Chapter Three

The Alienated Self

The crisis of alienation faced by Adam and Eve started with their disobedience to God’s power and authority and ultimately led to their separation from Him, and their Edenic home. They also lost their God-given innocence, individual liberty and ran headlong into a world of corruption and evil.

The protagonists of both Greene and Joshi fit themselves well into this framework. They are stripped of their family, home, friends and country and they drift from place to place in search of meaning and identity in a world which is corrupt and grossly materialistic. They become ‘godless’, break their relationships with others and remain isolated and uncommitted. Consequently, their minds turn to be battle-fields of conflicting impulses, tensions and neurotic anxieties. Their alienation has, therefore, both sociological and psychological implications.

The world in which the protagonists of Greene live is the “cursed ground” full of “thorns and thistles”, “pain” and “sorrow” (Gen. 3: 16-18). It is a replica of the world into which God drove out Adam and Eve. The seedy and sordid images which come together in Greene’s novels show such a world and throw significant light on contemporary social, political, economic and psychological evils and the general human condition.

The horror of the world which Greene so closely knew as a child also grew up along with him. A passage from his The Lawless Roads bears this out in clear terms:
In the land of the skyscrapers, of stone stairs and cracked bells ringing early, one was aware of fear and hate, a kind of lawlessness – appalling cruelties could be practised without a second thought; one met for the first time characters, adult and adolescent, who bore about them the genuine quality of evil. (14)

Even as a child, Greene became aware of the perils of the “Commercial Civilization” (The Lost Childhood 152), “the evil of capitalist society” (28) and “a ravaged world” (Lawless 15). David Pryce-Jones’ words throw ample light on Greene’s awareness of the world around him: “Greene’s observation, concentrated on details of poverty and misery and human shabbiness, gives him in particular an affinity with Orwell, for both of them seem to penetrate to the weak spots of the capitalist world” (9).

Greene’s Francis Andrews, the protagonist of his first novel, The Man Within very often speaks of “a terror of life” (136) in which he goes on soiling himself. The novel presents veritable pictures of a “Hell” where one finds so easy to believe in sin and corruption. Andrews is the son of a blackguardly smuggler and after his death Andrews is forced into the wild business of smuggling. He betrays the smugglers to the excise men. In the chase that follows some are captured and the leader of the gang, Carlyon, whom Andrews always adores, escapes. The smugglers pursue Andrews to take revenge on him and Andrews during his flight comes to stay in the cottage of Elizabeth, a saintly woman who persuades him to go to Lewes and give evidence against the smugglers at the Assizes. This he does for the sake of Elizabeth whom he loves and also for the reward the harlot Lucy has proposed to offer him. In the long
run, the smugglers are acquitted and they wreak vengeance upon Elizabeth for
sheltering Andrews. Elizabeth kills herself and Andrews commits suicide. The novel
clearly portrays “a ravaged world” in which there are betrayals, corruption, lust,
revenge, psychic disturbances and social disharmony. In such a “confused world”
Andrews, bewildered and blundering, desperately tries to achieve a sense of identity.
As Morton Dauwen Zabel says: “Marked, hunted, or condemned, he may work for
evil or for good, but it is his passion for a moral identity of his own that provides the
nexus of values in a world that has reverted to anarchy” (60).

In his The Name of Action Greene points out how contemporary world is torn
asunder by wars, revolutions and dictatorship. It is the world of Paul Demessener,
Trier’s Dictator, his charming but deceptive wife, Anne-Marie, and Oliver Chant, a
revolutionary who forgets his mission driven by strong sexual urges which eventually
alienate him from the other rebels. Greene draws our attention to the world of people
like Paul Demessener who are locked up within themselves. He has power, but it
alienates him from others. There is also the world of Anne-Marie who does not want
to marry Chant but wants him for sexual enjoyment. Chant’s situation is existential as
he has nobody to turn to. He lives in an isolated and deranged world.

In Stamboul Train Greene describes a train journey from London to Stamboul.
The train speeds on and the external corrupt world is seen through the window. The
train itself becomes an evil world full of a strange medley of people. They are “being
born to a destiny as much as a destination, and they will be harried all along the line”
(Pryce-Jones 18). “Together” as said by Keshava Prasad “they [the characters]
represent the contemporary humanity” (65). Greene’s focus is again on human
alienation. The major character in the novel is Czinner, a high-minded revolutionary who goes to Belgrade to join an abortive coup. Coral, in the train, reflects the “necessary evils” of the world. He and Myatt fall in love, but their union is ephemeral. Allott comments that they have “short lived relationship” (82). Czinner, the revolutionary points out to Col. Hartep how contemporary political and social corruption alienates man from man: “When all were poor, no one would be poor. The wealth of the world belonged to everyone. If it was divided, there would be no rich men, but every man would have enough to eat, and would have no reason to feel ashamed beside his neighbor” (Stamboul Train 201).

Greene’s novel It’s A Battle-Field deals with the fact that alienation is largely due to mechanization, political unrest, economic crisis and unemployment. The main plot of the novel concerns Jim Drover, a communist bus-driver, who was sentenced to death because he killed a police man in a political riot. His wife and others who try to save his life, unfortunately, forget their goal and get directly or indirectly involved themselves in their own battles. In this work, Greene sees the world in terms of a battle-field where each character while professing to fight a common battle is interested only in his/her own self: “The truth is, nobody cares about anything but his own troubles. Everybody’s too busy fighting his own little battle to think of the, next man” (188). Once again, Greene’s focus is on the disruptive world which causes human alienation.

In England Made Me the characters are exiles and vagrants without emotional anchorage. Their tortured relationship is seen against the background of a commercial and antipathetic world. As Kenneth Allot puts it: “the angle of vision from which
characters are seen displays their loneliness, cynicism and frustration” (101). Anthony Farrant has a fractured mind, because his twin-sister invites him for an incestuous love-relationship. He succeeds in resisting her, but he is given to boasting and lying. Kate cannot have any successful sexual relationship with Krogh, her husband, because her mind yearns for her brother, Farrant. In G.S. Frazer’s words “Evil seems to have triumphed” in the novel (136). The novel also draws our attention to the evil world of industrialists like Krogh who are thoroughly inhuman. Being very fond of money, he alienates himself from others and lives in his own world of fantasy. “He has shut out the world, because he has elected to live in the closed world of money” (Keshava Prasad 86). David Pryce-Jones observes: “But England Made Me is as preoccupied with the effects of capitalism on individuals, and with the class structure breaking up into new formations, as any Marxist literature” (28).

In The Confidential Agent the character “D” “carried the war within him. Wherever D. was, there was a war” (9). The war within and the war without have made death more real to him than life: “His territory was death: he could love the dead and the dying better than the living” (128). His government sends him to negotiate a coal deal with an industrial magnate in London, but he is hampered from finalizing the deal by political disturbances. He loses his wife in a Spanish prison at the hands of the Fascists and he lives alone with nothing to hold on.

In Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party Greene paints another picture of the lonely and the alienated life of an industrialist who lives for money alone. He takes revenge on others who are greedy by enticing them with gifts and praises. His last research is an extreme test on human greed. He places six crackers in a
bran-tub – five contain cheques of the value of two million francs each. The sixth cracker contains a small but potential lethal bomb. The result of this experiment is a foregone conclusion. Of all the guests, Jones alone is greedy for death and not for money. Jones’ conduct disturbs Doctor Fischer’s world – an alienated one-man’s world. So far, the millionaire has been despising others because both his wife and daughter have deserted him. Steiner who loved his wife and whose life Fischer has ruined, also comes to have his revenge. But soon his hate gives way to pity, but pitiless Doctor Fischer wouldn’t be pitied. He kills himself.

In *Brighton Rock* the environment is seedy and sordid. To Pinki, Brighton, the slum, is repulsive, ghastly and evil. Defaced by war, the shabby houses lend a strange look to the area where the poor, miserable dwellers live in an atmosphere of near anarchy and chaos. Walking down the main road towards a place called Old Steyne, Pinkie feels everything is ghoulish, soiled and unhealthy. Pinkie is a monstrous product of this dark environment which has made him an emotional cripple. He is cruel, inhuman and terrifying in his attitude to life. Pinkie is a study “in relation to the ravaged world” (Allot 121). He is “a nasty, totally anti-social juvenile delinquent” (*Brighton* 31) leading a horrid, loveless life, believing only in violence, murder and suicide.

In his *The Power and the Glory* Greene depicts the Mexican State as a veritable Hell. Greene talks about poor peasants who are the “population of heaven”, (44) aged, painful, and ignorant Christians attending secret Masses. They have preserved their faith, in spite of the very severe religious persecution by the Communist government there. Against this background of heat and squalor, weariness
and insignificance, the flight and pursuit, betrayal and corruption, the sin and suffering of the nameless Whisky Priest assume significance. The world as found in the novel is totally corrupt and it has its impact on people who are supposed to be saintly and devout Christians. The priest in the novel, whom the world “turned away from every harbour” (102) felt “like a man without a passport” (102). Driven by loneliness and despair, he takes to alcoholism and even fathers a child. R.W.B. Lewis says that the priest is a representative figure, a Picaro who is presented in a new context (30).

Set in Saigon in the fifties, The Quiet American tells all about the Vietnam War. The Quiet American in the novel is Pyle who is a proper Bostonian, a Harvard man, a Unitarian, sincere, innocent and ignorant of the corruptions that are normally associated with love and war. Pyle has all those characteristics which Fowler dislikes among the Americans. But both are drawn together in a relationship that is partly friendship and partly rivalry for a girl named Phuong. Pyle helps the General in committing acts of terrorism in which fifty innocent Siagonese women and children are killed. This activity forces Fowler to put an end to Pyle’s destructive innocence.

After Pyle’s death, Fowler is haunted by a sense of guilt. The novel illustrates that Greene’s vision of the “terror of life” has not changed over the years. Like all the other novels of Greene, this novel also presents a world of isolated, unhappy men who act out a drama of pain and suffering, corruption and treachery. In a BBC talk Greene revealed that the novel has “a background of world events” (A.S. Raman 21). The Indo-China presented in the novel is yet another uncomfortable part of the world with an atmosphere of seediness and sin, decay and death. Kulshrestha observes: “. . . the predominant impression left by the novel is . . . one of violence and suffering” (143).
He concludes: “Hell is here, once again, and the images of violence and death define it” (144). The slums of Brighton, the heat and squalor of Mexico and West Africa and the violence of Indo-China are different facets of the inescapable human condition which alienates people from one another.

In *The Heart of the Matter* Greene presents a colony in West Africa, the condition of which he saw during his stay in Sierra Leone. The novel centers around Major Scobie, a Deputy Police Commissioner, who though very pure and noble at heart, becomes corrupt out of pity for his wife and others. Though just and honest, for his wife’s trip to South Africa, he borrows money from the Syrian trader, Yusef, who is waiting to get a chance to trap him. In the absence of his wife, Scobie takes pity on Helen Rolt, a young widow, one of the survivors of a torpedoed ship and soon falls in love with her. His wife, Louise, returns unexpectedly and asks him to accompany her to the Mass. As a Catholic, he cannot go to the Communion without prior confession and repentance since it would mean damnation. There is an unbearable conflict in his mind between his love for Louise and Helen, and his love for God. At the end, he commits suicide to remain faithful to all the three – his wife, his mistress and his God. Scobie’s world is a British colony in West Africa and it is as squalid as Mexico or Brighton or Indo-China. It is a land known for heat and damp, moths and mosquitoes, lizards, pye-dogs, rats and cockroaches which create a perfect climate for human meanness and misery and improper relationships.

*A Burnt-Out-Case* is set in Belgian Congo. The central character, Querry, is a famous Catholic architect. He takes flight from his old life and reaches the heart of darkness and comes to a leprosérie. At the leprosérie he is in a state of indifference
and abandonment, a man bereft of any association or emotion. He wants nothing and suffers from nothing. Though he has fled the world, he is hunted by its representatives. Father Thomas and Rycker try to carve him as a theologian or a saint, whereas Parkinson, a corrupt English journalist, is out to build Query up as an architect of souls. Being fed up with the European norms of civilization, Query mixes himself very freely with the priests, laughs with them and serves the lepers. He is very free with the natives who believe in *Pendele*, which is the Eden of one’s childhood. He walks into the forest, dances with the people and tries to regain his lost innocence and childhood joys and happiness. He is slowly “cured of pretty well everything, even disgust” (A Burnt-Out-Case 193). His compassion for Rycker’s immature wife, Marrie, leads to his involvement with her. He spends a night with her telling the story of his wife in the form of a parable. But the irony is, Marrie who hates her husband announces that Query is the father of the child she is carrying. The result of this blunt lie is that Rycker shoots his rival. Query dies because of the mistaken assumptions and stupidities of others. The novel “exemplifies Greene’s obsessive unease with the boredom, vulgarity and seediness of the civilization in which the springs of life dry up” (Kulshrestha 133). Greene seems to suggest that one must escape from the deadening influence of an adult civilization to the world of Edenic childhood where evil and terror have no place. The novel is a bitter criticism of contemporary civilization and values of life cherished by people like Rycker and Parkinson who are bent on driving the innocents to isolation and desolation.

Joshi also finds the world as a “ravaged” one marked by violence and evils corruption and betrayals of all kinds. But unlike Greene, who has a panoramic vision
of the “terror of life” which is present throughout all the countries of the world, Joshi has a limited vision. Joshi is primarily concerned with the inhumanity prevalent in the Post-Independent India and one or two European countries where his characters are destined to live for sometime. Yet, like Greene, he too focuses his eyes on the corruption and the moral evils that alienate people and give them a sense of rootlessness and meaninglessness.

The “terror of life” which is at the very centre of Greene’s novels appears at the very beginning of Joshi’s first novel The Foreigner. Sindi Oberoi, the protagonist, of the novel, says: “I belong to the world that roared beneath my apartment window” (61). He talks about “war and atomic weapons” (26). To him the Americans are “atomic wizards” and “missile boys” (26) “whose kids they will blow up some day” (26-27). He finds: “there is no end to suffering, no end to the struggle between good and evil” (41). The dead man he finds has a “peeled face, the gaping hole where his eyes had been” (49). Sindi sometimes feels that he “existed only for dying . . .” (61). He has gone to America, Kenya and India and wherever he is his “foreignness” lays within him (61). He comments that America is “a place for well-fed automations rushing about in automatic cars” (88). The “terrors” he finds around him in America have made his mind “a battlefield where the child and the adult warred unceasingly” (127-128). To his friend, Sindi says: “. . . this country [America] is going to grind your face right into its grubby trash cans . . .” (154). Sindi’s observations highlight the hypocrisy of the modern, degenerate, spiritually dead American society. The moral and the spiritual bankruptcy induced in him by the American cultural and social values combine with his innate cynicism, lack of parental love and affection make him “a
foreigner” both physically as well as metaphorically (Meenakshi Mukherjee 202-03).
The result is, that he totally alienates himself from others. He is trapped in his
loneliness which is “accelerated by his withdrawal from the society around him”
(Pathak “Quest for Meaning” 47). Sitting expressionless, he watches the world go by.
He has no religion, no permanent amorous relationship with women and no emotional
human bonds.

Joshi’s second novel The Strange Case of Billy Biswas presents more hopeless
pictures of corruption and evils. The atmosphere in which the protagonist, Billy
Biswa, finds himself is loaded with the same sense of failure and frustration as in The
Foreigner. Billy pursues “the tenuous thread of existence to its bitter end . . .” (8). He
is totally dissatisfied with what he finds both in India and America. “To him India is a
land full of uncertainties” (27) and “White America . . . was much too civilized” (9).
The novel presents the theme of man’s restlessness in modern materialistic life and his
futile attempt to escape it. As O.P. Mathur observes: The novel is “concerned with the
crisis of contemporary civilization in the upper-class Indian society in particular and
the modern world of industry and commerce in general” (139). Billy hates the
artificial and the frightening surrounding both in America and India. They are totally
unsuited to his temperament and his “soul,” which as observed by Lokesh Kumar, “is
aching to come out” (48). On reaching India, Billy finds no difference between the
social atmosphere of India and America. It seems merely a change of theatres, the
show being the same. For instance, Simla, the tourist centre in North India, is a
pleasant place to many. But to Billy, Nature there is in her tooth and claw. He hears
the thunder ever rolling, storms breaking out as often as possible and snow covering
all the time the mountains. Billy seems to dislike both the climate and seasonal
changes in India and the people who show their love for them.

In India, Billy’s inner self which craves for a simple society untouched by any
kind of make-up from outside, gets no satisfaction. He finds the upper crust of Indian
society to which he belongs is devoid of spirituality and humanitarian concerns.
People have started following the norms of the Western society. He calls the
Westernized Indians “children of kings condemned to exile” (143). Billy’s mind
suddenly turns to the primitive side of life and he begins to feel within him “a great
force, unkraft . . . a primitive force” (23). As R.K. Dhawan writes:

All of a sudden, Billy is seized by a phantom which makes him anxious
to leave the so-called civilized world of greed, avarice, riches and
hypocrisy. On one of his anthropological excursions to a hilly region of
Madhya Pradesh, Billy mysteriously vanishes. His love for the
primitive in life makes him leave his wife, his only child and his aged
parents. Ignoring family responsibility, filial expectations and societal
obligations, Billy disappears in the saal forests of the Maikala Hills.
(“The Fictional World” 32)

Joshi’s Billy has the same fate of Query who figures in Greene’s A Burnt-
Out-Case. Query too escapes into the primitive world from the civilized world and
finally dies at the hand of Rycker who thinks that Query is having an affair with his
wife. When shot Query falls down dead saying “Absurd . . . this is absurd or else . . .”
(196). Both Query and Billy are victims of our “dog-toothed civilization” (Greene,
The Lost Childhood 223). Both are utterly bored with everything: love, work and faith and all that seem to matter much to the civilized people of the world.

The world which is at the centre of Joshi’s fourth novel The Apprentice is the Post-Independent India. Joshi points out that after Independence India has become a land of chaos, confusion, corruption and hypocrisy. The theme of the novel is akin to Greene’s The Heart of the Matter where the protagonist undergoes a painful struggle to maintain faith in a hostile environment of corruption. Ratan Rathor, the protagonist of Joshi’s novel, feeling powerless and alienated from his own self as well as his surrounding, becomes an existentialist character. As Tapan Kumar Ghosh observes:

*The Apprentice* is about a dark crisis in the human soul. It depicts the anguished attempt of a guilt-stricken individual to retrieve his innocence and honour. It is a story of crime and punishment, of dislocation and search. It portrays the effort of a man without honour . . . without shame . . . a man of our times. (90)

Joshi gives in the novel pictures of “the terror of the world”. We have government officials who speak “frightening words” (*Apprentice* 6); government colonies having “identical flats”, yellow by day, colourless at night (6); Gandhian fathers who are killed for their idealism and their wives dying “spitting blood” (7), “the butcher police” (11) who stampede the people, “the tear-gas squad, throwing, throwing, throwing . . .” (11), the panic-stricken crowd, “black wave of mounted police”(11), “the sounds of the clubs against human flesh” (11), the people kneeling down with their heads covered with their arms, the advancing horsemen flailing their clubs and “The sky grey with heat . . . blazing . . . The sky threatened to split . . . and the barred
shops” (11-12), and young people who have “neither job nor money” (30). In short, as Lokesh Kumar says, Joshi in the novel presents a “Machiavellian society” (73).

Ratan Rathor, the protagonist of the novel, is soon sucked into such an evil world and he gets an appointment as a temporary clerk in a war department which purchases weapons and soon becomes a careerist. He says: “I embarked upon the solemn and relentless pursuit of a career. Bourgeois filth . . .” (Apprentice 39). Step by step, he advances in the pursuit of his career, earns more money, marries the niece of the Superintendent, pleases his superiors, takes bribes and causes the death of many including a Brigadier friend. He makes the best use of all the chances available in the corrupt and the evil Post-Colonial India. The result is he alienates himself from others who call him “a whore”. He is so confused that he considers himself to be reduced “to the status of those leaves of autumn that are blown here and there, at the mercy of the wind” (69).

Joshi’s fourth novel The Last Labyrinth gives more darker pictures of a world in which individuals and their values confront each other. The novel presents the story of Som Bhaskar, a womanizer and a boozer, a lusty discontented man who wants to satisfy his “Hunger of the body. Hunger of the spirit” (The Last 11). His constant cry and his “strident song” is “I want, I want, I want, I want,” (11). He invades the world of Aftab intending to grab his plastic industry as well as his beautiful wife, Anuradha. Soon he gets himself lost in the labyrinthine ways of life. According to Joshi, Post-Colonial India is full of mazes in which the individuals are inextricably caught. Aftab’s palatial house “Lal Haveli” is a mysterious edifice, symbolic of all the loopholes available in the country. Joshi finds Benaras as a city symbolizing Post-
Independent India which has become the breeding place of all kinds of vices. Som says: “Hers was a city without a name, a city set in an oasis, plundered a thousand times and waiting to be plundered again, by men like Aftab and me who forever lurked in its desert purlieus” (37). It is a happy hunting ground for people like Som and Aftab who are liars and frauds. Som, for instance, is actuated by the feudal insatiable hunger for money and for carnal pleasures. As R.K. Dhawan says: “Som flits from one pleasure to another; he becomes the incarnation of the quest of hunger for the joy of life. He therefore goes in search of new experiences whether they concern business or fornication” (“The Fictional World of Arun Joshi” 43). His degradation intensifies and being alienated from others he leads “a sordid meaningless life in the so-called civilized world” (O.P. Mathur and G. Rai “Arun Joshi and the Labyrinth of Life” 148).

Joshi’s last novel The City and the River, as M.K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan observe is:

. . . a scathing indictment of the notorious Emergency proclaimed by Indira Gandhi in 1975, mainly to preserve her power at all costs. The fundamental rights were suspended, and her brutal power-drunk son, Sanjay, let loose a reign of terror in Delhi, demolishing wantonly the huts of the poor in the name of beautification of the city and restoring to indiscriminate and forced sterilization as part of population control. (29)

Yet, slightly different from the other novels of Joshi, but like Greene’s The Power and the Glory it also focuses its attention on the clash between the powers of
the world and the power and the glory of religion. As Lokesh Kumar points out the novel is “about the struggle of the boatmen, representing the ‘River’, against the torturing laws regulated by the power-hungry Grand Master and his Advisory Council, representing the ‘City’” (113). The Grand Master and his aides – Astrologer, the Minister for Trade, The Education Advisor, the Police Commissioner and the Master of Rallies etc remind one of the Lieutenant and the Communist government in The Power and the Glory. In Greene, the Lieutenant and the police indulge themselves in religious persecution in the remote southern States of Tabasco and Chiapas in Mexico “where Churches had been closed down, even destroyed and religious services were prohibited” (Kulshrestha 73). “Greene was appalled by the physical and moral climate – heat, desolation, squalor, cruelty and corruption – in Mexico. But, in the midst of all the squalor and violence, Greene found faith in the hearts of the people” (73). In the novel the boatmen “consider themselves to be the children of the river, and to the river, and river alone do they hold allegiance” (The City 14). The Grand Master assumes the powers of a king and tries to freeze the number of the Boatmen by hunting them down and throwing them into the prison. He is an exact replica of Greene’s Lieutenant who works against the spiritual values of the people. However, the Grand Master’s efforts become vain and another Era of ultimate Greatness is about to begin. A new City comes up to be ruled by another Grand Master. The same thing happens in Greene’s The Power and the Glory. The old priest dies and a new priest comes in from somewhere to preach religion and give God to people. As O.P. Mathur rightly comments: “Any attempt to usurp the souls of men is stupid and is doomed to failure but not without much avoidable suffering, death and destruction” (New Critical 63).
The theme of the novel is an eternal one – the ever-going on conflict between power and religion. In Joshi’s vision, in contemporary India, the conflict has become very intense leading to large scale massacre of innocent people. Joshi feels that any imposition of religious or political values on the uncertain, secular-political contemporary India is sure to alienate individuals from one another and from the system that governs them.

Joshi’s stories are also full of men and women who face “the terror of life”. They are lonely, frustrated and uprooted and like the characters in his novels they also desperately seek the meaning and purpose of life. As “Joshi’s novels and short stories are all of a piece: they deal with the kindred theme of man’s anguished quest for survival in life’s impasse” (Ghosh Arun Joshi’s Fiction 194). In the short story “Kanyakumari” the narrator presents an accurate picture of modern India which has failed pathetically to satisfy the aspirations and ambitions of the growing youths. The narrator says:

Just then the sirens went off. I turned sharply to the east but there was no sign of the sun. A cloud hung on the horizon except that it was not a cloud. Nor was it a frog or mist. It was just a haze, a curtain through which you could not see. I thought maybe I was in the wrong place. So, I ran up along the rock to the back of the temple. But there was no sun there either. Just the grey haze, a blanket. You could see nothing, not even a glow. (Joshi The Survivor 217)

The dawn in India is grim, joyless, more depressing than the dark night preceding it. The youth in India find no consolation when the sun does not light and the sky is
curtained by a haze. The story presents a disconsolate vision of India where the sun has yet to rise. The failure of the narrator-protagonist to see the sunrise from the Vivekananda rock at Kanyakumari leads him “to experience a greater disappointment with the country which is infested with unemployment, violent politics and corruption of all sorts, and is moving like a rudderless ship in a turbulent sea” (Ghosh 210).

The short story “The Home Coming” relates the story of a young soldier who returns home from the war and who is not able to establish any meaningful relationship with the people in his family and town. The terrors he has seen in the war, the nightmarish experience of the gruesome deaths of his fellow soldiers, the neck to neck fight in the dark trenches with the enemies, the memories of a school building full of girls that had been the brothel for a battalion and of a deserted village where he found “a child stuck on a bayonet in front of every hut” (Survivor 102) – all these crowd in on him and give him sleepless nights and increase his loneliness and estrange him from others.

The foregoing discussion shows how Greene and Joshi delineate the human condition in their respective Western and Eastern contexts and reveal how the modern world is thoroughly ravaged. They point out that the world today is beset with all kinds of evils, violence and terror that it has become totally unfit for human existence.

Greene’s existential vision is panoramic and it goes beyond all limits and borders and encompasses the entire world with all its evils and perils. He continually shifts his locale from one part of the world to the other where evil in some form or other is rampant. As David Pryce-Jones says: “the subject matter of his novel till the
outbreak of the Second World War includes smuggling, the destruction of a dictator, the death-sentence passed on a Communist, international capitalism, a juvenile delinquent, and civil war” (Graham Greene 9). Greene himself has said that he deals with “eternal issues of the struggle between good and evil (The Lost Childhood Penguin 102).

Joshi, on the other hand, has a limited vision and range and it is confined to one or two Western countries like America and England and to the Post-Colonial India which in his view has become a breeding ground of all kinds of vices and wickedness.

As Greene’s vision of the evils in contemporary world expands, his images become more and more seedy, squalid, sordid, repulsive and even ghastly. Usually such images accumulate in “thrillers” which according to Corolyn D. Scott give form and shape to the modern predicament (“The Urban Romance” 6). As Greene’s vision of the terror-stricken world enlarges more and more evocative images of the human misery and suffering come in succession and create a world of corruption which critics call “Greeneland”. Greene himself has objected to this criticism. In his Ways of Escape he says: “Some critics have referred to a strange violent ‘seedy’ region of the mind (why did I ever popularize that last adjective?) which they call Greeneland, and I have sometimes wondered whether they go round the world blinkered . . . They won’t believe the world they haven’t noticed is like that” (60).

Whatever be Greene’s reaction, the dexterity and sophistication with which he has made geographical locations as symbols and a paradigm of the human condition, cannot be belittled. To him, the world appears to be an “infernal world”, a despicable
place of sin and corruption. Walter Allen rightly points out: “Heaven remained rigidly in its proper place on the other side of death, and on this side flourished the injustices, the cruelties, the meannesses that elsewhere people so cleverly hushed up” (30).

Joshi’s images are also equally bleak, sordid and squalid and they effectively suggest a world that has become inhuman, brutal and treacherous. As in Greene, in Joshi also images of violence suggest the geographical and physical background which are the moral bases of the lives of his characters as well as the social and political forces that cause their alienation from others.

It is surprising to note that Joshi’s images have also an Eliotian colour. Sindi Oberoi, for instance, experiences a “panorama of futility” (Eliot Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot 177). Like a Wastelander, Sindi remains neutral or indifferent to almost everything. His affair with Anna reminds us of the love depicted in Eliot’s “Portrait of a Lady”. Like Eliot’s lady, Anna too, as Sindi later comes to realize, does not yearn for his company but for her youth. Sindi’s past action has been a total waste and he tries to redeem himself through right action. This is in accordance with what Eliot says in “The Dry Salvages”: “And right action is freedom / From past and future also” (Eliot Four Quartets 45). Joshi’s Boston is Eliot’s Boston of The Waste Land – insipid, sterile, degenerate, with no hope of resurrection. As S. Rangachari aptly remarks: “The themes of alienation, of rootlessness of individuals, of inanity and purposelessness of human existence, of moral vacuity, spiritual bankruptcy and apathy – the themes which are associated with Eliot’s early poetry figure prominent in The Foreigner” (1).
Greene and Joshi try to show how the alienated man living in a “ravaged world” loses his primeval innocence, freedom of choice and individual liberty. In the Edenic myth, Adam and Eve, after their expulsion from the garden had to lose these three blessings which they enjoyed earlier in the company of God. God’s curses pursued them and still they seem to pursue humanity. One can find a reflection of this in many of our existential literary works.

Greene and Joshi show in their fictional works how people come to lose their God-given innocence, individuality and freedom of choice. Andrews fails in life because of his environment which is evil and also because of his defective upbringing. His life is totally conditioned by his father and he lacks courage and confidence. He is betrayed by his father and the smugglers and he suffers from a sense of being left out. Keshava Prasad observes: “In The Man Within the dice is heavily loaded against the innocent man who is constantly betrayed” (53). Andrews loses his individuality and freedom of choice because of his domineering father. He often has in his mind the authoritarian figure of his smuggler-father looking over his shoulders threatening his and his mother’s existence. He is doomed to fashion his life only according to the whims and fancies of his overbearing father. Even when he chooses to be with the smugglers, he is victimized by them. Wherever he goes, his responses are controlled and inhibited. His innocence and his individuality are lost through his confrontation with the adult world of corruption and violence. The result is, he is psychologically upset and isolated by others.

In Greene’s Stamboul Train Dr.Czinner is condemned by an unjust world, a world of octopuses, a world based on money, war and self-aggrandisement. He is a
revolutionary fighting for a new world. He is an idealist, challenging the world that corrupts man. Of all Greene’s early heroes, he is the most innocent character. He reflects the radical imagination of Greene. Through him, Greene exposes the degenerate, corrupt world that confronts the innocents who fight against evils and die for a cause. But in a world of Harteps and Corals, Czinner’s idealism becomes a mere utopia. He is so innocent that he does not know that the world cannot give him justice. The court, without hearing his arguments, finds him guilty. Like a man who is forced to put an end to an interview Czinner admits “I plead guilty” (Stamboul Train 142). He is sentenced to death without trial. “They had”, he says, “sentenced me to death before they began” (145). “He is”, as David Pryce-Jones says, “something more than the man with the courage of his ideals: he is a man whose innocence has governed his life, and he pays for it, knowingly, by his death” (20).

Pinkie Brown in Brighton Rock was at first a very innocent Catholic boy. In the past he used to attend a Roman Catholic Church and serve as a choir boy. Rose who marries him hears his story and remarks; “You’re innocent” (64). Once in the choir he sang “softly” in a “boy’s voice” (66). When he was a kid he “swore I’d be a priest” (219). Even now, sometimes, he murmurs snatches of the liturgy “dona nobis pacem” in an off-key voice in which “a whole lost world moves”. Greene does not give any detailed description of the boy at any point in the novel. However, here and there he leaves a few deft touches to create his child-like innocence. For instance, Greene writes that Pinkie is “A boy of about seventeen” (4) living in “a shabby suit” (4) with “a face starved intensity” (4) and “a hideous and unnatural pride” (4). We read about his “thin legs”, his “narrow shoulders” and his grey “ancient eyes”. Greene
describes how such an innocent boy is sucked into a world of evil and corruption. The seedy environment in which he lives and his unhappy, poverty-stricken childhood bring loneliness and meaninglessness into his life. Pinkie’s innocence is marred by his total aversion and abhorrence for sex generated in his mind by his parents who have sexual intercourses on Saturday nights (132). Kite uses his innocence and introduces him “to a life of crime and violence by a simple gesture of kindness” (H.M. Burton 20). Kite treats him to a cup of hot coffee and takes him “home” to Frank’s. Pinkie, soon becomes the leader of a Razor slashing gang and becomes an inhuman devil. Pinkie who was once innocent is now living “in the territory of pain, proudly wearing a razor blade under his thumb nail, slashing his victims at leisure” (S.K. Sharma 82). Pinkie loses both his individuality and his freedom to choose his course of action. He marries Rose so that she may not bear witness against him to the police. The police chase him and Ida Arnold who is ever after justice hunts him and in desperation he commits suicide. Pinkie, in short, is “a character driven by forces beyond his control”. He is “a victim of society, a victim of the terror of life . . .” (82).

In The Heart of the Matter Major Scobie, the Assistant Commissioner is just, upright, hard working and conscientious. The commissioner calls him “Scobie the Just”. It is his primal innocence that makes him take upon himself the burden of God to relieve the sufferings of others by showing them pity and compassion. “It had always been his responsibility to maintain happiness in those he loves” (The Heart 16-17). “Scobie continues to remain so good, that he “can’t bear to see suffering . . .” (207). He chooses to continue in service, though he is passed over for promotion in favour of another man. He also chooses to be with his wife, Louise, who is
unattractive and unfaithful. For her passage to South Africa, he borrows money from Yusef, the Syrian trader who is trying to trap him. Again, in the absence of his wife, he chooses to be in love with a young girl, Helen Rolt. Finally, when it comes to choosing between hurting his wife or his beloved and God, he chooses the latter course. He does not want to deceive God by receiving Communion with a sinful heart. He cannot desert Helen. Nor can he, being a Catholic, divorce his wife. Driven by extreme despair and remorse he chooses to put an end to his life. Scobie’s innocence, his individual assertions and his choices are frustrated because of the physically and morally corrupt universe in which he lives. P.N. Pandit comments: “The heart of the matter is that men are drawn away to evil and corruption by the circumstances of life and this going astray from the path of righteousness, shows a soul’s disappointment; it implies his love of an ideal he could not achieve” (135).

The Whisky Priest in The Power and the Glory was once innocent and even ignorant of many theological matters. But now serving people in the “godless” Mexican State, he has become “bad”; “a Whisky Priest” and he looks like a “common man” (61) and “a beggar” (63), “a small gaunt man in torn peasant’s cloths” (60), and “a small man who blinked and needed a shave” (37). He has lost his innocence and he is shamelessly begging for Brandy (38). He has also fathered a child, Brigitta. “He alone carried a wound, as though a whole world had died’ (68). He has chosen to be with God’s people putting God into the mouth of men: an odd sort of servant . . .” (60). What is most lasting and impressive about him is his “undying power and glory” (Collins 255), “however flawed by weakness” (255). Hunted and persecuted by the police in the Communist State and betrayed by some people, the priest loses all his
former innocence and his ability to make a choice and runs away. He is shot down and he dies realizing his unworthiness and powerlessness. “From comparative innocence and smug indifference to other people’s pain, he has moved on to corruption and involvement in human misery” (P.N. Pandit 132).

In The Quiet American one witnesses the war-torn Vietnam with all its evils, violence, intrigues, bloodshed, treachery, distrust and betrayal. Against this background, Greene presents Thomas Fowler and Alden Pyle who are always at loggerheads with each other for the hand of Phuong, a Vietnamese girl. In fact, Greene’s objective in the novel is to show how an individual (Pyle) and a whole race of people who pretend to be innocent are burdened with a sense of guilt and betrayal. David Lodge says that the novel is “an expression of venomous Americanism” (The Novelist at the Crossroads 112). Fowler, at first, thinks that Pyle is innocent. He soon learns that Pyle is working under cover receiving orders from Washington to form a military “Third force”. He also understands that Pyle is working with General The, a traitor. With the help of the General, Pyle arranges to bomb Saicon after having carefully warned the Americans about it. Though Pyle is good at heart and he means well, his innocence is exploited by the Americans. Pyle wants to do good not to any individual but to a country, a Continent. But he ends up with doing more harm to the already damned people. In making love to Phuong, Pyle is also led by his empty ideas chosen from books. He thinks that his money which he will inherit from his parents, his “good health” and his “blood group” will help him win her. He treats her as a flower to be tended carefully and as a child to be protected. But, Fowler looks upon her as a woman capable of looking after herself. Pyle offers her his youth and money,
but Fowler his love and the tenderness of his age and experience. The result is Phuong comes back to live with Fowler. Pyle’s idealism as pointed out by A.A. De Vitis is “a dangerous weapon in a world covered by the cult of power . . .” (118). Pyle’s innocence, whether presumed or real, his idealism which he got from books; his wrong choices and his efforts to assert his individual worth – all fail miserably in a land torn by factions. His individuality is lost as he is a member of a group, a crowd, the “Third force”.

Like Greene, Joshi also shows in his novels how modern man loses his primal innocence, his freedom to choose and his unique individuality. His maiden novel The Foreigner which is called “one of the most compelling existentialist works of Indian English Fiction” (Prasad M “Arun Joshi” 51-52) shows how the protagonist’s friend Babu Khemka who comes to America to pursue his studies loses his native innocence. For the first time in his life, Babu “full of typical Indian fantasies and illusions” sees “a glamorized foreign dreamland” (R.S. Pathak “Human Predicament” 113). Naturally, the environment there corrupts him. In America, he thinks, he is in a paradise and he indulges himself in free-sex and fulfils all his suppressed dreams. To Sindi he says: “what is the good of coming to America if one is not to play around with girls?” (The Foreigner 19-20). June loves him for his natural innocence in his speech. “For me the most confusing thing about Babu was the naivete with which he talked about his own feelings” (90). For Sindi “He was like a child asking for sweets” (92). Sindi tells June: “His innocence was driving me to exasperation” (147). The other students pity him for he in his innocence has chosen June as his lady-love. When Babu is full of all kinds of plans for the future, Sindi, who knows his father’s
character, chides him saying “It is high time you ceased to be an innocent little rich-father’s-boy” (154). Without paying heed to Sindi’s advice, Babu takes to heavy drinking and he falls in love with June without knowing her past. Finally, he kills himself in a frenzy when June tells him that she has been sleeping with Sindi. As Indira Bhatt and Suja Alexander have observed: “We notice that though Babu pretends to have embraced the American mode of life and values, yet cannot leave behind his ingrained Indian value vis-à-vis virtue of chastity and fidelity in an American girl” (22). Babu’s sense of Indianness can be seen in his fear for his father. When he fails in the examination “He kept on worrying what his father would say” (The Foreigner 110). He cannot also place before his father his affairs with June. O.P. Bhatnagar says that he is “foolish” and “basically a coward” (“The Art and Vision of Arun Joshi” 33).

The external corruption of the land eats away Babu’s inner sap and leads him to make wrong choices and changes him into a “person who does not have an individuality of his own” (Indira Bhatt 22). Sindi, clarifies to Sheila the exact reason for the alienation and the death of Babu:

> It was his innocence that killed him, Sheila. . . He lived in a world of dreams, in a world with sculpture in drawing rooms. In the end, the hard facts of life proved stronger than his flimsy world of dreams. His death could have been heroic. But the pity of it was that the dreams were not even his own – they were products of the turbid flotsam of a rotting social class he was supposed to perpetuate. (The Foreigner 55)

The novel also reveals the circumstances under which Sindi Oberoi, the protagonist of the novel loses his innocence, his individuality and his powers to
choose. Joshi elicits our sympathy for him by making him an orphan. His parents “died in an air crash near Cairo” (9) and Sindi becomes “an uprooted young man” (195) carrying his “foreignness” always with him (61). Wherever Sindi goes, he faces “the terrors of life” and he looks as a “baffled” (4) “stranger” (4). The promiscuous environment in which he lives corrupts his innocence and makes him act out “of lust and greed and selfishness” (4). In choosing his women he miserably fails. He practises the philosophy of detachment in human emotions, but he fails in maintaining it. He loves Anna but, when he realizes that Anna is yearning “for her lost youth” (168) he gives her up and chooses Kathy who hungers for adulterous love. When she also leaves him, his existential crisis gets intensified and as S. Rangachari puts it, he passes on from innocence to “self isolation, callous indifference, gross selfishness and inhuman passivity” (“T.S. Eliot’s Shadow” 2).

Billy Biswas, the protagonist of Joshi’s novel The Strange Case of Billy Biswas knows no pretensions. “He was one of those rare men who have poise without pose” (11). He favours a simple life without ostentations – “A life which has no cravings for money or ambition” (Saleem 65). But, unfortunately, he is growing up in a degenerate society which is bent upon destroying all his innate and inborn virtues. The life he yearns to lead is the primitive innocent life of his Swedish girl friend, Tuula Lindgren, and Bilasia, his tribal wife. Bilasia lives in Maikala Hills, a world beyond corruption and topsiturvied values. As Harish Raizada remarks the novel shows “the impingement of the Civilized on the primitive World” (83). Billy opts for the tribal world of innocence which as D.R. Sharma says “operates in a simpler and clearer manner” (“The Fictional World” 3). The desire to be away from the madding
crowds enhances his sense of alienation and dispossession and he runs away into the woods. The members of his family and the whole mechanism of the government “is brought against Billy Biswas, who, by his act of rebellion, has put the Civilized society to shame” (Ghosh 87). In the encounter that follows, Billy is shot dead by a Havildar, one of the members of the “bastardly” (The Strange Case 233) civilized society which can never find in it an “equivalent” (236) of Billy Biswas who is “like rain on parched land, like balm on a wound” (236).

Billy also fails in all the choices he makes because he does not choose in consonance with the values of the “phoney society” (185) in which he lives. He is sent to America by his father to get an engineering degree. But he exercises his freedom of choice and switches over to the study of Anthropology. After getting a Ph.D. degree in it, he chooses to be a committed explorer in his field of study. He makes it clear to his room-mate Romi: “All that I want to do in life is to visit the places they describe, meet the people who live there, find out the aboriginals of the world” (14). Then he chooses to be a teacher at the Department of Anthropology of Delhi University. It is here that he becomes restless and mixes very freely with the tribals and begins to explore their lives. He chooses to marry Meena but continues to have an adulterous affair with Rima. With the passage of time “the misunderstandings between the husband and the wife gets the form of the crisis of character” (Shankar Kumar 100). The broken relationship gives Billy a chance to escape into the tribal shelter.

Billy is “strange” and a “case”; the two key words of the title have “thematic significance” (Pandey 7). He is “strange” because though born in a materialistic world, he “opts for the primitive life of the tribals”. “His ‘case’ is an interesting psychological
study . . .” (87). He loses his individuality and freedom because he is bound by an organized society consisting of the members of his family and the officials of a
government. “Billy’s search for meaning . . . is conducted in a very hostile atmosphere
and he has to pay a heavy price for it” (R.S. Pathak “Human Predicament” 119).

Ratan Rathor, the protagonist of Joshi’s The Apprentice also progresses from
innocence to experience in a world that hankers after money and power. “He is born a
good man, the son of a martyr in the national movement. But when he goes out of his
village to graduate in life of the crooked world, honesty does not get him even the
lowest job, and he makes his essence, as he goes along, choosing the life he leads”
(Guru Prasad “The Lost Lonely” 99). The novel tries to show how even the most
honest and the innocent individuals become the victims of all the evils that flourish in
modern India. “The main thrust of the novel” as said by Shankar Kumar “is a contrast
between Pre-Independence idealism preached by Mahatma Gandhi ‘a man of
suffering’ and Post-Independent disillusionment” (113).

Ratan’s adolescent life is marked by his innocence, expectations and fears. He
says:

I went regularly to college and did better than many. I was in perfect
health. If I was occasionally ill there were people to look after me. I
was the fastest sprinter our college had known. I had won an award for
poetry, something which athletes seldom did. There was nothing in the
present that explained my disquiet. Indeed, it was not the present that
haunted my dark dreams. What clouded my horizon was the future, my
friend, the unknown ominous FUTURE. (The Apprentice 17)
Ratan’s father was an idealist, and a Gandhian known for his simplicity and honesty. He was never after money, fame and name. He was mercilessly killed by the police when he took out a procession during the Independence struggle. After the death of his father, Ratan too wanted to be like his father, but “a difference held me back” (18). His disillusioned mother wanted him not to entertain the crazy ideas of his father, but to be pragmatic, earn money and become a wealthy man. So, finally, he gave way to her persuasions and “embarked upon the solemn and relentless pursuit of a career” (39). R.K. Dhawan finds Ratan “neither a rebel nor a dissident” but a victim who “adapts himself to the ways of the world” (“The Fictional World” 37).

In his choices also Ratan fails. As O.P. Mathur and G. Rai say: “Ratan Rathor always plans to do the right thing, but never does it” (“Arun Joshi and the Labyrinth of Life” 87). He chooses to work as an apprentice clerk in a Government Office dealing with war purchases. He keeps his eyes upon “careerism” despised by his father as a “bourgeois filth” (The Apprentice 39). He chooses to forget and ignore the stenographer friend who had been instrumental in securing a job for him. He chooses to be very close to the Superintendent in his office and to please him he even marries his niece. Henceforward, he never looks back and on the Superintendent’s retirement he gets his post and earns every comfort in life which his father never had. He becomes so greedy that he gets bribes and sends to the war-field the substandard war-materials supplied by one Himmat Singh. He also chooses to enjoy wine and women and all “fantasies of pleasures” (The Apprentice 79). In the war, the substandard weapons misfire and his best friend, the Brigadier, who once saved his life from death is baited. The Brigadier suffers a nervous breakdown and commits suicide. The irony
is that the son of a freedom fighter becomes engrossed himself in anti-nationalist and nefarious designs. He is compelled “to abdicate his true self to fit in the corrupt society . . .” (V. Reddy 218). His “true self” is caught in “a web”, “a prison”. As a student, Ratan believes that Post-Independent Indian Republic will usher people into a new era of peace and justice. All his hopes and expectations of chances to exercise his individual freedom are shattered to pieces. In a monologue he says “Freedom. Freedom. What is freedom but a word, my friend? Freedom of men, of nation. No more than a word. We thought we were free. What we had, in fact, was new slavery. Yes, a New Slavery with new masters . . .” (The Apprentice 60-61).

Joshi’s novel The Last Labyrinth, “is a spiritual autobiography of a lost soul groping for the meaning of life and death” (Ghosh 123). Som Bhaskar, the protagonist of the novel “is tossed between the rationality of his father and the spirituality of his mother” (Lokesh Kumar 91). The bad upbringing deflects his innocence and takes away his confidence in the rightness of making his choices and actions. His father becomes a victim of melancholia that causes his death and his mother dies of “Cancer and Krishna” (The Last 57). Som is upset. He loses the well-defined vision which he had as a boy. His wife, Geeta, is modern, intelligent and sophisticated. He broods over his fate, loses all hopes, gets psychologically affected, becomes possessive in character, moves from one woman to another and keeps on grabbing others’ companies. Yet he is dissatisfied. His discontent turns into lust. He admits: “I was a womanizer all right, and a boozer, but my womanizing and boozing had not settled anything” (156).
Som fails in making his choices also. First, he chooses to live with his wife and
enjoy a happy married life. Yet he fornicates. He runs after several women – ayahs,
librarians, nurses, aunts, friends’ wives and others. Ironically enough, nobody satisfies
him and he comes to have a terrible sense of emptiness, “voids within and without”
(The Last 47). He chooses to be with the clever professor Leela Sabnis who is
divorced by her husband for her unnatural love for reading. But soon his affair with
her also fizzles out “because Bhaskar does not have the stance of clarity and certitude
which she has. In her, the world of matter and spirit did not meet . . . What he needed
was something, somebody, somewhere in which the two worlds [body and spirit]
combined” (Hari Mohan Prasad “The Crisis of Consciousness” 233). Then, he chooses
to go with Anuradha who yields to him on many occasions, but does not want to be
possessed by him. To forget her, he makes a Continental tour with his wife but soon
returns to her, makes love to her “with singular ferocity” (The Last 121). Other
choices follow. He tries to grab her husband’s Company and finally he tries to kill
himself with his grandfather’s gun, but he is stopped by his wife Geeta.

Som is not able to assert his individual worth. He is a victim of circumstances
and environment. “Bhaskar is a product of twin worlds – the Western world of science
and rationalism and the Indian world of faith and transcendentalism” (Prasad “The
Crisis of Consciousness” 236). He loses his “cultural heritage . . . love, sacrifice,
communal faith and adherence to tradition that may provide one with a positive
framework for individual self-definition and meaningful existence” (Ghosh 149).
When he fails in all his attempts to prove his individual worth and rationalist
philosophy of life, he becomes a coward and he goes even to the extent of putting an
end to his life. Till the end he leads an alienated and restless life. He has “a Hamlet-like incertitude, an inherent sickness” (Pandey 132-33).

Joshi’s last novel The City and the River marks a departure from his existing oeuvre in as much as it delineates the political shenanigans indulged in by the political leaders of Post-Independent India. As said by Subash Chandra: “There are unambiguous parallels between the Emergency regime in India and the one portrayed in the novel” (265). The Emergency period in India’s political history is one of the darkest periods known for all kinds of atrocities and violence. The “City” in the novel is the hostile political world and its representatives are the Grand Master and his aides. The representatives of the “River” are the religious Boatmen and people like Bhumiputra, Vasu, Dharma, Shailaja, Patanjali and the Professor. Like Greene, Joshi too in this novel creates the usual tension between political power and God’s glory. The evil Grand Master with his advisors creates a reign of terror using the latest scientific instruments and suppresses the religious Boatmen who are “the children of the river” (The City 14). The innocent, God-loving Boatmen are tortured and their head person is imprisoned and blinded. There is much destruction of life and land. Unable to bear this, Nature takes revenge. The River swells up and washes away the entire City leaving no trace of any habitation. Yet, out of the ruins of the old City a new one comes into existence. This is similar to the optimistic expectation of the religious people and the arrival of a new priest in Greene’s The Power and the Glory.

Bhumiputra and the professor in the novel are as innocent as Greene’s Whisky Priest. The professor’s objective is to prove the innocence of Bhumiputra. A
concocted news is published in the newspapers that Bhumiputra and the other Boatmen are trying to murder the Grand Master. The professor tells the public:

“Ladies and gentlemen, in the name of God, I beg you to believe that Bhma is innocent” (The City 122). But “No one wants to hear about innocent men . . .” (122). Therefore, the professor chooses to put up a lottery stall to broadcast the truth about Bhumiputra. When more and more people come to the stall he is arrested by the Grand Master and his stall is run over.

Like Greene’s Whisky Priest, Bhumiputra also chooses to be a preacher. He is thought by the government to be the kingpin of a conspiracy and he is “arrested for making subversive propaganda at the university” (43). Later, to prevent the Boatmen from perishing, he goes to their huts and preaches to them as Lord Krishna does in the Gita. “He was at peace now. There was no choice in him except to go on preaching the king’s story” (158). Yet, when he is threatened to be arrested he escapes and thereby loses his authenticity and individuality. Joshi in his novel “ . . . is dealing with the universal predicament of the modern man besieged as he is by debilitating forces” (Subash Chandra “Towards Authenticity” 271). The most damaging effect created in the novel, as pointed out by Mukteshwar Pandey “is the stifling of spontaneity of the individuals personality” (151). R.S. Pathak says that those in power kill “spontaneous assertion of individual initiative, feelings, wishes . . . opinions” (“Quest for Meaning in Arun Joshi’s Novels” 67).

The protagonists of Greene suffer from some psychological complex or an “obsession” which deprives them of their innocence, freedom of choice and their ability to assert their individuality and subjectivity. As a boy Greene himself had some
complexes. The restrictions in home and school, the wicked friends, his early sexual experiences, the book he read, the evil he saw in his hellish environment created in him what Colin Wilson calls “the mescaline experience” which “plunges the taker into . . . fears and fantasies” (Beyond the Outsider 217). Greene has carried over his vision and “obsession” to almost all his characters and they suffer from some inner discord. They become “divided men” and split personalities having two levels of existence, the spiritual and the earthly – the life of goodness and the life of degradation. For, instance, Major Scobie, Czinner and the Whisky Priest are ever conscious of their inner corruption and they long for peace and God’s forgiveness. Conrad Dover in It’s A Battle-Field is obsessed with a sense of guilt. He he has slept with his brother’s wife. “It irked him . . .” (173). His “guilt seemed everything”. Greene’s Pinkie, Raven, Andrews etc also experience “fears and nightmares” and “a heightened sensibility which sets them apart” (Allot and Farris The Art of Graham Greene 93).

Joshi never had the early bitter experiences and disappointments of Greene. For a brief period in 1957 he worked in a mental hospital in the United States where his uncle was a psychiatrist dealing with chronic Schizophrenics. One is left to guess that the strange cases he had seen there might have helped him to create characters who suffer because of a schism in their souls. Joshi’s characters are also a bit psychologically affected like those of Greene. Joshi’s belief is: “Life’s meaning lies not in the glossy surface of our pretensions, but in those dark mossy labyrinths of the soul that languish forever” (The Strange Case 8). His interviewer Sujatha Mathai has said that Joshi “sees lives as labyrinths – hopeless mazes . . . (“I Am A Stranger” 142). Both the writers, therefore, have the same existential vision of life – the
individual facing his own nothingness, and confronting his guilt, his assertion of
personal freedom, his failures in making right choices, his death consciousness and
the need to define himself against it etc.

The crisis of alienation and the resultant loss of human subjectivity dealt with
by the two writers can be viewed from yet another perspective. Unlike Greene, Joshi
brings into his novels the “internal fractures” and “fissures” of the Post-Colonial
Indians. Joshi’s The Apprentice relates to the time when the Indians looked forward to
a glorious millennium. But their expectations were falsified by the degeneration
taking place at all levels of life. “The novel” as R.K. Dhawan has observed “is
concerned with the corruption that power brings with independence” (“Destiny of a
Nation” 53). Ratan Rathor, the protagonist of the novel, as pointed out by
V. Gopal Reddy, lives in “A world of dreams soon getting shattered resulting in
dissatisfaction with . . . the emergence of a feeling of being essentially lonely” (143).

Greene, on the other hand, does not deal with the Post-Colonial situation of a
particular society. His vision engulfs the whole world which is in the grip of all kinds
of evils and corruptions giving rise to disruptive and divisive forces and leading
people to their alienation from others. “He has brought to the literary front a modern
approach for giving deep insights into human nature and suffering especially in a
world where, to quote Neitzche’s phrase ‘God is dead’” (Satnam Kaur 187).

After the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, there was
permanent estrangement between them and their Creator. Their children went away;
y they fell out and they became victims of betrayal, treachery, murder and bloodshed.
God’s curses followed them wherever they went and they were destined to face all kinds of hardships.

In existential literary works one comes across numerous characters who suffer from “the ancestral curse” called “familial alienation”. Characters move out of their families, break up relationships and carry with them a sense of isolation, the feeling of loneliness, friendlessness, homelessness, meaninglessness and even strangeness. They withdraw themselves into a cocoon-like life and remain uncommitted.

Almost all the protagonists of Greene and Joshi experience “familial alienation” and feel defeated, disillusioned and even get themselves destroyed. As a boy, Greene himself was a stranger both at home and school. His domineering father, spiritless mother, his early cravings for lust and sex and the resultant anxieties, despair and depressions etc get themselves unmistakably reflected in many of his protagonists. In the words of Francois Mauriac: “Even if he [Greene] withdraws and shuts his eyes, his most distant past will begin to ferment. His childhood and youth is enough to provide a born novelist with an immense amount of literary nourishment” (“God and Mammon” 108).

Andrews in Greene’s The Man Within runs away because his parents are indifferent. His father is a “bully” (3), “domineering brutal, a conscious master, not chary of his blows to either child or wife” (24). His father wants Andrews to study irrelevant subjects like Greek just to brag about it. His “mother died with the serene faithfulness of a completely broken will” (24). His father’s ghost haunts him wherever he goes and it becomes responsible for his alienation from Elizabeth who is “a saint”
(The Man Within 45) and a “mother” (4). Elizabeth takes away from him his “fear and cowardice” (13), his feeling of “friendlessness” (12), and makes him go to Lewes and bear witness against the smugglers who endlessly chase him for his betrayal.

Anthony Farrant in England Made Me is spoilt by his father. His sister Kate says that he “ruined Anthony and he was tormented by Anthony until the end” (64). Antony cannot adjust himself to the school he is forced to go to. At school he re-enacts Greene’s truancies. He rejects his sister when she develops incestuous love for him. His love for all women is based only on lust. While making love to Loo he feels “a recurring itch of the flesh” (186) and “. . . the desperation of the hunger of departure” (122). He becomes homeless, friendless and moves from job to job. He is full of deceit and lies and he is untrustworthy. “He is possessed with irresistible loneliness. The sense of being an exile never seems to desert him” (Keshava Prasad 185). For a time, he remains uninvolved and he keeps himself away from the life of his sister and Krogh who takes her as his mistress. As G.S. Frazer observes he is “a pathetic product” (The Modern Writer 88). Atkins comments he has “no sense of anticipation, only hopelessness” (Graham Greene 50). A study of his story shows to what an extent he is spoilt by the members of his family.

Pinkie Brown in Brighton Rock is “another in the series of victims of childhood” (Pryce-Jones 29). As a boy, he feels that he is neglected by his parents who forget themselves in their Saturday night sexual acts. The boy is psychologically affected and he becomes a nasty, totally antisocial juvenile delinquent. He becomes a gangster, an outlaw and a murderer. He is homeless and friendless. He marries Rose so that she may not bear witness against him. After the murder of Spicer, he wants to get
rid of his wife and enters into a suicide pact with her. The police come and he jumps down from a cliff blinded by the vitriol in his hand and is united with the nothingness which he always found around him.

Raven in *A Gun for Sale* has traumatic experiences early in his life at home which develop into “angoise metaphysique” in later life. His father was hanged and his mother cut her throat. To him “The idea of a home is a place of suffering, not of love or happiness” (136). To Anne he says that a man is born with evil and the condition of his parents nurtures it. Raven is born with a harelip and his parents cannot afford a good surgeon. It is badly sewn up and it gives him an ugly appearance. His ugliness becomes an obsession with him and he goes on committing crime after crime. When people avoid him because of his deformity, he takes revenge on them. He also becomes a murderer and a victim of lust.

James Wormald in *Our Man in Havana* and Arthur Rowe in *The Ministry of Fear* lead an alienated life because they are not able to forget the wounds they received during their childhood days. Wormald’s schooldays strongly recall to our mind Greene’s own schooldays and the names of his schoolmates. Psychologically affected, he is unsuccessful in business and he is found as a sad anxious man with a limp and his face reflects sorrows which are beyond any cure. Deserted by his wife, he lives like a man in exile. The failure of his marriage makes him mentally crippled and burdens him with a sense of guilt. Arthur Rowe always broods over his childhood days and like a child he is fond of reading novels meant for children. He develops “pain-phobia” and being unable to tolerate his wife’s physical pain he kills her. Till his death his mother’s image haunts him and he remains uninvolved. Major Scobie in *The Heart*
of the Matter becomes dishonest because his wife develops an affair with another man and he himself falls in love with Helen Rolt, a young widow. He becomes the cause for the death of his honest servant, Ali. He borrows money from Yusef who is trying to find a chance to trap him. He takes bribes and finally deserts God and commits suicide. Dr. Plarr in The Honorary Consul lives away from his parents and leads an isolated life. This makes him emotionally deficient and “a cold fish” (185). His love for Clara is based on lust. To him love means “The stupid banal word love” (251). He has no emotional attachment with any woman and he remains totally detached from others. Fowler in The Quiet American lives away from his wife who refuses to give him a divorce. His love for Phuong is insincere. “I only want her body. I want her in bed with me”. He is lonely, friendless and he is incapable of committing himself to any action. Dr. Fischer’s (Dr. Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party) hatred and jealousy for the other people springs from his discovery of his wife’s relationship with Steiner. He leads an isolated life ridiculing all the time the friends who come to see him. He has no love even for his only daughter.

Joshi’s protagonists also experience “familial alienation and develop what is called “the crisis of consciousness” which affects them both physically and mentally. Joshi shows how in Indian patriarchal societies, the fathers become centers of authority and dominate the scenes occupying the entire power space leaving very little or marginal space both for women and children.

Joshi’s protagonists exhibit similar reactions like those of Greene’s when they are denied parental love and love from the other members of their families or from someone with whom they develop a love-affair. Sindi Oberoi in Joshi’s novel The
Foreigner is totally broken and anchorless. As a boy, he has lost both his parents and being psychologically affected by their loss he calls them “those strangers” (9). Like Camus’s Meursault, he does not want to be reminded of them. This loss makes him go from country to country in search of a home and friends to ward off his loneliness and his feelings of estrangement. He is an alien everywhere physically as well as metaphorically. He confesses “My foreignness lay within me” (61). To Mr. Khemka and his daughter he says clearly “I hated to talk about my parents, I hated the pity I got from the people” (The Foreigner 9). “Denied of love, familial nourishment and cultural roots, he grows with a built-in fissure in his personality and becomes a wandering alien, rootless like Naipul’s unanchored souls or Camus’s outsider” (Prasad Arun Joshi 29). He turns to be an anomic man, responsible to no one, having no morality, no ambitions, and no purpose in life. He is always overcome by “a strange feeling of aloneness and aloofness” (Bhatnagar “Arun Joshi’s The Foreigner” 14). He remains uncommitted for quite a long time and when he understands that he himself is responsible for the death of Babu and June, he ceases to be “a perennial outsider” (Mukherjee The Twice Born 22) and gets himself involved in the life of others and finds meaning in life.

In the same novel, Babu Khemka also suffers because of familial alienation. His life is conditioned by his father, “an awful bully” (The Foreigner 122), a rich industrialist and an Indian “orthodox” (89). His father is “one of those fastidious persons who are so often found among big people” (112). Babu is very much afraid of his father who is the tyrant of the family. We observe the filial awe of Babu when he fails in the examinations and frustrates the expectations of his father. His father and
sister will be ashamed of him (111). Babu is only a shadow of his sister and his father. He agrees to marry June, but he is not bold enough to place the facts before them. Later, as he is not able to bear the infidelity of his beloved he ends his life like a coward. It is obvious that the lure of the West makes him abnormal and as observed by Indira Bhatt and Suja Alexander “Maya (illusion) in the form of June destroys him” (22).

In Joshi’s The Apprentice Ratan Rathor leaves the course prescribed by his idealist father, a follower of Mahatma Gandhiji, and becomes a victim of money and corruption and meets with his downfall. He becomes a drunkard, a womanizer, takes bribes and leads a luxurious life. In his moral downfall, he becomes a wretched whore, a master-faker, a hypocrite, a scoundrel, a thick-skinned liar, a crooked upstart and a spineless flunky. At the end he finds that “life is zero” (142). He feels that emptiness covers him “like a boil, like leprosy (63). He loses all his peace of mind when his friends who “appeared no friendlier than a streetful of strangers” (110) cheat him.

Billy in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas is also a victim of parental alienation. He belongs to an aristocratic family. “His grandfather had one time been the Prime Minister of a famous princely State in Orissa. His father, after completing his law studied at Inner Temple, had mostly practised law at Allahabad and Delhi” (12-13). When Babu was in America “he was a judge of India’s Supreme Court” (13). Against the wishes of his father who wants to make him an engineer Babu studies Anthropology in America as he wants to learn and “find out the aboriginalness of the world” (14). Billy’s predicament becomes a strange case as he turns to be a split personality – split between the “primitive” and the “civilized”. As advised by his
mother, he marries and tries to avert his hallucinations and behave like a normal man. But his wife, Meena, fails to engage his soul and satisfy his inner urges. He feels terribly sick of the so-called upper-class “shallow” (179) city societies of Delhi and runs away into the Maikala Hills and gets himself thoroughly tribalized. He lives with Bilasia, a tribal woman, who is the right woman to satisfy his soul. But his father, the Chief Secretary, Rele, (the police Superintendent) Meena, Situ and others turn against him and try to bring him back. In their effort to catch him alive they kill him mercilessly.

Som Bhaskar in The Last Labyrinth has inherited the traits of his grandfather, his father and mother. Like his grandfather he is a womanizer and a drunkard and like his father he has developed a scientific attitude. Moreover, he has studied abroad and he has a Western outlook. But tragically enough, in spite of all the wealth he has, he has a deep sense of emptiness, of voids within and without: “It is the voids of the world, more than its objects, that bother me. The voids and the empty spaces, within and without” (47). He has become “a neurotic” (80) and “a compulsive fornicator” (80). The constant cry of his soul is: “I want. I want. I want” (11). He develops affairs with Leela Sabnis and Anuradha who is living with Aftab. “His excessive preoccupation with sex makes him a miniature Cassanova . . .” (Mani Meitei “Indian Ethos” 84). At the end he becomes very greedy and tries to possess all the wealth of Anuradha and Aftab. The novelist says that “like a shipwrecked sailor sinking into the ocean” (The Last 144) he falls into a bottomless pit of despair. At one point in his life he even tries to kill himself.
The foregoing discussion reveals that both Greene and Joshi deal with familial alienation in their works and show how it affects psychologically and socially the course of life of their protagonists. Their bitter childhood experiences and the indifference of their parents produce schism in their souls and they go astray seeking their own meaning of life. As they are split-personalities, they are not able to adjust themselves with others, and hence they lose their peace of mind, become friendless and remain aloof finding no meaning in life.

The above analysis indicates that in Greene the protagonists’ loveless life at home and the seedy environment in which they live create a havoc in their lives and they are unable to lead a normal and healthy life. Their relationships with others are strained and they remain without any commitment living alone in their private cocoons. Greene’s novels reveal that familial alienation is a universal factor as most of his protagonists are doomed to live in war-torn places. They move about in a state of homelessness as if they were in a foreign country where they do not know the language and have no hope of learning it. As Gangeswar Rai has observed they are “always doomed to wander in quiet despair, incommunicado, homeless strangers” (27). In other words Greene’s protagonists behave like “the foreigners” in Joshi.

Joshi, on the other hand, is obsessed with the evils that have come into existence in Post-Independent India. In all his novels he shows that familial alienation makes the individual run away to foreign countries or into some interior forest in search of a new mode of life. After independence, due to educational and professional ambitions and domestic problems, many Indian youths seek their livelihood in foreign countries where they face innumerable difficulties which ultimately change their life-
style and make them lose their original cultural moorings. As Tapan Kumar Ghosh has rightly pointed out Joshi “has taken full cognizance of the inter-cultural development in his country and created a coherent fictional contradictions of Post-Independent Indian society” (214). When writers like V.S. Naipaul, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Bharati Mukherjee treat multi-cultural situations, their apprehension of the reality is “affected by the experience of more than one country and conditioned by exposure to more than one culture” (Meenakshi Mukherjee 86), Arun Joshi like Raja Rao is strongly rooted in the Indian cultural tradition. Like Raja Rao, Joshi holds tenaciously to an Indian cultural identity and to Indian modes of thinking that shapes his content and colours his vision. Joshi’s belief in the Indian cultural superiority guides and controls the movements of his protagonists. Despite all hardships in foreign countries, his protagonists finally return to India to hold on to some Indian values which may give meaning to their lives. While Greene’s heroes suffer in various countries with little hope of any redemption, Joshi’s heroes come back to the raft.