to have been tempted in her absence and realises that 'the beautiful is often spontaneous and immoral'. However, Krishan learns that this may be their last meeting since Irene is accused and standing trial for her participation in the Irish struggle.

In this stay, Krishan becomes acquainted with famous personalities like W.B. Yeats, A.E., Lady Gregory and others. The respect and regard that W.B. Yeats and A.E., show for Indian culture surprises and amazes him. In fact, he sees copies of Gandhi's Young India with A.E., and borrow them. Gandhi's

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1. Maud Gonne is well known for her role in the Irish freedom struggle.
simple descriptions of his experience with Bka the untouchable startle Krishan, and he keenly feels the sincerity of the narration; in comparison his novel on the untouchable, Bhaka, in the style of Joyce, appeared intellectual. Suddenly he is confronted by the reality of the situation - of Irene and others actually living their ideals and the passivity of his own life, and decides:

"I must go to the Mahatma and learn to be human. I must feel the breath of men's mouths. If Irene has come back from Bohemia to Maud Gonne and the Irish struggle, I must go back home from the clever talk of Bloomsbury to Sabarmati Ashram" (TB, p.527)

Thus Krishan decides to return to his homeland.

Krishan begins to complete his work on the thesis to be able to return to India. Meanwhile he is startled to receive his first letter from his father: Babu Ram Chand severely criticises his son's way of life. He exhorts him to mend his ways, to return to a life of sanity, and become a respectful and obedient son. Krishan replies to the letter contradicting his father's views about him and in turn criticises Babu Ram
Chand's way of life. He upholds his desire to live a life of freedom and conveys to him his decision to go to Gandhi. Finally, Krishan writes to Irene informing her about his journey back to India and the novel closes with his hope for her eternal love.
Section II

AN INDIAN REBEL IN WESTERN SOCIETY

In the previous section Krishan Chander's individual response has been articulated as depicted in The Bubble. It is seen that his desire for freedom in the Indian society is fulfilled by the life offered in the western society. Accordingly, this section attempts to examine his response in the context of his belief in individual freedom as a contemporary alternative.

The Confession of a Lover ends with a final open clash between Babu Ram Chand and Krishan, which is a culmination of a long-standing disparity of perspectives between father and son. This coincides with the completion of Krishan's academic studies at college—figuratively and literally he leaves the house of his father and decides to travel to 'Vilayat'. This journey is symbolic because it answers not only his quest for higher academic studies but also takes him to an ideal societal set up; since the west portrayed a singularly happy utopia by its apparent contrasts with India's traditional attitudes. The
quintessence of this contrast was contained in what appeared to its tremendous sense of operative freedom as against the apparent bondage of Indian life. Pitted one against the other, the western society projected, as it were, a life based on thought, scientific temperament, equality of man with man, defined in the framework of freedom - individual and otherwise; the Indian society paled by comparison and appeared to be ridden with ills; for which a diagnosis and treatment appeared to be so obvious the way of life of the western man. It is against this background that Krishan's crusade for individual freedom gains impetus as an alternate way of life. This section, therefore, attempts to examine Krishan's individual response to the concepts of freedom: Does he consider the concept of freedom with seriousness and depth before accepting it? Does he find that it really improves human life? Can individual freedom lead to happiness?.

In his life in *Confession of a Lover* Krishan could not prove the practical actuality of living a life based on his belief in freedom, because of the untimely death of Yasin. In this sense 'individual freedom' remained a distant reality, ensconced in happiness, denied to him by the traditional set up. In contrast, Krishan meets Irene in a society that seems
to be tailor made to his idea of an ideal society. He is overwhelmed by the freedom with which he can approach Irene to form the relationship: His liking for Irene, her own attraction for him and a desire to pursue their togetherness seem to be the only parameter at work. In this context Krishan finds the total absence of religious or societal restrictions, both unbelievable and miraculous. In realising his relationship with Irene, Krishan seems to have found his 'utopia' in the life that she offers and which society accepts. Thus, Krishan at the first moments appears to have scored his point for individual freedom, in the actuality of his life with Irene. Does this then provide the alternative - the 'contemporary myth of man' - for Indian society? An answer to this possibility will be arrived at, by examining the details of Krishan's relationship with Irene.

Krishan a student of Philosophy, meets Irene a student of Art; their relationship signifies all the dichotomies characteristic of each, gathered together in freedom - For Irene, 'life is an aesthetic adventure' to be lived in continuous bohemia; for Krishan life is a quest. She calls their relationship 'living together' but Krishan calls it a Gandharva marriage. In this reaction it is clear that Krishan seeks
a permanence in his relationship with Irene implied by the Gandharva rites, while Irene's 'living together' symbolises impermanence. It is the difference contained in this different individual articulations of their relationship that bears upon the meaning of freedom, which we will attempt to examine.

Initially, Krishan is overwhelmed when Irene gives herself completely to him in such absolute freedom. Nevertheless, a continuous fear begins to haunt him. He realises that Irene was his 'equal' and that 'such a beauty would attract many other lovers and may leave him'. This bitter reality prompts him to ask 'was he not taking a risk?' At this stage, Krishan who is sensitive to his personal risk appears to overlook the fact that freedom which he advocates intrinsically admits risk. He does not, therefore, relate certain social or religious restrictions of his society as parameters to control this very element of risk in human relationships. On the other hand, he is overwhelmed by Irene and not only desists from any introspection on the larger implications of freedom, but also readily abandons the actual purpose of his western journey - the 'philosophical quest' and plunge into the bohemian life with her.

The first few days of Krishan's life with Irene conjures up images of utter happiness and fulfilment; in
absolute abandon of any strictures, they experience the pleasures of sensations. Krishan feels that with Irene he is a part of 'love' itself and this enables him to experience the 'beyond' to go 'towards light'. Unfortunately, his experience of happiness and of his feelings of the mysticism of love, is short lived: It receives its first setback when Irene exercises her freedom to live life as an 'aesthetic experience' - she leaves Krishan while at the New Year's ball to go away with her former boyfriend pursuing the happiness of sensations. Krishan realises for the first time how it feels to be left behind (discarded in a sense) and resents the feeling. His near tearful pity for himself is matched by his resentment and anger for Irene's seducer. Thoughts and counter-thoughts surge in his mind till he wills himself into a 'mature' attitude of Irene's behaviour. Krishan finally realises that Irene's action of leaving him, to go away with another for experiences was within the bounds of her scope of individual freedom. Thus, Krishan comes to see that Irene's belief in freedom is an extension of his idea: He advocated freedom in so far as 'lovers' need not be bound by societal or religious strictures; whereas Irene questions even the bond of relationship. This is so because for Irene, freedom also entails a
freedom to step out of a relationship whenever she had the urge to do so. Her denial of strictures therefore did not acknowledge obligations to relationships, because then relationships denied freedom by binding partners almost permanently. However, Krishan’s belief in freedom only extended to his desire to form relationships, but he did not see that freedom can be used to question the basis of the relationship itself. In reaction, therefore, Krishan feels that he has to ‘grow up from the world of Amritsar’. He feels that his Indian upbringing had stunted his vision of freedom and therefore, decides to ‘re-educate’ himself into Irene’s interpretation. By this decision, Krishan rejects any re-examination of his belief in freedom and begins to accept Irene’s scope of its meanings.

In keeping with this decision Krishan accepts Irene when she returns to him. In fact, he feels he is ‘capable of the kind of flirtatiousness which was love among the artists’ and goes along with Irene to visit her artist friends. However, Krishan’s decision to accept freedom in Irene’s sense is again short-lived when ‘insecurities’ return seeing the rapport within a second between Mr. Mehta and her. Krishan again realises that Irene will live her way of life at all costs and ‘seek fresh sensations every day’. Nevertheless, he re-decides to woo her and accept everything about her.
In an absolute contrast to the above decision, Krishan has a nervous breakdown when he learns that Irene has become intimate with Mr. Mehta. Krishan finds his 'faith in Irene', this time much lessened 'than in the previous occasion' and becomes contemptuous about her philosophy of life. It is not clear how Krishan says that his 'faith in Irene' is lessened because her behaviour is in absolute accordance with her beliefs. Krishan, who had made up his mind to accept 'every­thing of Irene' actually fails to keep up to his decision, and again goes through emotional turmoil. His near paralytic condition is only relieved by the arrival of a telegram from Irene. Krishan stops censuring her the moment he reads her semblance of an apology and re-accepts her, conscious of his desire for her. Irene exchanges letters with Krishan arguing and justifying her need for freedom, and criticizing Krishan's attitude. Ultimately he is able to accept Irene's justifica­tion of behaviour and her view of freedom and re-decides to accept Irene, and her argument for complete freedom. Irene returns to England and takes Krishan's help to undergo an abortion. Thereafter they begin to live together but Krishan's fear of Irene leaving him is constantly present.

The fear becomes a reality when Irene accepts Mr. Mehta's invitation to dance and dinner at a club in Soho. Krishan who
also chances to visit the very club is startled to find Irene with Mr. Mehta. Krishan is not able to control his spite and rushes at Mr. Mehta challengingly in 'Peshawari fashion'. The fight expresses Krishan's claim over Irene and forces her to go back with him to their rooms. Krishan spends a bitter, tearful and sad night. Later he forces himself on Irene, physically to assuage his hurt feelings. In doing so Krishan, not only uses the same sort of weapon against a woman which he so despised in the Indian man, but also repudiates his belief in individual freedom. Against this background it is clear that Krishan sought to theoretically accept Irene's way of life but the practice of this decision cannot be seen in his actual life. Nevertheless, Krishan is intent on accepting Irene's life style and beliefs. In keeping with this intention Krishan conveys to Irene at the close of *The Bubble* that he accepts her definition of freedom, and that he 'won't be a prig anymore'. In accepting Irene's idea of life and of freedom, Krishan discards his own since it is untrue to his belief in freedom. Under what rationale does Krishan accept Irene's point of view?

Krishan's initial experiences of happiness arising from the freedom offered by western society, soon turn to
bitterness and anger when Irene utilises the same freedom to go away with other men. In the context of this unhappiness he remembers the customs of his own people, and the love of Yasmin. However, this does not prompt him to re-consider his views and conclusions about his tradition. On the other hand, Krishan's reaction almost always is pity for himself and anger for the other man. Thus, in the first case, Krishan's resentment begins with the thought of 'turning murderer', and in the case of Mehta, he uses physical force to express his anger and claim his right over Irene. In both these cases Krishan later feels guilty of harbouring 'un-Gandhian feelings'. Ultimately, Krishan calms down from the initial emotion of the moment and begins to attempt an understanding of Irene's interpretation of freedom.

In the above context, Krishan is touched to the quick by Irene's accusation that he professes a theoretical belief in freedom, but does not practically live up to the ideal. She drives the point home, when she accuses him of having inherited the 'power mania of the patriarch' and wishes to 'own woman' in a typical Hindu attitude. This touches a raw nerve in Krishan, who claims to have waged a war against the traditional set up in Indian society. He realises that his behaviour with
respect to Irene, in his desire to bind her to him, shows that he is a part of the very system he criticises. He concludes that if he really means to treat woman as an equal, he should offer her a freedom that does not bind her. This is emphasised when he sees that Irene's desire to experience life with other men is the same as his desire for several females:

"'Come to think of it, she is right, I have felt desire for several females'" (TB p.219)

Thus, Krishan accepts Irene's meaning of freedom when he juxtaposes his behaviour and desires with her desires and behaviour. In this context, it is obvious that he neither considers whether his own behaviour is correct, nor does he pause to contemplate on the ideal of freedom, after he sees the manner in which it can be extended to Irene's scope and meaning. This acceptance of freedom, therefore, appears to be argued as an alternative because of an individual inclination for the fulfilment of personal desires. But having accepted freedom, it is obvious that it has to be extended to Irene's interpretation of it; since he cannot now call for restrictions or principles of limit despite the unhappiness that such a scope of freedom brings into his life. Thus, Krishan who advocates individual freedom in the Indian context sees its logical
conclusions in the life symbolised by Irene, and comes to accept it.

Against this background, Krishan tries to justify his initial inability to accept freedom on Irene's terms by blaming his traditional upbringing in India. Krishan feels that morality has been ingrained into him. He, therefore, wishes to 'emancipate' himself, exhorting his need to 'free myself from every moral lasceration, even of Gandhi'. Thus, Krishan feels that had it not been ingrained into him to accept 'morality' by his 'Arya Samaji uncles and Gandhi' he would have behaved exactly as Irene is doing. This argument, it is difficult to accept considering Krishan's moral strain in the background of his life throughout Morning Rose and Confession of a Lover. Krishan himself admits immoral feelings for his own aunt Devaki; in the Indian context this is unheard of because an aunt so often takes the place of mother; further, his relationship with Yasmin can be anything but moral. Therefore, it is difficult to accept Krishan's 'ingrained morality' in Irene's case and its total absence in his earlier life. Nevertheless, it is this basic argument that Krishan puts forward as an explanation for not being able to accept Irene's scope of freedom. At this stage it is difficult to accept that Krishan tries to find reasons to explain his inability to accept Irene's idea of
freedom, but does not try to reason whether such freedom can be an alternate way of life. In effect, Krishan appears to vote for freedom because he feels a personal need for it in his life, and in the desires that he wishes to fulfil. Thus, his crusade for freedom does not appear to arise from a serious and deep consideration of the possibilities that it offers for human life in general.

Krishan's argument for freedom, arising from a personal point of view is further emphasised when he says:

"'... the beautiful is often spontaneous and immoral'".

(TH, p. 450)

Once again, Krishan does not try to consider whether his personal idea of 'beautiful' is a generally accepted point of view. Further whether such a personal idea can be an argument for advocating the need for freedom appears to be not considered at all. Finally, this becomes the base for his crusade for freedom. Thus, Krishan's call for individual freedom which begins in *Morning Face* reaches its complete articulation in *The Bubble*. This 'individual freedom' entails a complete ban on restrictions of any kind whether religious or social. Spontaneous feeling is the only parameter involved in forming relationships which in turn is maintained only if the partners have the urge to do so.
In accepting freedom in the above literal sense, Krishan gives final articulation to the alternate proposal for contemporary man. However, Krishan does not seem to consider whether freedom in this sense can really be conducive to human life. On the other hand, he continues to criticise the traditional way of life in Indian society. In advocating freedom to form relationships, Krishan severely deplores the apparent bondage of arranged relationships in Indian marriages. In effect, he appears to claim that freedom allows for a humane attitude to form relationships while the Indian system, denies freedom and therefore treats human feelings, insensitively. This is borne out when he claims that the arranged marriages in India lead to the 'soul murder of the woman on the first night'. It appears, therefore, that Krishan implies that his proposal of freedom is sensitive to woman's feelings. In this context it is inexplicable that Krishan employs freedom to betray Evelyn in what amounts to her soul murder. Krishan's sensitivity for women, in his treatment of Evelyn, is conspicuous by its absence. Krishan who knew of Evelyn's feelings for him, her desire for marriage, his own decision not to offer her such a relationship, does not have any justification to use her in moments of his own physical weakness - Does this not
amount to Evelyn's 'soul-murder'? Krishan should have seen that despite what he calls the 'soul-murder' of women in arranged marriages, they become a part of a family but his own 'soul-murder' of Evelyn left her bereft and lonely. In effect, therefore, there is 'soul-murder' in the western context too, and it is freedom that allows him to use Evelyn and get away with his behaviour. Freedom also allows him to exploit Evelyn's weakness to suit his purpose. It is freedom again, which allows the complete abandonment of the partner, who cannot live up to the same intensity of the other partner - Evelyn in Krishan's case and Krishan in Irene's. The abandoned partner is left in pain and loneliness the acuteness of which Krishan himself experiences. It is, therefore, expected that Krishan should consider a way out for the partner who is left behind; more so in the case of a woman, who by her very nature, can become the tragic victim of a life based on freedom. However, Krishan does not raise any of these questions; instead, he makes do with a fleeting remembrance of Evelyn, emotionally, in the context of his own hurt. Notwithstanding these serious facets, he reasserts his belief in individual freedom.

On the other hand, Krishan's argument for his involvement with Evelyn will be that he loved her 'in his own fashion'.
Irene articulates the same sentiment after she leaves Krishan for Mr. Mehta. Thus, love in 'freedom' becomes a matter of one's 'own fashion'. In this context, love appears to become an 'emotional-physical-sensation' an experience of a moment, without a guiding principle - Irene is honest enough to admit that this is her view of love but Krishan does not. He attempts to 'mystify' the meaning of this love and attribute to it experiences of the 'beyond' or towards 'light'. In this context, it is difficult to see how Krishan articulates 'superfices' of feeling to Irene, but in the same framework characterises his sensations as 'pressed deeper and deeper' so that 'my pleasure in you' is a part of 'grace at the same time as it is a physical intoxication'. First, Irene who believes in the aesthetic of the moment, will never accept such a proposition. Secondly, how can the physical ever lead to 'experiences of grace' without a guiding principle? Thirdly, Krishan himself doubts his own stand when he thinks aloud ever so often about his own experiences of love, asking himself 'why he had become a mere hedonist waiting for smiles from a girl'. Moreover, for Krishan to experience the 'beyond' even in this way his need for a partner, seems to be unfortunately jinxed: If he is ready, Lucy is not, if Evelyn is agreeable, he is not, and when he tries to explain it to Irene she doesn't believe it at all. Thus, she dubs his
attitude as mistaking a 'physiological state for the mysticism of love'. It appears, therefore, that this love can never work out because defined in freedom, each partner has his own end in mind. Further, by trying to impose one's own 'beyond' desires on the other partner the very basis of individual freedom is threatened. Finally, Krishan's desire for experiences of the 'beyond' seems tremendously dependent on a partner. In striking contrast the path of both western and eastern mystics which depends solely on their own merit appears to be utterly free. In the final analysis, therefore, Krishan's definition of love built on individual freedom carried out in one's 'own fashion' appears to be an impediment and a prisoner of its own parameters.

However, Krishan's argument of his kind of love will be that it is 'spontaneous' and, therefore, 'beautiful' even though it is immoral, while the other is not given to spontaneity by its moral strictures. If spontaneity is the criterion, then Krishan's spontaneous feeling of happiness with Irene is matched in equal intensity by his spontaneous feeling of unhappiness arising from her many escapades. Thus, if spontaneity can have happiness as well as sadness, then why prefer it to the so-called not-spontaneous, which also gives rise to feelings of happiness and unhappiness? Krishan's counter will be that his
unhappiness or Evelyn's unhappiness is because they have not understood the full scope and meaning of freedom in its entirety. This suggests that a true understanding of freedom as a norm of society leads only to happiness. But, is this state of perfect acceptance of freedom possible in a society made up of so many people of different temperaments? It appears to be an impossible proposition as an alternative way of life and a condition too hypothetical for practical living. It does not appear, therefore, to be within the bounds of everyone to become a contemporary image of man, and a way of life.

On the other hand, Krishan's acceptance of western society based on his understanding of it also needs to be considered, since the ideal of freedom appeared to be a western way of life. At the close of his stay in England Krishan has had a firsthand experience of western society. He sees how the English propose equality and the 'Bentham Mill' wisdom in theory but do not concede that India should be free. Equality at home and imperialism outside stands striking in obvious contradiction. Krishan also notices that there is segregation and differentiation on the basis of colour, race and economic conditions. He sees that women are considered inferior despite the formal rules of equality observed by men. Nevertheless, Krishan does
not raise objections about the hypocrisy of western society. On the other hand, it was just such a hypocrisy and a dichotomy between practice and theory, that compelled him to reject the society of his forefathers. Therefore, that Krishan can use a yardstick to condemn one society but fails to use the same yardstick to condemn another is left unexplained; his authenticity of objective vision therefore appears to be questionable.

In the final analysis Krishan accepts Irene's scope for the meaning of freedom based on a thoroughly subjective analysis for a desire for individual freedom. It is this feeling that compelled Krishan to sweepingly reject the Indian tradition and accept the western with alacrity. In fact, Krishan's endeavour to propose an alternative way of life for contemporary man appears to be based on a limited and superficial understanding. Therefore the proposed ideal of freedom does not appear to be a contemporary ideal because it fails to show more positive alternatives, directions and possibilities for human life. In fact, the happiness offered appears to be a bond-slave of a whimsical-master without any principles of limit.
Finally, Krishan's actual purpose of coming to England on a 'philosophical quest' in search of another understanding of life needs to be considered. It was his aim to study the 'concept of Self in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal'. However, he cannot pursue the topic under Professor Dicks who believes that Philosophy is a criticism of the sciences. Nevertheless, Krishan decides to 'study the systems and ... also follow my own idea of the Self ...'. After sometime, it is observed that Krishan confronts himself by his fruitless situation:

"Not all his reading and experiences had yet enabled him to be anything. He had gathered bits and pieces, as an adolescent in the west, he had been impersonable to all isms. He was fascinated by all categories...."

(TB, p. 290)

Thus, Krishan finds that his reading of western philosophy is not leading him anywhere. Moreover, throughout The Bubble he does appear to take up an indepth study of the many philosophies that he tries to understand and then co-relate their meaning and relevance to his life. He also continuously reminds himself to keep track of his 'philosophical quest' and not get caught in the maze of Irene's way of life. Finally, his decision to
'go back home from the clever talk of Bloomsbury to Sabarmathi Ashram' shows that Krishan goes knocking at his own tradition and society. Therefore, his only entry in the matrix of life at the end of The Bubble after living in England is a need for individual freedom.

Against this background, Krishan's decision to 'go back home from the clever talk of Bloomsbury to Sabarmati Ashram', needs to be considered. In this context, his final articulation of the scope and meaning of freedom, and his inclination to learn from Gandhi appear to be contradictory; since to learn from Gandhi means to completely obliterate the belief of his past. Therefore, whether Krishan Chander undertakes this journey literally or figuratively may make the important difference in his endeavour to seek a contemporary ideal for Indian society. Thus, Krishan embodies a young man, not only holding high the flag for individual freedom, but also walking towards Gandhi; either this journey will be abandoned, or the flag has to come down for such an endeavour to make some meaning. In fact, Krishan's desire to learn of his people under Gandhi will mean a re-examination of his rebellion in its totality. In choosing the 'Sabarmati Ashram' and discarding 'Bloomsbury'
he appears to be making that choice to learn of his people in the language of his civilization and not in terms of another. In this choice Krishan, therefore signifies hope for contemporary Indians, since the 'contemporary myth of man' to be proposed in the forthcoming autobiographical novels may be of reckoning importance.
INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM: AN IDEAL FOR OUR TIMES?

The preface to the second autobiographical novel the Morning Face contains a long heart-to-heart epistle from the author Mulk Raj Anand to the protagonist, Krishan Chander Azad. In this letter Anand puts forth his aspiration to project Krishan in the mould of a 'contemporary myth of man' in place of the God-image of his name-sake Lord Krishna:

"But, as you will find out, in your later incarnations, you are really not the Krishna of the age of the gods. You cannot be, because the age of the gods is over. You seem to be aspiring to the new contemporary myth of man of the Kaliyug, the iron age...(MF, p.V)

This 'contemporary image' projected by Krishan, aspires for the 'transformation of the earth, ... to attain quality, depth, and truthfulness'. Anand, therefore, echoes a hope for rejuvenating men 'to face their destiny... in spite of the darkness'.

"The struggle of rebels like you cannot be in vain.

For the hangover of the passions, the self searchings
and the actions of man like you, may penetrate into the faculties and experiences of some other human beings. And a few men may take heart and may face the realities". (MF, p. vii)

In the above context and on the basis of the discussions of the previous chapters an attempt is made to finally articulate Krishan's endeavour to propose a 'contemporary myth of man'. Krishan's rebellion begins in Morning Face and takes issue with the religious and social traditions of his society; in the Confession of a Lover his rebellion rejects the religious and social rules of living with respect to his relationship with Yasmin. Thus, he does not accept or consider traditional constraints on him to give up Yasmin: He desires to love Yasmin and taste happiness by living with her; he, therefore, wants the freedom to answer the call of his desire. On the other hand, marriages were arranged in Indian society on the basis of caste and economic feasibility become suffocating practices to be crushed by freedom. In effect, caste and creed become non-existent, arranged marriages became an anathema, and his inability to support Yasmin economically became drab and unpoetical - hence negation of tradition paved way to achieve the object of desire. This negation subsumed an a priori need for freedom in which the individual
could function. Unfortunately, Krishan's dream of happiness in freedom cannot become a reality because of Yasmin's untimely death. In this sense, he is denied the opportunity to live a life based on his beliefs in the Indian society. Therefore, the viability of living a life in freedom is not realised.

On the other hand, Krishan's life in England with Irene provides the practical situation and the possibility of living a life based on individual freedom. Thus, Irene who is an equal partner in this belief initially overawes Krishan, by the life she offers. Ironically, it is she who also shows the logical conclusion and the inherent limitations of his crusade for individual freedom. He sees how Irene in her scope of freedom demolishes not only religious and social restrictions, but also renders personal relationships meaningless. In a very literal sense freedom assumes connotations of being able to do just as one pleases to. Her freedom thus extends to invalidate the aspects of good, bad, vice and virtue, which otherwise act as restrictions. Her life then becomes an 'aesthetic adventure' to be lived for a moment in utter freedom. In effect, Irene symbolises a way of life which seems to be given to the 'urge of the moment', which, in other words, defines 'freedom'. Krishan tastes the bitter reality
of this sort of life lived in freedom, when Irene exercises her right to go away with her former boyfriend or with Mr. Mehta. Suddenly his loud call for 'individual freedom' loses its piquancy. However, Krishan knows that once he has rejected principles of limit (religious and social) in his earlier call for freedom, the rejection will have to be absolute. Finally, his call for freedom articulates its scope and meaning in the terms prescribed by Irene. Freedom to be 'free as a bird' then becomes Krishan's single important entry in his proposed alternative way of life. Thus at the end of The Bubble, the 'contemporary myth of man' projected by Krishan Chander, is an unequivocal call for freedom - absolute individual freedom. This freedom is defined and demanded at all levels; in an individual, between individuals, and between individual and society.

In this context, this section attempts to raise a few questions: Can freedom then become a norm of society? Will the contemporary image of man sustain human happiness defined in freedom? Can it therefore be an acceptable alternate matrix of life? This study finds it difficult to accept freedom as a possible alternative, because of various problems that appear to arise, a few of which are elaborated below:
First, this freedom seems to result in partners living in constant Kaleidoscope alignments, prompted by urges and desires at a given moment. Therefore, the idea of relationships itself becomes meaningless, in the sense that relationships too become bonds to be annihilated by freedom. It is difficult, therefore, to accept this alternative as a norm for society which is made up of relationships; since it appears to be too hypothetical for practical living.

Secondly, a freedom that completely endorses 'experience' at any cost allows man to interpret experience as he wishes to. Thus 'I love you in my own fashion', and 'I want experience' can be used as sanctions for any sort of behaviour. The consequences of the misuse of this freedom are appalling and uncontrollable. How can such inevitability be restricted, if not with restrictions or principles of limit?

Thirdly, this freedom seems to subsume a condition that men and women are given to identical wishes in equal intensity and at the same time. But practically Krishan sees how he cannot measure up to Irene's standard of experiencing life, and Evelyn cannot make the mark to his own life. Thus, Krishan's ideal appears to be an ideal for the few who are strong (not necessarily physically) and capable of living
like Irene. Surely, Kirishan knows that it takes all types to make the world and that his image ought to be as much for Evelyns as for Irenes. Moreover, even in the case of people like Irene it is difficult to find partners on the same wavelength and frequency, in an absolute way. Thus, Kirishan's image seems to cater to that 'rarity' so rare in reality: How can this, then be a contemporary image for all mankind?

Fourthly, this freedom appears to offer immense possibilities of happiness for some (symbolised by Irene) and condemns others to despair and loneliness (symbolised by Evelyn). It is freedom that allows Evelyn's exploitation by a partner, and it is freedom again that allows him to leave her when he wishes to - causing despair, loneliness and misery, from which Evelyn has no way of protecting herself. Thus, freedom can be used to exploit a section of people, who cannot measure up to the levels demanded by the other partner. In effect, Evelyn symbolises a new creed of untouchables of another kind, whose life in society can be miserable and lonely - How can this concept of freedom be a 'contemporary myth of man'?
In the final analysis, objections to Krishan's endeavour to project a 'contemporary myth of man' for Indian society can be raised on two counts: First, Krishan's rebellion appears to lack verisimilitude and authenticity, because it fails to make a convincing study of the Indian tradition, before rejecting it. Secondly, it proposes an alternative way of life by crusading for freedom based not only on a weak foundation of rebellion but also by accepting freedom without serious contemplation about the possibilities that it signifies. Therefore, just as Krishan Chander rejects the 'age of the gods' under a travestial understanding of the practice of tradition; the proposed contemporary ideal also cannot be accepted because of the literal and therefore travestial form of meaning that freedom can assume. Unless, this freedom is redefined by principles of limit, Krishan's search for a 'contemporary myth of man' has to continue.