Chapter Four

The Lost Lonely Questers

The present generation of people who are the descendants of Adam and Eve with their fractured selves are ever in quest of a belief, a meaning and a value of life. In his own life, Greene has been always in search of an authentic belief on which he can lean. His life has been “a journey without maps”. Greene’s sorts into the heart of darkness – the reckless trek through Liberia, Congo, Vietnam etc are marked by “a hungry curiosity” (A Sort of 9). Greene has been a victim of the human situation like many of his protagonists and his “travels, as much as act of writing, were ways of escape” (9). A.A. De Vitis rightly upholds that “Greene’s journeys, though motivated by temperament and curiosity, fall into typical patterns of psychological and spiritual quest” (Modern Fiction Studies 276).

Greene’s Man is “abandoned” in a ravaged and nightmarish world given to violence and death. Mr. Tench, the dentist, is utterly deserted in the Godless Mexican State and what he experiences is “huge abandonment” (The Power 18). The Mexican father tells his wife: “we have been abandoned here. We must get along as best we can” (28). To Padre Jose, this world appears as an “abandoned ship” (29). There is no peace for him “in the whole abandoned star” (30). The Whisky Priest wants to be with his woman, thinking that if he left the State, “he would be having her too abandoned” (67). When the Whisky Priest is arrested for possessing liquor, “In an odd way he felt abandoned . . .” (136). In Greene’s tragic vision, every one living in Mexico is “going deeper every moment into the abandoned land” (157). As a very conscious artist
having tremendous faith in man’s potentialities, Greene tries to find ways and means
to accommodate all his abandoned men in life instilling in them some belief or hope.
John Atkins says that throughout It’s A Battle-Field “runs the question, what can you
believe?” (Graham Greene 38). He describes Greene’s world as “a compound of
violence, terror and a bewildered search for some form of faith” (123). Beekman
W. Cottrell says: “The search pattern has dominated Greene’s work from the outset,
and The Potting Shed is so successful because it is a kind of apotheosis of that form”
(“Second Time Charm” 254).

Greene being a more socially conscious writer, in novel after novel, he
presents the various ills, both within and without human consciousness and makes a
search for an ideal world that may bring peace and happiness to people who feel that
they are simply left in the lurch to suffer all alone.

As Mukteshwar Pandey observes: “Joshi’s leitmotif in his novels is quest”
(156). A hopeless longing for peace and serenity drives all his heroes. His characters
throughout their lives try to seek meaning in a meaningless world. They are, as said by
Thakur Guruprasad, “The Lost Lonely Questers” (The Fictional World 155). If
Greene’s characters are just “abandoned”, Joshi’s characters are well-caught in several
“mazes” of life from which they are not able to extricate themselves. As Joshi himself
has said to his interviewer Sujatha Mathai, his characters have lost “the shinning secret
of the core of life” in so many “labyrinths’and “mazes”. Joshi’s endeavor, therefore, is
to recover the lost soul and explore its inner psyche to know its longings and put it on
the right track towards redemption. In this context, it is worthwhile to quote what Hari
Mohan Prasad has said about Joshi’s search for a belief for his characters:
His fiction is a quest for the essence of human living. The external world and reality emerge from the consciousness of the individuals. All his heroes are both Picaresque and pilgrims – Picaresque in their wanderings and pilgrims in their search for meaning of ‘Karma’, for the life force, for atonement, for the First Cause, for the Ultimate Truth, for God.

(Arun Joshi 112)

His characters are essentially seekers and questers of some belief or some conviction that may save them from their existential predicament. This central theme runs parallel to Joshi’s existential vision of life highlighting it as much as possible.

Sindi in The Foreigner “wanders through the maze of existence” (179) striving to discover “the meaning of life” (165). Billy Biswas in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas is concerned with his search for the “Other Thing”. “That Other Thing was, and is, after all, what my life is all about” (189). Billy becomes a primitive to be spiritually aware of the meaning of life. It is this “search” (189) that ultimately drives him to the doors of death. Joshi, through Romi, describes Billy’s quest. He says: “In brief, I know of no other man who so desperately pursued the tenuous thread of existence to its bitter end, no matter what trials of glory or shattered hearts he left behind in his turbulent wake” (8).

In The Apprentice, Ratan Rathor cleans the shoes of the devotees who come to a temple and thereby cleanses his soul of its impurities. He purges his soul of its vanity, pride and arrogance and attains absolute humility. He realizes: “one must try and not lose heart, not yield, at any cost, to despair” (143). Som Bhaskar in The Last Labyrinth journeys towards the temple at the mountains to encounter Krishna
and attempts towards reaching his soul. The novelist “seems to suggest that the labyrinths of life can be resolved through unwavering faith, trust, intuition and open hearted prayer to God that help in leading a really peaceful life” (Pandey 159). In his last novel, The City and the River Joshi’s canvas is large and he takes up the issues of the entire humanity and not that of some particular individuals. There are a number of questers in this novel, but the real quester is the Nameless-One whom the raft carries as an illegal child and brings back as an illumined one. He becomes the disciple of the Great Yogeshwara and comes back to restore peace and order in a chaotic world. It is a universal human quest for purity through sacrifice “of egoism, selfishness, stupidity” (263). The yajnai of life “burns only on sacrifice. When the fire is low, when the flame is dying, men must feed it with their own lives” (166). This is perhaps, the meaning of life in the meaningless world. However, Joshi’s protagonists do not arrive at a meaning all on a sudden. They go through a long process of adjustments and accommodations and like Greene’s protagonists they try with several beliefs and convictions. As Ramaswamy in Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope says “life is one long pilgrimage” (191). This problem is due to the protagonist’s inability to relate himself to his surroundings which is inimical to him.

The central experience of Joshi’s characters is their existential crisis which spells out the absurdity of the human condition. Man in such a condition cares only for his worldly advancement and never thinks seriously of his spiritual deterioration. Joshi’s characters in this respect behave very much like those of Greene’s and their problems at many points seem to coincide. Hence, like Greene, Joshi also tries to find
some conviction or faith which may protect his characters from falling into the
existential abyss.

Some of the protagonists of both Greene and Joshi believe that they can find
solutions for their problems through revolutions, political agitations and upheavals.
Greene’s novels The Honorary Consul, The Quiet American, The Name of Action,
and The Ministry of Fear are mainly concerned with this mode of accommodation.
Father Rivas in The Honorary Consul has been aspiring since childhood to become a
fearless abogado to defend the poor and the innocent. The irrelevance of the
teachings of the Church to the problems of the suffering humanity makes him a
rebel. He feels ashamed to read to the people, “sell and give to the poor” while the
old Archbishop is “eating a fine fish from Iguszu and drinking a French wine with
the General” (116). He is driven to rebellion by his compassion for the poor and the
suffering and those who are denied justice. The paradox of Rivas is that he has to do
evil out of love for those who suffer. The following passage quoted from the novel is
highly revealing:

‘I believe in the evil of God’, Father Rivas said, ‘but I believe in His
goodness too. He made us in his image that is the old legend . . . So I
too believe in an old legend which is almost forgotten. He made us in
His image – and so our evil is His evil too. How could I love a God if
He were not like me? Divided like me. Tempted like me’. (227)

Father Rivas does not succeed in his attempts, for he is actuated from within by a
sense of pity and love of humanity. In his attempt to save Dr. Plarr, he gets himself
killed. The priest in him also makes him fail as a rebel. He feels drawn to his victim
Charley Fortnum, by sympathy and fellow feeling. When his wife Marta asks him to say the Mass, he agrees because he cannot deny his duties as a priest. His unwillingness to carry out the threatened execution of Fortnum underscores his failure as a revolutionary. He even gives absolution to Fortnum. He also seeks forgiveness for his separation from the Church. At the end, he dies while performing his pastoral function. Through the portrayal of the character of Father Rivas, Greene condemns those who believe in agitations and revolutions without having any basic stronghold.

In The Name of Action, Greene presents Oliver Chant as a revolutionary. Chant goes to Trier to overthrow its Dictator Paul Demessener. He hopes to achieve justice and save the people from the hands of the ruthless tyrant. He meets some of his fellow revolutionaries who are all patriotic and who are bent on putting an end to the life of the Dictator. But unfortunately Chant who is supposed to lead the gang is drawn towards the Dictator’s wife and he succeeds in seducing her. He forgets his mission and gets himself involved with the Dictator and his wife and he even strives to save them from the hands of the blood-thirsty mob. Greene, quite obviously, shows, once again, that human emotions are very strong and human love can take away from one the original ardour of rebellion and revolution. Chant is as unfit as Father Rivas to participate in a revolution.

In The Quiet American, Fowler, for sometime, remains uninvolved in the revolution that goes around him. “I won’t be involved” is his oft-repeated assertion. Yet, towards the end seeing the violence that is committed and moved by the general human condition in war-torn Vietnam, he plunges himself headlong into the situation and feels that he is responsible for all the sufferings caused. He says: “I was
responsible for the voice crying in the dark: I had prided myself on detachment, on not belonging to this war, but those wounds had been inflicted by me . . . .” (113).

Fowler’s attitude is that he hates the war and the revolution, but pities its victims. After looking at the dead soldiers, he averts his eyes saying that he “didn’t want to be reminded of how little we counted, how quickly, simply and anonymously death came” (52). Greene once again points out that human emotions and love of the sufferings are more stronger than organized wars and revolutions.

In The Ministry of Fear Greene depicts an atmosphere of political tension in which Arthur Rowe, the protagonist of the novel, is involved. He is tortured by pity and terror. A few years ago, he killed his wife out of pity for her for she was slowly dying because of her long illness. He was sent to prison and then he spent several years in an asylum. When he came out, he found life meaningless and he avoided all human contact. Rowe is very much like Mersault, the “outsider” in Camus’ novel, The Stranger. One day he gets himself entangled in a strange situation where some persons enact a murder. He thinks they are pinning the murder on him. He runs away and then he becomes involved in a fifth column organization operating in bomb-torn London. During the terrifying London Blitz, he feels himself as an exile. Finally, after much deliberation on his own limitations and his guilt which involved him in the murder of his wife, he makes the right choice. He turns to Anna, the woman who loves him. It is only in her company he can live without any anxiety and say “I am happy”. Here, again Greene points out how revolutions and wars are inadequate to save man from his existential crisis. Greene seems to say that all revolutions and rebellions which aim at
violence and bloodshed are bound to fail in the face of human love and meaningful commitment.

Joshi also makes his protagonists try with revolution and rebellion as a mode of accommodation and as an anchorage. But unlike Greene, he views it from an entirely different perspective. In his novel The Apprentice Ratan Ratha’s father, a successful lawyer, sacrifices his profession and plunges himself into the freedom movement organized by Mahatma Gandhi. Ratha’s father is an upholder of Gandhian values like simplicity, honesty, selfless service and non-violence. As an idealist, he has absolute faith in the Gandhian movement and he is prepared to suffer for it. “... he had abandoned his practice, given away most of his wealth ...” (8) and allowed his family to suffer with no means of living. His wife is “tubercular” (7) and she is “spitting blood” (7), almost dying. The future of his only son and the advice of his friends cannot bring him back to what he calls “careers and bourgeois filth” (39). In the agitation that follows, he is mercilessly shot down dead. Ratha gives a pathetic description of his tragic death:

My father advanced a step. The sergeant pulled out his revolver. The moment in my mind is frozen as a moment of great silence. There seemed only the three of us – my father, the sergeant, and I – the three of us surrounded by a great silence. They stood staring at each other, saying nothing. My father took another step. Then, if you can believe it, my friend, they shot him. They shot him in the chest and again, as he spun around, in the back. (12)
The violence and the atrocities committed during the Independence Struggle are in no way less harmful than the ones perpetrated by the revolutionaries and warmongers in Greene. But Joshi’s focus is not on them. It is on Ratan, the young boy who is growing up in Independent India. After his father’s death, Ratan wants to join either the Gandhian Movement or the struggle organized by Subhas Bose. But his pragmatic mother does not allow him. She tells him: “It was not patriotism but money . . . that brought respect and bought security” (19). To her, a man “without money was a man without worth . . . little better than a beggar’s shoe” (20). This materialistic attitude to life starts haunting Ratan and forgetting all the idealistic values of his father he goes in search of the “bourgeois filth” which his father always hated. Joshi bewails that love of money and wealth has come to influence and take a firm grip on many youths of the Post-Independent Indian society. Unlike Greene, who underlines the success of human emotion and love in times of war and turmoil, Joshi focuses his eyes on agitations and rebellions which the Indian youths consider as a mode of accommodation. He points out how they make them “fall from the acme of innocence and glory to the nadir of degradation and shame” (Ghosh 93).

Some of the protagonists of Greene and Joshi embrace Communism with the hope that it will lead them to their redemption. When Greene was in Paris, he and a friend joined the Communist Party with the hope of getting a free trip to Moscow and Leningrad. He even attended a meeting and came out dejected. Joshi, on the other hand, is an avowed Gandhian and a follower of J.P. Narayan and as such he is not an advocate of Communism. He has no faith in the “Marxian philosophy of class-consciousness and class-conflict” (Shankar Kumar 45).
Some of the characters of Greene who embrace Communism during their quest for meaning, soon turn to be cheats and unreliable persons. Mr. Surrogate in Greene’s *It’s A Battle-Field* is a fake Communist. “He is an empty vessel. There is a real need of a revolutionary leader, but Mr. Surrogate is only a poor substitute” (Atkins *Graham Green* 44). Mr. Surrogate lives in a palatial house like a bourgeois. He is at home only with abstractions – Social Betterment, Equality of Opportunity, Means of Production – and he shrinks from actual contact with human beings. He thinks of Drover not as an individual but as a sacrifice to be decked out for the altar of Communism. “To him, in a cause there was exhilaration, exaltation, a sense of Freedom” but “individuals gave pain by their brutality, their malice, their lack of understanding” (*It’s A Battle-Field* 44). Yet, Mr. Surrogate cannot be happy alone among his “glamorous abstractions” (44). He needs a companion to confirm his belief in the reality of Capitalism and Socialism, Wealth and Poverty, but a companion may also see through him and destroy his public image. He seduces a young working-class woman, Kay Rimmer, to satisfy his lust and pride. He lives alone in his flat in front of his dead wife’s portrait which hangs before his bed. The portrait is “an atonement for his dislike, as a satisfaction for his humility, because of its reminder of the one woman who had never failed to see through him” (58). His political philosophy is a means of escape from his lust, shame, betrayal and cowardice into the haven of abstractions.

In *The Quiet American* when Pyle tells Fowler that people do not want Communism, the latter readily agrees with him. He gets disenchanted with Communism, seeing the violence perpetrated by the loyalists. The following passage
quoted from the novel reveals his inner bafflement with regard to Communism and all ideologies:

Isms and ocracies. Give me facts. A rubber planter beats his labourer – all right, I’m against him. He hasn’t been instructed to do it by the Minister of the Colonies. In France I expect he’d beat his wife. I’ve seen a priest, so poor he hasn’t change of trousers, working fifteen hours a day from hut to hut in a cholera epidemic . . . I don’t believe in God and yet I’m for that priest. Why don’t you call that colonialism?

(95-96)

Greene uses Fowler as a foil to Mr. Surrogate and points out how some people who profess some socio-political ideology show their total disregard to fundamental values of love, pity and compassion and add to human misery and suffering.

Greene in his The Power and the Glory creates the Lieutenant as a representative of Communism which promises to build up a revolutionary society based on perfect terms of equality. The Lieutenant, with his secular aura, strives for the material well-being of the people without any facade of humility, while the priest, with his religious ‘mystique’, strives for the same ideal without any pretence to asceticism. The Lieutenant stands for materialism and authoritarianism and is symbolized by his revolver. He is a symbol of the secular power of the State. Through him Greene points out that man will be left with nothing in the absence of belief in God. Utopian ideals and the beliefs in a juster world are not only impracticable, but they are also a menace to the freedom of the individual soul and they prevent it from developing in its own way. Revolvers can do nothing against the “terrible aboriginal
calamity” in which the whole human race is implicated. Perhaps, for sometime, Greene felt that Communism would be a healthy alternative to Fascism. As George Orwell puts it “From the grip of Communism upon the intellectuals there followed the tendency to see the world situation in the simplified terms of absolute German evil and absolute Russian purity” (Selected Essays 113). Greene’s expectations did not come true because of the terrible experiences he had during his visit to Indo-China which was then totally ravaged by various political and Communist ideological groups. In The Power and the Glory also Greene finds a chance to expose the inadequacies of Marxian ideology and points out that it works against the existential freedom of the individuals in a State.

Readers of Greene’s novels may very often think that Greene is trying to bring about a fusion of Marxism and Christianity, prescribing it as a panacea for all the ills of his protagonists who are in quest of some frame of reference for the redemption of their lost selves. But such a fusion takes place nowhere in any of his novels. In The Power and the Glory as Adele King observes: “... the Lieutenant’s dream of a ‘new world’ is false, because it ignores both floods and torrents of the natural world and the corruptible nature of man” (41). At best, the Lieutenant can offer the people what is called “authoritarian humanism” with a gun in his hand. In The Honorary Consul, Greene, instead of aiming at a fusion, goes for a downright rejection of all brands of totalitarianism. The book offers neither a Christian message nor a Marxist solution. Father Rivas who carries a gun, is a lapsed Catholic, who dies as a renegade in the eyes of the Church, and an outlaw in the eyes of the State.
Dr. Plarr in *The Honorary Consul*, like Fowler, takes no interest in politics and he is not a Communist. He finds Marx “unreadable” (174). He is unwilling to be mixed up with the terrorist plot organized by Father Rivas, as he is doubtful about its efficacy. Later he gets himself involved in the plot because he considers his involvement as “a mark of friendship” (26). He hopes that his father will be freed as a part of the ransom if he is with Father Rivas. His love for Clara, a teenage ex-whore, at present four months pregnant by Plarr, is another motive for his joining the plot. Yet another reason is his great love for Fortnum, Clara’s husband. Through the character of Dr. Plarr, Greene makes it explicitly clear that a Communist has to be first and foremost a lover of humanity. This is in agreement with what Greene has said about Communism and Communists in general in his other novels.

Like Greene, Joshi also chastises Communists and Communism. In *The Foreigner* Sindi Oberoi is thoroughly upset when the income tax man speaks in favour of the “proletariat” (40). When he addresses Sindi as a petty bourgeoisie, he feels that he is trying to spit in his face. Sindi is annoyed when he says: “India is working towards a *new* age, Mr. Oberoi . . . An age in which each man will be equal to another” (40). Like the protagonists of Greene, Joshi’s Sindi also eschews Communism which believes in violence and death at the cost of human life and human love. Sindi’s answer to the income tax man is: “The revolution may come . . . And you know what will happen when it does. You will be shot. I will be shot. Muthu there will probably be shot. The rest will remain unchanged. The charlatans you wish to destroy will just turn around and put on another mask” (40-41). Mr. Khemka, the industrialist in the novel is class-conscious. He advises Sindi: “Never trust these lower classes.
They have to be made use of, but kept in their place” (134). Sindi knows that Khemka is exploiting his workers and he replies to him not like a Communist but like a humanist:

It is not I who should be ashamed of, Mr. Khemka, but you yourself. I have only been one of your victims. It is you who have swindled those miserable wretches in rags who push carts on your streets and die at twenty-five. It is you who have been telling lies and fabricating documents just so that you could air-condition this ostentatious house and throw gigantic parties for the horde of jackals who masquerade as your friends. (214)

Sindi is making fun of unions and groups organized by the Communist leaders. “We sat upstairs at Wengers where young executives have their business receptions. Except for two teenage girls, we were alone in the room. A crowd of workmen with tattered banners were found on the lawn across the road. They obviously were waiting for their leader. ‘All India Scavengers Union,’ the banners said” (49). Sindi also talks ill of the “gesticulating leader on the shabby platform” (50) and the happy, poor people who listen to “his personal sorrows” (50) with “fun” (50). Sindi observes that the leader is “searching endlessly for the road to the parliament and then to the Cabinet” (50)

Mr. Khemka also makes fun of the working-class people:

In the slums across the street, bundles of soggy humanity shuffled out of their huts and spread their miserable rags to dry. Full-breasted women their thighs naked under wet saris, scurried back and forth like animals quarrelling over small bits of tin. Naked children rolled in the filthy pools, squealing with delight. (42)
Like Greene, Joshi is also against totalitarianism. The Police Commissioner who figures in Joshi’s novel *The City and The River* is as good as the Lieutenant in Greene’s *The Power and the Glory*. Like the Lieutenant, he has sympathy for the poor. He considers the Boatmen as God’s people. When the professor goes to him to enquire about Master Bhma who has disappeared, the Police Commissioner expresses his displeasure with the totalitarian government and the high-caste Education Advisor who begins the politics of caste-antagonism. Like the Lieutenant, he does not drink and he does not “even bother to hide what he thinks” (*The City* 81). Like the Lieutenant, he justifies the enforcement of strict law and order on the grounds that “the poorer the city is, the more guns its government needs” (82). To Dharma, he once says, “Don’t think I have no pity. I too am of the mud-people after all. But the boatmen have asked for it” (141). Like Greene’s Lieutenant who is at the beck and call of the totalitarian Mexican government, Joshi’s Police Commissioner is also caught in the net of dittoing what the Grand Master demands.

It is interesting to note that the vision of a Social Utopia presented to the people by the Police Commissioner is a tall tale as the one promised by the Lieutenant. Both Greene and Joshi are of the view that no man-made organizations and dogmas which believe in violence, bloodshed and terrorism can save the suffering humanity. The Police Commissioner’s promises are false and he is flayed alive by one of the Colonels who says:

Comrades: The ultimatum of the Police Commissioner is nothing but the dying yelp of the jackal. It is the same animal whom you have thrashed and skinned at a hundred barricades. What has now happened
that this jackal has turned into a lion? Or, is it that it has learnt to
imitate the lion’s roar? Let the jackal remember, a lion’s roar does not
make a lion. (206)

Joshi also does not aim at any fusion of Marxism and Hinduism. In the novel,
at the end, the Grand Master and his friends who govern the people with a rod of iron
are overthrown. A great deluge engulfs and destroys them. The final message of the
novel is summed up in the Great Yogeshwara’s words: “His is the Will, His is the
Force” (264). Joshi’s The City and the River like Greene’s The Power and the Glory
is much more than a simplistic version of the destruction and annihilation that power
politics ruthlessly brings upon mankind. The two novels transcend socio-political
issues. They establish that ‘faith’ is the only means of redemption for man whose
“self” is splintered into pieces by a world which does not know what is human love.

Both Greene and Joshi are not Communists, but they are champions of people
fighting against injustice and corruption. Both believe that human beings are born to
suffer and it is only through their immersion in sin and suffering they can emerge out
as real human beings having love – “not the best love, but love all the same” (The
Power 106). The Upanishads recognize pain and suffering as the “condition of
progress” (S. Radhakrishnan Indian Philosophy 243). Thus, a political ideology like
Communism or Socialism cannot be an answer to all the ills and perils of man facing
the existential crisis. Communism, as seen in both the writers can breed only violence
and add to human suffering. It does not, as already pointed out, become a source of
human love which alone is the saving grace of humanity. Mahatma Gandhi once wrote
“the purer the suffering the greater is the progress” (qtd. in C. D. Narasimhaiah and S. Nagarajan vii).

During their long journey towards self-realization, some of the characters of Greene and Joshi feel that they can join some group and thereby find a meaning for their life. In their novels, both the writers, stress that social institutions which aim at creating “mass-men” can in no way save individuals from their existential problems. Both insist on the significance of human freedom and conscious independent initiative of the individual. They criticize all dehumanizing forms of collectivism and emphasise the individual’s need to extricate himself from the “crowd” in order to be fully himself. Both know what Kierkegaard has said in this regard. Kierkegaard has little use for the “crowd” or the “public” and he summons the individual to come out from the “group” and take the burden of his being upon himself: “A crowd in its very concept is the untruth, by reason of the fact that it renders the individual completely impotent and irresponsible or at least weakens his sense of responsibility by reducing it to a fraction” (Kierkegaard The Point of View 193). Heidegger’s expression for the “crowd” is “they” (das man) (Being and Time 163). Karl Jaspers uses the expression “mass-existence” or the mass (Man in the Modern Age 56) and points out the nature of the “unthinking multitude”. Marcel speaks about the “functional man” (Homo-Viator 4) who is deprived of mystery, dignity, personhood and humanity itself.

In Greene’s Quiet American Pyle is full of abstractions. He organizes what is called “The Third Force”. He is motivated by some Communist ideology and not by any need which may save people during the war. Pyle is appallingy ignorant, callous
and unimaginative. Fowler remarks that “. . . he was incapable of imagining pain or
danger to himself as he was incapable of conceiving the pain he might cause others”
(74). He uses a lot of catchy words learnt from books to justify the formation of a
“group” and the barbarity of killing people. That Greene has great contempt for both
Pyle and “The Third Force” is evident in the novel when he remarks: “Harding wrote
about the third force. Pyle formed one – a shoddy little bandit with two thousand men
and a couple of tame tigers. He got mixed up” (168).

In Greene’s novel Dr. Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party, Doctor Fischer
who is abominably rich has a group of “friends” whom he calls “acquaintances”. They
are all his fawning satellites cringing always to get from him even the odds and
remnants, the leftovers, which may fall from his dining table. The Doctor gives them
dinners and even plays games with them. These guests or toadies constitute a group of
five strange characters drawn from different walks of life. These greedy flatterers
submit themselves to him to be humiliated and Dr. Fischer’s methods of humiliating
them are very cruel and fantastic. These “Toads” are “mass-men” who are always
ready to say “yes” to whatever Dr. Fischer tells them. The story of Dr. Fischer and his
servile friends shows how “mass-men” are reduced to mere fractions and collectivism
deprives people of their dignity and self-respect.

Padre Jose who figures in Greene’s The Power and the Glory is another “mass-
man”. During the anti-clerical purge in Mexico, some of the Catholic priests run away
from the State and some remain behind, marry and settle in life as demanded by the
totalitarian government. Padre Jose joins the latter group, marries in obedience to the
law, loses his sense of self-respect and he is mocked at and taunted both in his home
and outside. He is “fat and ugly and old and humiliated” (49). He is lost in a “crowd”.

A study of the later novels of Greene reveals a close affinity between Greene
and Sartre. Like Sartre, Greene believes that commitment to “other authorities” at the
cost of one’s subjectivity leads one ultimately to experience anguish, disillusionment,
isolation, defeat and death.

In Joshi’s The Apprentice, Ratan becomes an “yes” man in his office to get
monetary benefits, promotions and advancements. He has become “an instrument, a
paw” (130) in the hands of Himamat Singh, the Minister and the Secretary. They are
the “trio” who run the country. They are the one “who would put signatures and so
on”. (130). “But if something went wrong it was no doubt the paw that would be
chopped” (13). According to Ratan “The country was full of spineless flunkeys”
(131). They are persons of unquestioning obedience and “a bundle of shams” (131).
Ratan says: “I liked to please my superiors: at worst, do nothing overtly that might
displease them” (34). He cannot rest until a job assigned to him is completed. The
superintendent will be searching him among the files. Ratan is mortally afraid of being
rebuked. He will be shouted at before others. Once the superintendent meets Ratan and
coaches him how he has to follow the life of “A CAREER” (38). And then “without
knowing, or caring to know” (39), Ratan launches himself “on the pursuit of . . . A
career! Nothing more” (39). Soon Ratan marries the superintendent’s niece, gets
confirmed in his job and gets the superintendent’s post when he retires. Since he has
been always a “yes” man pleasing his officers, his colleagues call him “a whore” (47).
Ratan pursues his “career” persisting in his servility. When the war starts, he tries to
amass as much money as possible by obeying the orders of “THEY” (60) – “The Authorities. The higher-ups” (60). The following passage throws enough light on the behaviour of the “mass-men” like Ratan who have come into existence during the wake of Post-Independent India:

So, they had appeared again. That is if they had ever left the scene in the first place. There was the public and there were THEY. That there were people above me higher and higher, I had always known. But, somehow I had assumed that they would be closer now, almost one of us. Earlier, when I thought of THEY I had thought of the Englishmen. Could it be that the Englishmen had been merely replaced? And many times over? Could it be that nothing else but this had happened? (60)

At present, the “mass-men” are the Indian politicians who have joined hands to rob the country of its wealth, and youths like Ratan join their camps unmindful of their fate. India is now “a confused society, a society without norms, without direction, without even, perhaps, a purpose” (70). As a result, people like Ratan are “A NOBODY! A NOBODY!” (70). As a “mass-man” he has “to lick THEIR boots, put on smiles for THEIR pleasure. Yes, sir. No, sir. Just as you say, sir. A servant” (71). Joshi makes him a peculiarly modern man “at once everyman and nobody” (Barrett 5).

Like Greene, Joshi also condemns and even ridicules “mass-men”, those who are with the crowd. Like Greene, Joshi also points out that one has to maintain one’s individuality and subjectivity at all costs. Ratan, at the end, realizes his failures and tries to become a unique individual. In Joshi’s The Foreigner Sindi towards the end of the novel realizes that he cannot lead an “alien” life and become an individual
asserting his worth and abilities. Similarly, Billy in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas refuses to accept the values of the modern civilized society and embraces the values of the aboriginals. In The City and the River the Boatmen are not subject to the powerful Grand Master and they freely choose their allegiance to God.

Yet another mode of accommodation sought out by the characters of both Greene and Joshi during their long quest for meaning is a belief that they may be protected by certain Welfare Associations. In Greene’s Our Man in Havana, Peter considers UNESCO as sacred, and devotes his whole life to its cause, even at the cost of his love for his wife. In other words, he is loyal to those who pay him, and indifferent to those who love him. Beatrice, his wife, therefore, falls in love with Wormold who is more humanistic than Peter.

Greene seems to suggest that social togetherness and expression of loyalty to a man-made social-organization may not always help people. His view is that man should first and foremost extend his love to the members of his family and others around him. Greene’s obvious preference seems to be *agape* which, in the words of Tillich, is ‘the will to self-surrender for the sake of other beings” (Morality 12). Greene’s attitude to organized religion is not much different from that towards other social organizations. In Greene, religion has come to mean the Catholic Church and its paraphernalia. According to Greene, the Church and its dogmas deprive man of his essential humanity and his innate ability to love his fellow beings. In fact, Greene’s conversion to Catholicism was more formal than profound. That is why, in his works there is an air of casualness in his reference to and reflections on religion. The image of Father Talbot who failed to help Greene during the terrible movements of his
spiritual quest recurs in his works revealing his usual impatience with the Catholic Church. Greene’s Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The End of the Affair, The Living Room and The Potting Shed, reflect his essential distrust of the conventional religion. Greene also denounces conventional piety and the formal aspects of religion, because they tend to reject the essentials, namely, love for God and love for a fallible and depraved humanity. Faith, to Greene, is unconditional. It offers considerable freedom to man, springs spontaneously from the human heart and comes out “shapelessly without dogma . . .” (Lawless 14). But Catholicism as such, does not admit any loopholes. Speaking about the fate of Scobie in The Heart of the Matter, Wilshere says, “within the frame work of theology he is damned” (Essays 132). The Catholic critics apply this yardstick to nearly all the Catholic characters of Greene who act against the will of the Church and commit “the unpardonable sin of despair” (132).

Some of the characters of Joshi also hold on to one or another social organization and conventional religion during their quest. In his novel The Foreigner students who come to America to pursue their higher studies in various academic institutions form an organization. Its main aim is to receive the new students and make them get acclimatized to the American environment and to have social togetherness. It is called International Students’ Association. But, it turns to be an organization showing mere formality and racial prejudices:

It was intended to bring foreigners in contact with Americans, but all it ever achieved was animosity; everybody ended up hating the Americans all the more. I don’t know why it happened. It was not that
the Americans showed off or misbehaved or anything. As a matter of fact they all were very courteous. Yet, something about it – a feeling that it was a bit of a charity or something – rubbed people the wrong way. *(The Foreigner 21)*

Sindi, the protagonist of the novel, often goes to this Association for a drink. But whenever he goes there, he gets the feeling that it is “somebody’s house” (21). He feels lonely as one sitting in his “own tomb” (22). No girl comes forward to dance with him and even if one comes he cannot have her sexually. This segregation is due to the fact that he is a non-American or a non-White. Like Greene, Joshi also suggests that no Organization or Association can help man if it is without human love and humanitarianism.

Sindi has a very poor opinion about the Y.M.C.A in New York. When he first walks around the city he thinks that America is a splendid country. But his opinion changes when he finds some old men on their verge of death in the Y.M.C.A. He says that “they spent their evenings, waiting for death”. *(The Foreigner 17)*. All of them are lonely figures having nobody to fall back upon. “They always clung to whoever offered them a hand . . .” (17). When Sindi crosses the Y.M.C.A one of the old men shouts at him: “How’s your asthma, son?” (17). The neglected old man’s question is suggestive of his love and concern for others and his pitiable condition in a welfare organization.

Joshi’s attitude towards conventional and organized religion is also similar to that of Greene. Hinduism which his characters follow does not offer any solace to his lost lonely questers. Sindi does not have any faith in God. He tells June “My mother
was English and my father, I am told, a sceptic. That doesn’t seem like a good
beginning for a Hindu, does it?” (31). June was a born Catholic and “a great
churchgoer” (31) till she was fifteen. Then, one day something happened. She found
that everybody around her in the Church was “playacting” (31). The priest read his
sermons just like her uncle who used to read the markets aloud from the newspaper
every evening. Billy also does not find any meaning in temple-worship. In
Bhubaneshwar, he is not attracted by the deity there, but by the landscape around. Som
Bhaskar cannot relate himself to Gargi’s advice and her shrine on the mountain. As
Lokesh Kumar comments: “The man-high blue flame in the circular chamber of the
temple gives him no satisfaction rather it arouses void in him which he earlier has felt
in the cave of Ajanta” (106). In Joshi’s novel The City and the River also there are no
temple-worshippers. Like the Christian Church, the Hindu temple is also an organized
institution which believes in a number of rituals, offerings and customs. Even without
eating anything in the morning the Hindus “go to the local temple and make offerings
of flowers and food to the local god. Some will wash the idol and decorate it with red
and yellow powder” (Truman Mankind’s Search 95). None of the protagonists of Joshi
is interested in idol-worship. With the singular exception of Sindi, all the other
protagonists of Joshi believe in the highest form of the Hindu religion which enshrines
the teachings of the Vedas and the preachings of the Bhagavad Gita. This highest form
does include human values like love, compassion, brotherhood and proper human
relationships.

Some of the characters of Greene and Joshi, during their quest for meaning put
their faith in money and wealth with the hope that it can save them from their
existential crisis. In other words, they become Capitalists, business magnates and industrialists and amass huge wealth. Greene’s Krogh in England Made Me is a case in point. He opts for the sordid boon of materialism and he gives up every other blessing in his life in the realization of his goal. His monstrous success is accompanied by a gradual dehumanization. He becomes a victim of his own success and stands completely isolated: “E. K. on the ash-tray; E. K. on the carpet; E. K. flashing above the fountain which he watched, above the gateway; he was surrounded by himself” (49). He knows no human love and warmth of affection and he becomes so narrow-minded that he never laughs or cracks jokes. “Under the baneful drives of materialism he throws all human decency to the winds . . .” (S. K. Sharma 63). He remains as a lonely and an unhappy man.

Another character of this nature is Greene’s Dr. Fisher. He is very rich from the invention of Dentophil Bouquet, a toothpaste, which he marketed years ago. He is a multi-millionaire who lives in a great white mansion by the lakeside at Versoix, outside Geneva. He abandons his wife because he thinks that she is in love with Stainer. The shock that his wife has an independent existence apart from his own never leaves him. He has also no love for his only daughter, Anna-Luise, who has married an old man whom she loves very much. She is killed in a skiing accident. Fisher hates her husband, Jones, because he is thirty years older than her, unattractive and beneath her in social status. Fisher is totally dehumanized and being psychologically affected, he takes revenge on his friends. They are very rich people, but for Fisher’s costly presents they wait at his door. Fisher’s only pastime is making fun of the “greed of the rich”. He conducts experiments on their “bottomless greed”.
The endless greed of his friends is depicted with much elaboration in the final party which is called “The Bomb Party”. It is a game in which whoever that takes a gift will lose his life. Like Krogh, Dr. Fisher has also thrown to the winds all human values. He is full of hate and he dies because of hate.

Yet another victim of modern materialism is the head clerk in Greene’s short story, “A Drive in the Country”. Engaged in a mad pursuit of wealth, he gets himself thoroughly dehumanized in the process: “His home was like his office, run on the same lines, its safety preserved with the same meticulous care, so that he could present a faithful Steward’s account to the Managing Director” (Greene, Twenty-One 52). After taking a hearty meal he says: “I’ve improved the property . . . I’ve wired this room for power, . . . this radiator, the final stroke of satisfaction, the garden” (27). His daughter who entertains nothing but pure contempt for him runs away from her loveless home with the jobless Fred, only to return shortly, when the latter commits suicide in self-hatred. Yusef and Tallit in Greene’s The Heart of the Matter are awfully busy in increasing their wealth by all possible means, fair or foul. They are so lost in enriching themselves that they become thoroughly dehumanized. They become the cause for all the sufferings and the death of Major Scobie.

Mr. Khemka who figures in Joshi’s The Foreigner “is a modern maharaja” (134) and “a good-looking old fox” (134). He accumulates a lot of money by cheating the Income Tax Department and by exploiting the poor labourers. He can bribe the officers, twist any law and make as much money as possible. He says: “There are laws and laws and laws. But what is important is contacts. And that is what I have got. I have got contacts. Name anything under the sun and I’ll get it done” (135). He makes
electric kettles and he has three houses in New Delhi and a villa in Mussoorie. He earns thirty thousand per day, while the daily wage-earner in his factory gets only three rupees a day. Three is a chasm of misunderstanding between him and his employees who have “mortal dread” (13) for him. Like Greene’s Krogh, Mr. Khemka keeps everybody under “servility” (13) and his aim in life is to build an “empire” (12). Like Dr. Fischer of Greene, Mr. Khemka also throws regular parties to his friends who “drank and then they had gorgeous dinners” (13). Mr. Khemka talks to them “so sweetly, so disarmingly” (13). Like Greene’s Krogh and Dr. Fisher, Joshi’s capitalists are also heartless and malicious, people devoid of human love and proper human relationships.

Joshi’s The Apprentice “elaborates on the theme of corruption of the self in a society which is itself corrupt” (Indira Bhatt 44). Ratan in this novel gets a job as a temporary clerk in an office dealing with the purchase of war materials. Being a youth living in Post-Independent India which opens various avenues to heap up wealth, he learns all the techniques needed to go ahead as a “careerist”. He is ready to do anything to obtain promotions. He learns the values of obedience, servility, flattery and cunningness to come up in life. He becomes “a man of ambition”. “The more money I accumulated, the more I was determined to ‘enjoy’ life” (The Apprentice 85). He takes bribes, drinks and womanizes. In short, he enters into the “bourgeois filth” which his father used to dislike. He takes an enormous bribe while making war purchases which ultimately leads to the death of his only best friend, the Brigadier who once saved his life. Like Greene, Joshi while pointing out the lack of human love on the part of the capitalists, finds an occasion to condemn the bourgeois filthy society
which “squeezes out the essence of goodness and innocence from the poor people and takes undue advantages of their simpleness and thus making them corrupt and mean . . .” (Indira Bhatt 50).

Joshi’s hatred for the “phony society” is seen in his novel The Strange Case of Billy Biswas. He expresses his contempt for money and wealth through Billy who says:

I sometimes wonder whether civilization is anything more than the making and spending of money. What else does civilized man do? And if there are those who are not busy earning and spending – the so-called thinkers and philosophers and men like that – they are merely hired to find solution, throw light, as they say, on complications caused by this making and spending of money. (96-97)

Billy loves and admires Tuula who treats “money for what it was: a whole lot of paper” (177) and hates the world that hangs “on this peg of money” (97). In fact, Billy belongs to an upper-class well-to-do family, the members of which are living “in great style” (49). “They had old crystal chandeliers in the drawing-room, a thing rather uncommon in private homes . . . they were in some way connected with the rajahs of Burdwan” (49). Joshi’s belief is “bordering almost on our Hindu beliefs” (176). He believes:

. . . to survive man needs a minimum of goods which must either be given to him by society or he must receive the exchange to procure them. This minimum, however, is very, very low, much lower than people imagine, and, except in times of great calamity, like war or
famine, easily available. Once the society or your profession ensures this minimum, you should devote all your energies to the full exploitation of your gifts . . . (176)

Som Bhaskar in *The Last Labyrinth* is a millionaire even at the early age of twenty five. Still he is not satisfied and the constant cry of his heart is “I want” (11). He had been “to the world’s finest universities . . . a quarter million had been spent on my [his] education” (11). He “knew that money was dirt, a whore. So were houses, cars, carpets . . .” (11). Yet soon Som “goofed it all up” (40). This is because of his undying huger for more and more wealth, money, drinks and women. Nowhere in the novel one finds him as a humanitarian spending money for a common cause.

The “filthy lucre”, of money and the corrupting influence of power politics is Joshi’s focus of attention in many of his short stories, particularly in “The Gherao”, “Kanyakumari” and “A Trip for Mr. Lele”. In the last story, Mr. Lele, a travelling salesman, becomes the victim of “The economic determination of a mechanized and grossly materialistic society with its debasing effect on the individual psyche . . .” (Ghosh 16). Materialism estranges him from the essentials of life “such as experiencing the vitality of existence and meaningful human relations” (16). At the end, he gives up his job and comes back to his crippled daughter, finds the meaning of life and the need for human love. Both Greene and Joshi concur that economic determinism reduces man to functional roles leading them to their crisis of alienation which prevents them from having normal human relations with others. Joshi goes a step further than Greene and points out that corruption, bribes, hypocrisy and love of
money have made the Post-Independent Indian people highly materialistic and ambitious.

The lost lonely questers of Greene and Joshi also try to find the meaning of life and existence through love, lust, sex and married life. The attitude of the two writers towards these areas of human life shows distinct traces of the influences of the Western existential thinkers and writers, their own respective religious and moral convictions as well as personal experiences. Both depict human love as a tragic emotion fraught with frustration, anxiety, pain, despair and betrayal. However, it should be stressed in this context that ‘sex-as-sin’, a thematic motif, favourite with the Catholic critics of Greene, is not very prominent in the works of Joshi, since, neither the doctrine of the Original Sin, nor the question of ‘sin- and-absolution’ forms a part of the central core of Hinduism.

Many of the protagonists of Greene and Joshi become victims of possessive love which generally leads to incompatibility in married life. Rycker in Greene’s A Burnt-Out-Case treats his wife Marie just as an “object”, and keeps her under his thumb purely for his sexual gratification. He tells her that her “sexual obligations” are part of her “married duties” (41) as prescribed by the Church. That the possessive, self-absorbed Rycker has crushed Marie’s individual sensibility is borne out by certain intimate moments such as the following: “When he had lifted his body off her like a half-filled sack and dumped it at her side, and . . . he asked her roughly, ‘Aren’t you satisfied? A man can’t go on and on’” (67). It is significant that to Greene, such a one-sided sexuality is due to Rycker’s exaggerated sense of superiority.
In Greene’s *The Name of Action*, Oliver Chant’s love for Anne-Marie is one-sided and aggressive. He treats her as a mere “object” and likes to take her with him even unto death. But her attitude is different. At the most, she can just offer him her body: “You can have me if you want me” (272). Her love for him is nothing but lust at its centre. Oliver’s fault is that “... he could not understand the other’s spirit” (271). He fails to recognize that she too is an independent individual.

Dr. Fischer in Greene’s *Dr. Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party* is known for his egoistic nature, infernal pride and his incapacity to love. He is jealous of his wife because he thinks that she has an affair with Steiner. In his case also, there is one-sided love: “Sex was Doctor Fischer, and [she] had never enjoyed it” (39-40). He is not jealous of her friend but he is obsessed by the fear that “she was leaving him entering a region into which he couldn’t follow her” (40). He makes her life very miserable and his jealousy contaminates her in such a manner that she “felt herself guilty of something though of what she wasn’t sure. She apologized, she abased herself... and ever after it seemed to her that he made love with hatred” (40).

Greene’s Fowler in *The Quiet American* explains how possessiveness hurts every partner in married life. Reading a letter from his wife who has refused him a divorce, Fowler reflects: “The hurt is in the act of possession: we are too small in mind and body to possess another person without pride or to be possessed without humiliation” (152-52). In Greene’s novel *The Comedians* Martha makes love to Brown in gay abandon throwing all scruples to the winds. They make love under all odd and absurd circumstances. But their union is skin-deep. They are like “two piece of machinery which an engineer had just failed to fit” (87). Brown, the possessive
lover, asks her the absurd question: “Have you slept with Jones?” (286) and in exasperation, she replies: “yes, yes . . . I’ve slept with Jones” (286). And Brown who is incapable of love puts Jones in the hands of the guerrillas and sends him to death. In Greene’s The Honorary Consul, Dr. Plarr first develops possessive love for Clara who lives with Fortnum, an old man. Soon it grows into hatred and jealousy. He says: “I am jealous because he [Fortnum] loves her” (251).

Like Greene, Joshi also tries to show that man should be capable of enjoying utmost freedom in sexual life and recognize the individuality of the other partner. Joshi’s Sindi says: “Marriage was more often a lust for possession than anything else, people get married just as they bought new cars” (The Foreigner 66). He does not “believe in marriage” (105). He is afraid of possessing and being possessed. Yet with regard to his love for June he behaves like a possessive lover. He says: “I wanted to possess her as I had never wanted to possess anyone before. The thought of possessing her had hunted me ever since that night in the woods” (70). Once he begins to love her, he suffers from an obsessive love for her. He behaves exactly like Greene’s Dr. Plarr.

Som’s love for Leela Sabnis is possessive. “He seems to be unaware of the importance of human values in life and broods over his desire for possession” (Lokesh 91). He moves from one woman to another exercising free-love and lust. His possessive conduct all the time dominates his personality. His love for Anuradha, Aftab’s pretended wife, is also possessive in nature. He says: “All I wanted was her. I wanted her body and soul, every bit of her I wasn’t willing to share a hair of her body with anyone” (The Last 133). Som speaks like Sindi in The Foreigner who says, “I
even began to grow a little jealous when she [June] talked admiringly of some other man’ (75). Som lives “on the nourishment of the shades thrown by her [Anuradha’s] naked body under the chromatic shower” (The Last 121-22).

In their treatment of possessive love, both Greene and Joshi are almost similar. In both the novelists, possessive love leads to jealousy, hatred, despair and frustration. It takes away from people genuine love which is needed for a happy married life. In both, possessive love does not allow the partners to get married and lead a very happy life. It takes away from them human love and affection as it is one-sided.

Lust also plays havoc in the life of the characters who figure in Greene and Joshi. Greene’s Andrews sleeps with Lucy and gets himself soiled and becomes unworthy to be with the saintly woman Elizabeth. Lust for Pinkie is “a symbol of the past that weighs him down with its misery, hatred and loneliness” (Kulshrestha 61).
The Whisky Priest sleeps with the woman who bears him a child. Padre Jose though old and fatty marries a woman and becomes a joke for all. Even the children say “Jose, Jose. Come to bed, Jose” (The Power 30). In The End of the Affair, Bendrix and Sarah Miles, wife of Henry, wallow in filth and lust and face unhappiness, and uneasiness. In Greene’s It’s A Battle-Field Conrad Dover wants to save Milly, his sister-in-law, from her suffering, by lavishing on her love and attention, but ends up committing adultery with her. Finally, he feels tortured by guilt and betrayal. As said by Kulshreshtha “in Greene’s novel, love is often associated with pity. Conrad Drover wants to save Milly from suffering but the act of love is followed all too quickly by a sense of irrevocable injury that they have done to each other. Love has escaped, leaving behind the bitterness of guilt and hatred” (38). In The Comedians Brown and
Martha make love wherever they want – “... under the Columbus statue, near the empty pool at the Hotel, in a small room above a candy store, or in the official residence of Martha’s husband” (87).

In Joshi’s *The Foreigner* Sindi’s lust for Anna is transient and futile. She is, in fact, neither in love with Sindi or anybody else for that matter. She yearns for the vigour and vitality of her youth that is irrevocably lost. All her relationship, therefore, is essentially tinged with the feeling of estrangement or alienation. Similarly, Sindi’s intimacy with Kathy is based only on lust. The acute sense of ennui and boredom, enhanced by her separation from her husband, compels her to defy all social and moral norms and makes her sleep with Sindi. At first, Sindi has no genuine love for June. He only lusts after her. “When she lies beside him pretty and graceful like a cat, he looks at her. She doesn’t arouse him sexually. Yet he wants to possess her. He wants to take her in his arms and tell her he wants her” (79). And once again when she lies down in his arms, her body shivers with passion and desire rises within him like water behind a broken dam. He nearly cries “with the burden of lust” (79). Shyam M. Asnani comments that “In his moment of intense, sizzling passion, he [Sindi] entirely forgets his ideal of detachment” (“A Study of Arun Joshi’s Fiction” 274). Billy also seduces Rima Kaul and later he feels sorry for it and calls it “a terrible thing” (*The Strange Case* 187). Ratan in *The Apprentice* also takes a “sudden interest in women” (73). He says “I felt bold, unfettered. I started at them, the women. Openly. Willfully. To the point of rudeness. What is interesting is that not only did I stare at them but I felt that I had a right to stare. Right even to do more than stare if I got the chance” (74). Once he even “walked into a brothel hounded by a strange disturbance” (85). Som in *The Last
Labyrinth “fills his bourgeois idleness with gossip, parties, conferences and women while the muffled cry ‘I want, I want, I want’ haunts him” (Madhusudan Rao “The Hindu Existential Concern” 156). His desire for Anuradha does not transcend the carnal and the physical. He neglects his business, family and health. His lust for her is so great that to him she appears to be an “ocean” “one could never reach the bottom of her” (The Last 132).

In Greene and Joshi lust always leads to misery, frustration and disappointment. Since the lovers’ relationship is not based on sincere love, it stops with mere physical desire. It does not lead the partners anywhere; it only aggravates their present situation adding to their misery. As such, in both the writers, lust fails to be a proper mode of accommodation for the lonely and questing alienated characters.

In both Greene and Joshi married life does not offer much solace to the questers. Many a time, the husband and the wife are not true to each other. There is very often betrayal on the part of one and eventually disharmony and discord becomes inevitable in married life. Major Scobie commits adultery with Helen Rolt, a child widow, and this leads to a terrible conflict between him, his wife and God. This he does out of pity for Helen whom he meets in a wrecked ship. When they come together, they are bound by lust and sexual desire. Scobie has an obsession that he is born to take upon his shoulders the burdens of others. His wife, Louise, is money-minded and she is always worried about his promotion. There is no love lost between the two because “home to her was accumulation” of money (13). Finally, unable to find a way out, Scobie commits suicide.
Joshi’s Billy marries Meena who is extremely beautiful, but like Greene’s Louise, she is also a member of “the modern phoney society” (Lokesh 49). Billy thinks that the marriage is “ill-conceived, ill-fated” (133), and they are always “quarrelling” (76). “. . . the most remarkable thing about her was that she was never short of words” (37). The result is Billy is drawn to Rima Kaul, a beautiful Bombay girl. Rima has pity for Billy for all the sufferings he has at the hands of his wife. As in Greene’s The Heart of the Matter, it is “pity” that creates havoc in the life of the protagonist. The passage quoted below makes this very clear:

. . . I used frequently to go to Bombay to help my aunt. I saw quiet a lot of Rima on these trips. I had known her ever since she was a little girl. She lived close to my aunt’s place. We were alone quiet a lot. As the strain between Meena and me increased I noticed a peculiar turn in my relations with Rima. An element of self-pity started to colour whatever I said to her. (The Strange Case 187)

Billy “seduces her” (187) and then develops an affair with the tribal woman Bilasia.

Greene’s Dr. Fischer labours under the delusion that his wife has fallen in love with Steiner. He has nothing but pure contempt for her. In A Burnt-Out-Case, Rycker’s married life becomes hell-like. He is extremely lustful and he is never tired of having any number of sexual intercourses with his wife, Marie. She leaves him because “She felt ashamed of her fear and boredom and nausea” (137).

Unlike Greene who deals with the general human condition that prevails in the married life of many people, Joshi seriously questions the validity and authenticity of marriage in the modern society, as it is often morally disrupted and spiritually sterile.
Pressurized by the compulsions of the dehumanized society, Joshi’s characters get into married life expecting stability and permanence. But to their dismay, soon they are disappointed as they fail to understand the seriousness and the sacredness usually attached with an Indian’s married life. As his characters are Westernized their married life is without love, tenderness and selflessness. Babu Khemka has the values of traditional Hindu marriages ingrained in his very blood and so he cannot marry June, an American girl who has lost her chastity. As Indira Bhatt says: “It is obvious that the lure of the West makes him abnormal and ‘maya’ (illusion) in the form of June destroys him” (22). Sindi is “quite against marriage” (Dwivedi “The Novels of Arun Joshi” 99). Though he loves June, he cannot marry her because he is a strict follower of the philosophy of “detachment” preached by the Bhagavad Gita.

Some of the characters of Greene and Joshi marry for convenience with a view to overcome some hurdle. Pinkie marries Rose so that she may not bear witness against him. Padre Jose marries a woman so that the totalitarian government may not take any action against him. Pyle and Fowler make love to Phuong to ward off their ennui and boredom in an alien land where war is going on endlessly. Krogh is willing to marry Kate so that she will be prevented from leaking out his illegal business secrets. Joshi’s Billy marries hastily so that he may not have his hallucinations which make him feel very depressed. Billy marries Meena Chatterjee because “she was obviously, like Billy, of Bengali extraction” (The Strange Case 36-37).

It is interesting to note that both Greene and Joshi superimpose certain religious values on their married couples. When Pinkie dies, through a Catholic priest, Greene seems to accord a religious sanction to the humanist trait in him – he has the
capacity to love which is the sole criterion for ultimate salvation. In The Heart of the Matter when Major Scobie dies, Father Rank holds out hope for Scobie. He says that God’s mercy has saved him because he has a human heart (244). In The End of the Affair God intrudes into the life of Bendrix and Sarah Miles and saves Bendrix during the time of a bomb blast. Joshi’s Babu cannot marry June because of cultural, religious and national differences. Sindi sticks to his religious philosophy of “detachment”. Billy becomes almost a swami at the end. In Joshi’s last novel The City and the River the conflict is between allegiance to authority and allegiance to God.

If one analyses the novels of Greene very closely, one may find that his Western women are more bold and domineering. As they are economically independent they can stand on their own legs. As such, they can be called “existential feminists”. At the same time they, while facing their existential crisis they exhibit their essential humanity by shouldering the burdens of others. This is, according to Sartre, the most important characteristic trait of an existential character. In short, they are “feminists” as well as “existentialists”. Many of the women characters of Greene realize their responsibilities. Rose’s responsibility in love is the basis of her willingness to suffer damnation with Pinkie. “This forms the nucleus of the novel, its fundamental affirmation” (Gangeshwar Rai 39). Louise, Sarah, Mrs. Brown, Elizabeth etc can always assert their individuality amidst the terrible uncertainty of the world. Joshi’s women, on the other hand, with the singular exception of Leela Sabnis are more submissive as they are very particular in protecting and preserving the values of Indian culture and tradition. Even June and Tuula are ready to embrace Indian cultural and religious values which are very dear to the heart of Joshi.
What is more interesting to note in this context is that both Greene and Joshi have exalted human love to the level of spiritual or sacrificial love which has some sanctity about it. As one goes through the entire corpus of their works, one comes across here and there some lovers who have a touch of divinity in them and their love seems to attract the attention of even the most casual reader. But the pity of it is that so far no critic of either Greene or Joshi has fully focused his or her attention on this aspect.

The first instance of this kind of love one comes across in the case of Andrews and Elizabeth in Greene’s *The Man Within*. Andrews who is essentially lustful comes into contact with Elizabeth, “a saint” (57) who gives him all that he has missed so far – “peace, security, women, idle talk – and the nightside” (41) in reciprocation to sheer animal lust on his part. Scorching all his innate bias towards cowardice, she inspires him and sends him to Lewes in order to bear witness against the smugglers. But at Lewes, Andrews’ lower self goads him to yield himself to Lucy, a prostitute and he falls “back into the slime from which he had emerged” (135). He submits at one point: “I’ve wallowed . . . was a fool and imagined I was escaping, but now I have sunk so deep that surely I’ve reached the bottom” (135).

Subsequently, Andrews returns to Elizabeth “defeated by his body, dispirited, hopeless” (144). Meanwhile, tortured by the smugglers, Elizabeth kills herself with the knife Andrews had left behind for her protection. When the smugglers arrive on the scene, Andrews again leaves her in the lurch and runs away instead of rushing to her help. The death of Elizabeth triggers off in him profound feelings of guilt,
frustration, and despair which in Greene are always associated with the emotion of love. Greene superimposes a certain religious value on his lovers. In Man Within he shows that Elizabeth’s love has redemptive power. R.W.B. Lewis points out: “The energy that does redeem Francis Andrews is the love of Elizabeth, which combines with the stimulus of danger to give him a glimpse of the ultimate sources of existence” (230). When Elizabeth dies, Andrews “felt happy and at peace . . . his father was slain and yet a self remained, a self which knew neither lust, blasphemy…” (The Man Within 182). After her death, Andrews even learns to pray to God whom he once shunned and called “that stuff” (37). He is now prepared to face any hardship and do any sacrifice for humanity. So when the officers come, with the intention of saving the life of the smugglers, he tells them boldly: “I killed her” (182). To Carlyon, the head of the smugglers, who is mainly responsible for all his existential problems, he says: “You are safe now Carlyon” (182). Evidently, Elizabeth has mellowed and sweetened Andrews’ character. The beatitude of Elizabeth has thus made Andrews both a religious person of a forgiving-type and a humanist.

Another instance of this supreme kind of sacrificial love is found in Greene’s The End of the Affair. In this novel, Sarah Miles “the adulterous wife of a passionless Civil Servant” (Hoskins 176), Henry, is in love with a writer called Bendrix. At first, the lovers have no belief in God: “We had agreed so happily to eliminate God from our World” (The End 56). But during an air-raid, Bendrix is knocked down and Sarah, who has no belief in God hitherto, kneels down in despair and prays to God: “Le him be alive, and I will believe. Give him a chance. Let him have his happiness. Do this and I’ll believe. But that wasn’t enough, it doesn’t hurt to believe. So I said, I love him
and I’ll do anything if you’ll make him alive. I said very slowly, I’ll give him up for ever only let him be alive with a chance . . .” (79) (emphasis added).

Bendrix comes out unhurt and he is miraculously saved. Very often, Sarah thinks of breaking her pact with God. But it has caught her like a disease and she, as far as possible, avoids to meet him. When he comes to her house, in order to avoid him, she walks out in the rain. She is now pulled asunder between her love for Bendrix and her love for the merciful God who has saved Bendrix from death. Not finding a way out, she develops a death-wish and soon dies of pneumonia. After her death, many strange things happen. For instance, a small boy is cured of his stomach-ache and a rationalist preacher is cured of the strawberry marks on his cheek.

Sarah’s love for Bendrix is inexplicable. She has sacrificed her love for him in order to save him from death. It is a sacrifice of no ordinary nature and it reveals her abundant humanism. It is only her immense and intense love for him as a human being that she in a moment of extreme union made a bargain with God whom he and she earlier despised. God, out of his grace and kindness, has saved him and she stands by her vow because “another’s life hangs by her word” (Couto 83).

The death of Sarah purges the character of Bendrix. He is now no more the doubting Thomas, the angry and the obsessed lover. He has lost Sarah and gained God’s love. He now learns the value of humility and surrender. He has gone through the Purgatory and achieved the “peace that passeth all understanding”. The change that
comes upon him is like the one that comes upon Andrews in The Man Within. Both become humane because of the sacrificial death of the women they love.

Joshi has also similar lovers. One is June Blyth in The Foreigner. She is an American free-thinker. She is beautiful, affectionate and feminine. Sindi, the protagonist of the novel, meets her at a foreign students’ party. She often comes to his room and helps him whenever he suffers from asthma. Slowly their relation gets tightened and they start meeting each other almost everyday after her office hours. Their intimate relation continues for a long time and they indulge themselves in sexual transactions. However, fearing that she will possess him completely, Sindi who believes in “detachment”, a Hindu religious concept, tries to withdraw himself from her. He wants to make love to her without any attachment as he has done earlier with other women. “Pleasure with involvement and love without possession are the values that condition the attitudes and overall vision of Sindi” (Asnani “A Study of Arun Joshi’s Fiction” 63). Sindi’s cold “detachment” makes June move to Babu Rao Khemka who loves her very intensely and deeply. Babu has no individuality of his own. Being an Indian, he thinks that his father will be angry with him if he marries an American. June is disappointed seeing the changed attitude of Babu. When Babu fails in his studies, the university asks him to quit. He also begins to suspect June’s fidelity. When he finds that in her desperation she has slept with Sindi, he ends his life in an act of cowardice by driving his car very fast. Babu’s death shakes both June and Sindi. Babu represents what R.S. Pathak calls: “Typical Indian fantasies and illusions about a glamorized foreign dreamland” (“Human Predicament” 113). Sindi’s so-called “detachment” immediately vanishes and he
feels utterly miserable. He moves over to New York where he receives a horrifying letter from June which reveals that she is carrying Babu’s child in her womb. He immediately rushes to Boston, but it is too late. When he reaches there, he comes to know that June had breathed her last during an attempted abortion. Sindi screams in utter despair: “I sat in the chair with the hands on my knees and cried. But it was no good. There was no relief” (The Foreigner 190). He has begun to see “the fallacy” in his philosophy of “detachment” (192).

Joshi, repeatedly points out June’s readiness to extend herself for human good. She is a light-hearted and friendly American who mollifies Sindi and assuages his tormenting feelings of isolation and alienation. She gets rid of his psychosomatic disease, asthma, and his devastating fear of loneliness. Joshi describes June’s concern and care for the health of Sindi in the following words:

She walked straight into my bedroom and giggled when she saw me tucked up in bed. I smelled of sweat and medicines and I felt awkward when she put her hand on my forehead and sat down on the bed. She tweaked my nose and said, ‘How is the little brown Indian today?’

. . . She brushed my hair back from my forehead and told me I would be well soon. She didn’t know what she was talking about but it was nice of her to say so. She had brought some flowers for me which she wanted to put near the bed. (58)

Abdul Saleem comments that Sindi’s “reminiscences of June’s spontaneity, her soothing and caring presence and her uninhibited submergence in love and friendship, in spite of her Americanness make him re-evaluate and re-examine his stance as a man”
(61). Absolute detachment cannot emanate a sense of authority in human relationship and make it enduring without active participation and involvement in all human relationships. Like Greene, Joshi also recognizes a divine dimension in some women who are ready to love more and suffer more. June comes very close to Sarah Miles who exhibits selfless participatory involvement in the life of the man whom she loves.

Joshi’s *The Last Labyrinth* presents Anuradha who behaves exactly like Greene’s Sarah Miles. Som encounters Anuradha at first in a Delhi hotel at a reception organized by Aftab Rai with whom she is living without any formal marriage. He is irresistibly drawn towards her. Anuradha’s beauty is alluring and bewitching. She causes a spell on Som when he meets her in the hotel. “She was not self-conscious about her body of whose grace and sensuousness she seemed unaware” (41).

Anuradha exercises such an overpowering and fascinating influence over Som that he neglects his business, his wife and even his health in his attempt to win her to his side. He makes frequent trips to Benaras to acquire her for himself. Som is pretty conscious that he is invading the world of Aftab and Anuradha with the intention of grabbing Aftab’s plastic manufacturing company by buying its shares and his pretended wife Anuradha. Som is fascinated to Anuradha by her “features of women one saw in Moghul miniatures” (19). “. . . she looked like a medieval courtesan around whom wars might have been fought” (133). Som makes frequent visits to Benaras and to Aftab’s “Haveli” and feels that an irresistible pull is working over him. He is charmed by her attractive personality and vitality.

Like Greene’s Sarah Miles, Anuradha is also, at first, a free-thinker and a godless person. Som makes a trip to various countries with his wife Geeta in order to
forget her. But he fails in his attempt. Wherever he goes, he cannot but dream of Anuradha and her feminine graces. While sleeping in a hotel room in Tokyo with his wife he thinks of her in her erotic pose. “I could see it all: the room with ventilators of stained glass, the peacock on the carpet, the dark red floor. And Anuradha on the bed naked, gasping, her dark triangle almost touching my cheek” (114-15). From Bombay he rushes to Gargi, the Sadhvi who can unravel mysteries. To console him, Gargi writes on her pad: “God will send someone to help you . . . Someone who has known suffering” (118). Gargi does not give any reply to his query: “But what if there is no God” (118). So he returns home thinking all the way of the Kierkegaardian philosophy: “Prayer does not change God . . . but it changes him who prays” (118). He concludes: “may be, I ought to start attending temples every evening” (118). He again meets Gargi and she writes on a pad, “Go with her [Anuradha] . . . Don’t quarrel. She is your shakti” [Power, Wife] (121). Som does not understand what Gargi means by that, but he knows that Anuradha is indispensable to him. He again visits her frequently for sexual enjoyment about which he says, “We possessed each other with singular ferocity, neither willing to loosen the clasp . . .” (121-22). He takes her to a charming valley in the snow-covered mountains because “There . . . no one would know her and she would think of none and there would be no one to distract her from her loving of me” (124-25). But even in that situation, Anuradha is not able to forget her God. One evening when he is in the drunken state, she tells him: “There is a God up there . . . In those mountains . . . God will cure you” (126). She tries to help him to come to terms with life and to find out its meaning through love and divine faith.
Like Greene’s Bendrix, Som also cannot tolerate the presence of God between him and Anuradha. He is angry “at her dragging God into that room which until that moment had been the stage for satisfying wildest fantasies” (127). When he makes love to her, he feels, “It was like making love to a corpse” (127). Anuradha behaves exactly like Greene’s Sarah Miles. Once while Sarah is praying in a Church, Bendrix enters it and puts his hand on her thigh and his mouth on her breast. But she does not respond and she remains like a wooden block. Som cannot digest what Anuradha tells him about Krishna because he lacks faith. He is interested neither in Darwin nor in Krishna because he is consumed by his desire for Anuradha. He wants to eliminate Krishna and the city of Benaras, the “city of perversions” (The Last 136) as they have come between him and Anuradha.

Som suffers from a sudden and severe heart attack which leads him to the verge of death. When Anuradha does not come to see him, in anger, he orders his manager to purchase all the shares of Aftab’s company. He goes to the mountains to meet her and grab from her the shares which she has offered to Krishna as a gift. When he comes to the shrine, he learns that Anuradha was at his sick-bed when he had the heart attack. From there she went straight to Gargi and begged her to perform a miracle and save Som. Anuradha has told Gargi that she could not live without Som and she was not going home until Gargi did something to save him. Dr. Kashyap who attends on Som asks Gargi:

I am a medical doctor. I do not believe in things in which Anuradha believes. But I know for a fact that Som had no chance whatsoever and I want to know: did you save him? Anuradha says you did. And in
return for what you did, she says, you made her promise that she would
give up Som. For ever. That to her, Som would be dead, either way. Is
this true? Please tell me. (206)

Anuradha has saved the life of Som exactly in the same way as Sarah Miles
has saved the life of Bendrix. Both bargain with God and save the life of their lovers.
Anuradha also gives up Som after his cure and disappears from the scene. Aftab
informs Som that she has not returned from the temple where she has gone the
previous night for Janmashtami. Depressed, frustrated and desolated, Som makes a
fervent appeal to Anuradha: “Anuradha, listen. Listen to me wherever you are . . .
Aruradha, if there is a God and if you have met Him and if He is willing to listen, then
Anuradha, my soul, tell him, tell this God, to have mercy upon me. Tell Him I am
weary” (223).

The triangular relationship between Bendrix, Sarah and God in Greene’s The
End of the Affair gets itself reflected in the relationship between Som, Anuradha and
God in Joshi’s The Last Labyrinth. Both the novelists seem to suggest that faith is the
alternative to sin and that the sinners are not far away from God. In elevating carnal
love to the stature of spiritual love through the intrusion of a Third Man [God] Greene
gets a chance to develop one of his major motifs called “the sinner-saint paradox”.
Joshi has such a motif in his mind, but he is not able to develop it any further as his
literary output is not much. Like Greene, Joshi is also “primarily concerned with
religious issues” (R.K. Dhawan “The Fictional” 20) and he too believes that ordinary
corrupt human love can lead one to faith and to spiritual experience.
Greene’s Query in his *A Burnt-Out-Case* and Joshi’s Billy Biswas in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* are in search of the primitive childhood-world of innocence which they hope will give them an anchorage in life. In fact, their expectation is that of their respective creators. Both Greene and Joshi have profound sympathy and concern for the dying humanity which is slowly losing all its former social, moral and religious values. Greene expresses his concern emphatically and forcefully in his *Journey Without Maps*:

Today our world seems peculiarly susceptible to brutality. There is a touch of nostalgia in the pleasure we take in gangster novels, in characters who have so agreeably simplified their emotions that they have begun living again at a level below the cerebral. We, like Wordsworth, are living after a war and a revolution, and these half-castes fighting with bombs, between the cliffs of skyscrapers seem more likely than we to be aware of Proteus rising from the sea. It is not, of course, that one wishes to stay forever at that level, but when one sees to what unhappiness, to what peril of extinction centuries of cerebration have bought us, one sometimes has a curiosity to discover if one can from what we have come, to recall at which point we went astray. (10)

In the same work Greene says that we must all return to the past, to “simplicity, . . . friendliness . . . and start again . . .” (192). According to him in the past “the sense of taste was finer, the sense of pleasure keener, the sense of terror deeper and purer” (224-25). Greene calls the present civilized world a “chromium
world” in which heartless men live and accumulate wealth. Greene’s expectation is that man must go “back to Africa” (Human Factor 122). Greene has a special fascination for the primitive life of Mexico, Congo and Liberia where one could find “witch doctors” and “a rain queen” (122). Africa is Greene’s spiritual home, the heart of darkness, symbolically, a state of innocence, childhood, laughter and preternatural powers. In his novel A Burnt-Out-Case Greene shows that the unexplored continent of Africa is the spiritual home of mankind and makes a plea that we must all retrace our steps back to it to find there our racial childhood.

Joshi points out in his novels that Post-Independent India is withering and wilting “under the impact of unprecedented technological avalanche, dark forces of animosity, mutual distrust, violence and apathy . . .” (Shivani Vatsa and Rashmi Gaur 63). At present in India, materialistic aggrandisement and self-delusion rule the roost. The modern man here is without faith and enlightenment and he remains in a self-centered vacuum and he is unable to breathe the refreshing air of a liberating truth. Arun Joshi’s heroes who incessantly search for reality and meaning in the present day world face untold problems and sufferings. They never give up their effort to find an edifice on which they can stay and find rest and comfort. His heroes who suffer from spiritual uprootedness, cynicism, evils of materialism, loss of faith and human values under the dual forces of native ethos and Western training are ever in search of a socio-cultural situation that may be an answer for their crisis of alienation.

Joshi’s fiction is an expression of a distinctly Indian voice where one finds the richness of traditional Hindu values of simplicity, honesty, fairness, self-fulfilment, right action, a feeling of oneness with the elemental forces and others around. Joshi’s
leitmotif in his novels is quest. We see how he works out the hopeless longings that drive all his heroes. Like Greene, Joshi also believes that one can find one’s lost longings in the labyrinths of the jungles and hills of India which are the homes of the adhivasis [the tribals] who still preserve the traditional and cultural values of India. In his novel The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, Joshi makes a plea similar to the one made by Greene in his A Burnt-Out-Case. However, a close examination of these two novels reveals the truth that even the primitive world which the two novelists believe to be the spiritual home of man fails at the end because of the intrusion of the acquired values of the more powerful present day civilized world.

Querry, the protagonist of Greene’s novel comes to Congo, one of the most backward places in the world. He is totally crushed and defeated in life, reduced almost to the stature of a leper, bereft of all sensations and emotions. He is middle aged and he has lived and worked in almost all the civilized cities of Europe. Once, he was a universally recognized architect, a “raging success” (A Burnt-Out113) respected and honoured by both men and women. But now he has become a burnt-out case, a useless leper having “nothing. . . . nothing” (16). He is desireless, passionless, totally dispossessed, dispirited and he has come to the Congo valley in search of peace. He says: “Believe me I want peace as much as you do” (28).

Billy, the protagonist in Joshi’s novel, is a direct contrast to Greene’s Querry in age, maturity, profession, temperament and character. Billy hails “from the upper-crust of Indian society” (The Strange Case 9), and has “claims of aristocracy’ (12). Originally from Bengal, his grandfather had been the Prime Minister of the famous princely State in Orissa. His father practised law at Allahabad and Delhi, and had been
the Indian ambassador to a European country. While Billy is in America, his father is a judge in the Supreme Court of India. After gaining a Ph.D. in anthropology, he becomes a lecturer at Delhi University. He marries Meena Chatterjee, a rich and beautiful Bengali girl and begets a boy. Despite having such a background, he is ill at ease in the so-called civilized society. Hence he runs away to the saal forests of the Maikala Hills and goes in search of his real identity. Like Greene’s Querry, he is bereft of all his belongings, totally dispossessed and crushed in his spirit. But, unlike him, he is not at the “end” of his life; he is at the threshold of it, seeking peace in a remote hilly region which has summoned him.

In Greene, The Congo leper village is far away from the squalor and the seediness of the modern world. Though it is full of dirt, “hot air” (A Burnt-Out 10) mosquitoes and lepers, it can offer peace and “a cure for the sick” (30). There is a leproserie for the lepers, a seminary and a convent. Dr. Colin and the missionaries tirelessly work for the people’s physical and spiritual cure. The Maikala Hills is also a place which offers peace to the mind, where friends “can die for each other” (The Strange Case 120). The tribals “lived on roots and scooped the mud of dried wells to quench their thirst” (100). The women have “their hair mattered and clothes reduced to rags . . .” (101). People eat rope “as though it were not rope but jilebi [sweets]” (115). But they are always happy and they enjoy a lot of peace. Their only vocation seems to be dancing, drinking and making love (117). The landscape is extremely beautiful. The moon’s light is everywhere, “drenching the tree-tops, softening the stones, bathing the bush with mystery” (120). The water of the stream is “shining like so much mercury” (120). The trees are alive during the night and they beckon to Billy.
While watching the landscape, Billy believes that he is not the “son of a Supreme Court Judge, husband of Meena Biswas, and a father of a handsome child; ... but the first man on earth facing the earth’s first night” (120). All the objects of nature call him: “Come, come, come, come. Why do you want to go back?” (121). The place is more real than New York and New Delhi. It is so enchanting and enticing that Billy undergoes “a deep metamorphosis” (121) and he loses layer upon layer of his civilized life until he is left alone with his “primitive self” (121) which trembles in the moon light. Yet, the place is not without certain disadvantages. It is “ravaged by a terrible drought” (99); it has “dirt roads strewn with carcasses of dead cattle”(99); the children crawl about “naked, their bellies distended, eyes bleary with infections” (100-01); women roam about wearing “rags” and they are constantly exposed to the heat of the sun. But the primitives do not seem to worry about the backwardness of the place.

Like Dr. Colin in Greene’s novel, the primitives in Joshi also have a headman called Dhunia. The people in the hills do not have any organization to work under him. Like the tribals in Greene’s novel, the primitives in Joshi also do not worry about God and religion.

The primitives in Greene’s novel do not even think about the “discomforts” (A Burnt-Out 9) and the inconveniences. They work, laugh without any tension and make no complaints. The fathers in the seminary “laugh like children” (14). “The laughter rose higher. ... the game, like so many children’s game, was about to reach an end . . .” (14). The Priests “were not interested in the tensions and changing cabinets of Europe, they were barely interested in the riots of a few hundred miles away on the other side of the river . . .” (14).
In Billy’s village, nothing except death can stop the “dancing and drinking and . . . love-making of the people” (The Strange Case 118). The women sway from the waist and dance, the drummers jump into the air and give a wild yell and move upon the girls. Their bodies seem to have some “changing plasticity” (139). Like the primitives in Greene, they also do not bother about changes that take place in the civilized world. Nobody there is “interested in the prices of foodgrains or new seeds or roads or elections and stuff like that” (113). They have “no ambition, none at all . . .” (148). They have no value for money. Money means to them “a whole lot of paper” (177). The people there are “. . . the children of kings condemned to exile by those rapacious representatives of civilization . . .” (143). They need “a minimum of goods” (176). The girls are “more independent than our own girls” (148). It is surprising to note that Greene and Joshi, though separated by age, country and culture have conceived in their imagination almost the same type of tribals who are very much unlike the modern civilized people.

It should be noted that both in Greene and Joshi the primitive society totally changes the character and behaviour of Querry and Billy. In the Cango village, Querry gives up his self-esteem and achieves a sense of humility hitherto unknown to him. Father Thomas says: “you have a truly wonderful quality of humility” (A Burnt-Out 135). In the past, he had built many buildings for his own glory and pleasure (51), but now he makes everything for the pleasure of people and “for the glory of God” (51). Billy also learns the importance of humility. “He wore a loin-cloth and nothing else” (The Strange Case 102); eats ropes, and drinks country-made liquor. He becomes “simple enough” (176). Billy himself talks about his “metamorphosis” (121), “new
transformation” (139) and “final metamorphosis” (141). Tapan Kumar Ghosh says: “It was a strange process of regeneration . . .” (79).

Greene’s Query changes himself into a humanist. So far, he has been looking after himself. Now he says: “Human beings are my country” (A Burnt-Out 51). He feels that he is “responsible for every life in the land” (297). He goes in search of his negro boy, Deo Gratias, who has met with an accident. Query goes out into the bush to rescue him. This incident gives him the feeling that he is very much needed by the primitives. He also learns the need to love others from Dr. Colin who is the servant of the people and who wages a war against leprosy in the land. The superior also tells him: “when a man loves he must be Christian” (81).

At first, in his pride, Billy does not develop any contact with other human beings except Romi. He fails to establish any meaningful contact with his wife. Joshi says that he has “inhumanly sharp eyes” (The Strange Case 43). After undergoing the regenerative process, Billy begins to play a new role, that of a healer, a priest and a magician who cures dying children. He wards off tigers, and helps the primitive people with worldly problems and spiritual troubles. To the primitive folks, he appears “like rain on parched lands, like balm on a wound” (59-60). He also interferes with the collector on behalf of the primitives when they rise up in revolt against him (167).

Query, in order to become child-like, gives up sex and women. This is in accordance with what the Bible says – one can inherit the kingdom of heaven if only one becomes as innocent as a child. Joshi’s Billy, on the other hand, is married, has sex with Rima Kaul and he lives with Bilasia. Joshi presents a reality as most of the
adhivasis, as we find, have no sexual morality. They have no moral norms and ethical principles to follow. Romi, the collector, marvels at the intimacy between Billy and Bilasia and calls it “the intense beauty of . . . human relationship . . .” (The Strange Case 143). Bilasia is also called in the novel Devi Mata [a goddess] (158). In other words, she is shakti – wife of Lord Shiva – the Feminine Principle which is responsible for productivity and creativity. In elevating Bilasia to the level of shakti, Joshi follows the Sankhya system of Indian philosophy according to which evolution takes place when “Purus” and “Prakriti” come into contact. Bilasia is “Prakriti” and Billy is “Purus”. “Prakriti” is called “Shakti”. Bilasia is Billy’s “Shakti”. It is only after Billy’s union with Bilasia that he realizes his “self” and becomes whole. As Joy Abrahams says: “. . . the union of Billy and Bilasia can be taken as the human soul’s longing for reunion of ‘Jeevatma’ and ‘Parmatma’” (191) the union between man’s “self” with God [the Over Soul] from whom he has come.

Unlike Greene’s Query, Joshi’s Billy believes in sex and in course of time he is worshipped as a godman. Attainment of divinity through sexual experiences is not alien to Hindu philosophy and religion. It is found in many puranas [legends] and epics. As Siddhartha Sharma comments: “Like Indian sages, he [Billy] was seeking divinity in man, a god-head” (51). Greene and Joshi strive to achieve the same goal through different paths.

Both Greene and Joshi condemn the disciples of progress and civilization. Greene calls them “the Ryckers of the world” (A Burnt-Out 193). The civilized people kill Query and put an end to his paradise-like new world. The people involved in the murder are Rycker, an ex-Semianian but now married, Parkinson, a corrupt and
vulgar journalist who writes ridiculous reports about Query and Marie Rycker who
till the end behaves like a child towards Query and finally tells her husband a lie that
she is carrying Query’s child. Greene calls these people “fools, the interfering fools”
(197). In Joshi the civilized people involved in the killing of Billy are his wife, his
father, Situ, Rele, (the Superintendent of police), the constables, the *havildar* and even
Romi, Billy’s best friend. But the major role is played by a woman as in the case of
Query. It is Situ, Romi’s wife, who reveals the secret about Billy’s presence in the
hills to Mr. Biswas and Meena. Being highly influential people, they bring down the
whole government to the act of searching out Billy in the jungle. In this venture, Billy
is shot down by the *havildar*. It is interesting to note that Joshi calls these civilized
people “irresponsible fools and common criminals” (*The Strange Case* 231).

While dying, Query says “Absurd . . . that is absurd or else . . .” (*A Burnt-Out
196) which suggests that human life is nothing but an absurdity and all confusions in
man’s life are caused by the absurd, the pious humbugs and “the Ryckers of the
world”. While dying Billy looks at his murderers and says: “You bastards” (*The
Strange Case* 233) which implies that the civilized people are not in the real sense
civilized, but people born out of wed-lock. The irony is, that Query and Billy who
become primitives are killed by the most civilized people. The quest for meaning and
self-realization through the adoption of primitivism fails miserably both in Greene and
Joshi because of the infringement of the dehumanized civilized society on the
uncivilized and innocent primitive societies in remote areas.