Chapter II

THE STUDY OF THE SELECTED NOVELS OF ARUN JOSHI
Chapter II
THE STUDY OF SELECTED NOVELS OF ARUN JOSHI

2.1 Arun Joshi as a Novelist

The novels of Arun Joshi not only deal with human predicament and meaninglessness of life but also Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. The sense of meaninglessness is the most dominant feature of human condition in the contemporary epoch. Modern man can be discussed under five interrelated operational conditions viz. powerlessness, formlessness, isolation, self estrangement and meaninglessness.

All novels of Arun Joshi mention the difference between western philosophy and Indian philosophy i.e. inform the conflict between the sensible and the super-sensible seems to be permanent in the western philosophy, for the sensible is thought to be permanently opposed to the super-sensible, the flesh to the spirit. But the \textit{Bahgavad Gita} and the \textit{Upanishadic} mysticism is singularly free from this conflict; for it does not accept the division of existence into the sensible and the super-sensible which is referred to as Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

Arun Joshi's fiction conforms to Joseph Conrad's conception of the novel. Joshi recognizes a reality beyond the mere phenomenal world; a reality which the artist could imagine and capture by giving a consistent from to the shapeless facts of human existence. The source of most of Joshi's novels is actual experience. He feels a need to shape it, a need to discover the reality which lies hidden in the actuality of his own life.

Joshi's fictional world is a revelation of a world where man is confronted by the self and the question of his existence. He seeks a process of the understanding of reality which may lead him to the world of the core of the truth of man's life. He realizes man's uniqueness and loneliness in an indifferent and inscrutable universe i.e. near to Karmayoga. Arun Joshi has also been influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and \textit{The Bahgavad Gita}.

A large number of Arun Joshi's critics have attempted to analyse his novels in terms of western existentialist thoughts and concepts. We are going to consider existentialism not only outside and inside in human beings but also beyond both of them i.e. called Nishkama Karma. His novels have been labelled variously as dealing with the theme of alienation, anxiety and alienation and the predicament of modern man.

There is no denying the fact that Arun Joshi has been influenced by some of these western existentialist writers and that his fiction reveals an existential insight. But this does not
mean that Arun Joshi has blindly imitated these writers and produced an Indian version of existentialist fiction of the west. These critics have failed to notice the significant differences, cultural and attitudinal, between Joshi and the Western writers. It does not come to them that the existentialist writers belong to an ethos different from Joshi's and that their cultural predilections and perspectives might be different.

Ghosh writes that the influence of Camus and other existentialist writers is doubtlessly there in Joshi's works, as the shadows of a number of other western poets and novelist like Mathew Arnold, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Graham Greene can also be traced. The western writers provide Joshi with a stimulus, a body of suggestions as well as some modernistic techniques of narration which are assimilated into and form an integral part of his native consciousness (1996:12).¹

Among the India novelists in English, Arun Joshi has yet to receive adequate critical attention. He is mentioned as a novelist of promise. His thematic concerns remain invariably misunderstood. He is looked upon as a novelist of renunciation and detachment and his protagonists are treated as the Indian kinsmen existential outsiders. It is against the backdrop of such a critique that Joshi's fiction needs a second close look.

As a creative writer Arun Joshi is averse to the idea of baffling his reader with spiritual chess. At the same time his works show a sensitive awareness of our cultural heritage, and the value of compassion towards the hapless fellow beings. It is the failure of moral expectations that makes his protagonists shun a phoney and derivative civilization, nevertheless in their persistent quest for decent alternatives in a garish world. Arun Joshi's protagonists may well be called reflective insiders and near to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

Protagonists in Arun Joshi's novels are not only reflective insiders, but also Karmayogi and Nishkama Karmayogi. The yogi leads his world life as a Karmayogi and Jeevanmukta. The *Bahgavad Gita* says,

> "\( ^{\text{^^}\text{enq%[klq[k% LoLFk% leyks"Vk\'edkPpu%AA}} \)

> \( ^{\text{rqY;fiz;kfiz;ks /khjLrqY;fuUnkRelaLrqfr%AA(XIV: 24)} \)²

According to Tapasyananada it means, who is self poised alike in pleasure and in pain; who makes no difference between stone, iron, and gold; who is the same towards the loving and the hating; who is unmoved by praise and blame alike (2010:369).³ Thus the Nishkama
Karmayogi is forever away from pleasure and pain, praise and blame; because he is peaceful forever in the world.

2.2 Arun Joshi as an Indian Writer

Arun Joshi is a departure from the social realism of the early Indo-Anglican writers. He concentrates more on the interiority of experience than on depicting surface reality. He is concerned with the quest for meaning in life. He is like Kafka and Camus, Sartre and Saul Bellow, Elison and Malamud.

Arun Joshi, within a short span of his remarkable life and career, wrote five novels and a dozen short stories. He raises in his work a serious challenge to several scholars to penetrate the depths of his meaning. Writing against a background of post-independent India within a rapidly changing socio-political scenario when East meets West open to various alien cultural influences, Joshi dealt with the dilemma of the younger generation of Indians who found themselves caught between the traditional ethos of their older culture and the demands of a modern progressive way of life.

Dhawan introduces Joshi's fiction in the following terms: "His writings revels an unambiguous influence of Camus, Sartre and other existentialists. Joshi's fictional world is characterized by frustration, disintegration and disillusionment. Like Conrad, Melville, Graham Greene and Naipaul, Joshi is preoccupied with the themes of alienation of rootlessness of individuals and purposelessness of existence" (1986:10).

Fictions of Arun Joshi are the articulation of Indian voice and Indian sensibility that should be distinguished from British, European or American influences. Naik thinks the recent Indo-English fiction tries to "give expression to the Indian experiences of the modern predicament, while frankly modelling itself on western originals" and that "one of the leading recent novelists, Arun Joshi is preoccupied with different facets of the theme of alienation" (1996:10).

Prasad affirms, "Not being able to escape the infections in impact of Kafka, Albert Camus, Sartre and Bellow, Joshi dramatizes in his novels some thought provoking existentialist theme such as rootlessness and detachment (1996:10-11), quest for better alternatives in this ostentations, materialistic world in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, and guilt consciousness
and self realization in *The Apprentice. The Last Labyrinth* displays the truth that the search Som Bhaskar for transcendental reality ends in failure.

Kalinnikova has noticed that the creative work of Arun Joshi has developed along the courses of existentialism, observes "Experiencing the direct influence of the French writer (Albert Camus) Joshi has followed him and has created works about the aimless existence of a man who is indifferent to everything and alien to everybody works which are rather a brilliant illustration of the Indian variety of existentialism" (1985:179). But the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga are beyond existentialism.

The words of Kalinnikova are echoed by many other critics who have discovered similarities of concern between Arun Joshi and the existentialist writers of the West like Camus, Kafka and Sartre. They have compared *The Foreigner* and *The Apprentice* with Camus' *The Outsider* (1942) and *The Fall* (1957). Prasad has gone to the extent of saying that Joshi "is a novelist in the tradition of Kafka and Camus, Sartre and Saul Bellow, Elison and Malamud. His characters are in search of their lost self and Karma and Nishkama Karma in their own self i.e. means self is consisted in self, Karma is involved in Karma, Nishkama Karma is included into Nishkama Karma (1986:112)."

Arun Joshi's heroes experience estrangement from their society, culture, family and from their true selves, critics have hurried to interpret this alienation in the light of western existentialist concepts and equate it with the alienation that characters of Camus and Sartre suffer from indifferent socio-cultural contexts.

Arun Joshi’s unnoticed estrangement from nature and God and separation from tradition and community are surely, not for Joshi the same kind of intense experiences as a part of live human reality as they were for European writers. This was not withstanding Joshi's western education and exposure to European and American experiences. The alienation of European or the American is largely an imaginatively understood reality for an Indian who does not still live that kind of fragmented life. The western experience and reality is separated but Indian experience and reality is united into their own self.

Meursault's indifference is based on a conviction and an ultimate realization of the absurdity of existence that consists in the disproportion between man's intention and the reality he encounters, the confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world, Joshi seeks a wholeness of vision which is attainable not by giving way to heterogeneity
but by going into the cultural and spiritual problems of his own community. Arun Joshi has
mentioned in his novels that the karmic law seems to be central to The Bahgavad Gita. There is
no intervening agent between you and God. What you sow you reap. They stress ethical
discipline, suffering and sacrifice as the inevitable price for attaining perfection, wholeness of
being and self knowledge i.e. very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Arun Joshi's five novels and short stories incorporate Karmayoga and Nishkama
Karmayoga from The Bahgavad Gita and the Upanishad. He is mentioned the Upanishadic
hymn, "AAvLRk ek lnxe,k AA rel ek T, k"Érx,k AA eqÆreke fjrÉekxe,kAA" This means
Lead me from evil to good, from darkness to light, from death the deathlessness which is the
theme song of his short story "The Boy with the Flute" and may be called the theme song of his
fiction; highlights man's profound urge for transcendence (2000:23).

2.2.1 Outline of The Foreigner (1968)

Arun Joshi's first novel, The Foreigner (1968), explores the problems of Sindi Oberoi.
Sindi is always lonely and ill at ease in the world. He belongs to no country and to no people. He
regards himself as, "an uprooted young man living in later half of 20th century" (2010:130).
He goes to Boston where he meets June, an attractive American young woman. He has a short lived
but passionate love affair with her. He is trapped in his own loneliness. His alienation is of the
soul and not of geography.

The plot of The Foreigner has been unfolded from the viewpoint of the omniscient
protagonist narrator. Though Sindi Oberoi states very humbly, "I am not very good at
remembering events, but for some reason I always remember the beginning and end of an affair"
(1968: 33). He is a good narrator and succeeds in communicating the very minute details of his
life of both personal and business relationships. As Raizada points out, "The narrative follows
flash-ahead and flash-back technique".The narrative, as Dhawan writes, "keeps moving from the
recent past in Boston to the present in Delhi"(2003: 62).

The fictional plot of The Foreigner covers the locale of four continents - Africa, Europe,
America, and Asia. Sindi Oberoi is closely associated with all these geographical regions. The
novel opens like a thriller in depicting the mutilated dead body of Baburao Khemka, who is the
son of a leading industrialist of Delhi. The scene is located in Boston. But it soon shifts over to
New Delhi and then again to different continents in flash-back where the narrator had stayed in the course of his early life; education and profession.

Sindi Oberoi's life is a study in rootlessness. His mother was an English woman and father a Kenyan-Indian, so he is hardly Indian. Thus he is a child of mixed parentage. Both his parents who settled in Nairobi, died early in an air-crash near Cairo. Being orphaned, he was brought up by his uncle, and settled in Kenya. Though Sindi had not to suffer the sharpness of poverty, he felt starved of the parental love and on many occasions was compelled to think of the absurdity of his existence.

Sindi had lost his childhood because of the death of his parents. His being a product of a hybrid culture, and his education in Kenya, London, Boston and New York cut him off from his racial roots. So he becomes a victim of rootlessness. He is aware of the fact that he belongs to no culture and cannot confidently call himself either a Kenyan or an Indian. He kept on finding love with the English ladies and American girls.

_The Foreigner_ is the story of the narrator, Sindi Oberoi. He reaches Boston after a sojourn in England; while he is working for his doctoral degree in mechanical engineering, he meets Baburao Khemka, the only son of a Delhi tycoon Mr. Khemka. Baburao, a manic-depressive is Sindi Oberoi's friend. June Blyth seeks to salvage with a view to performing better in his course-work. Baburao gets betrothed to June Blyth; but ultimately he is frustrated both in the emotional and academic fields. He kills himself in a car accident and June Blyth dies while undergoing an operation for abortion. Sindi Oberoi comes to India and starts working at the industrial house of Baburao's father. When Mr. Khemka's tactics of tax evasion threaten to ruin his business, Sindi Oberoi decides to manage the firm after having been solicited by the employees.

Sindi Oberoi is tossed up in his life by indecision and rootlessness. The crisis of identity in the major characters of _The Foreigner_ has been explored at various levels such as the cross cultural, racial, national, international, individual, interpersonal and industrial and business relationships. There are various aspects of the plot, characterization and their interpretations.

Sindi Oberoi feels the sharp of the racial difference between the communities in the novel. He is always faced with the crisis of his identity and quest for a solution which he gets in the end at the suggestion given to him by a low-paid employee, Muthu, of the firm. He feels a kind of rootlessness because of the fact that his hybrid birth did not place him anywhere. Sindi's
life under his uncle in Kenya and his schooling there followed by his further studies in England and lastly in America made him all the more distanced from his roots, identity and a meaningful quest of life.

Sindi Oberoi's crisis of identity rests in his soul. It has nothing to do with geographical difference. He feels himself a foreigner in Kenya, London, Boston and New Delhi. Once he tells his uncle, "I was contemplating suicide since I was tired of living" (1968: 174-175). He informs his uncle that his life in Nairobi had virtually ended. He leaves for London with no plans in mind except that he has to study engineering. He works for sometime in a library, he discusses religion, God and mysticism with a catholic priest. Yet he is never satisfied.

"All love, whether of things, persons, or oneself was illusion and all pain sprang from this illusion. Love begot greed and attachment and it led to possession" (1968: 180). It is from Scotland that Sindi Oberoi goes to Boston to study engineering at the MIT. It is here that he comes in contact with June Blyth whom Baburao Khemka loves later on his arrival in Boston.

Sindi Oberoi never feels at home during his stay either in the U.K. or U.S. At Boston, the episode with June Blyth is also marked by her feeling of emptiness all the time. After Babu reaches Boston, June is closer to him because Sindi does not find himself cut out for marriage. June's separation from him makes him realize that she had become a part of him. The tragedy with Babu and later on with June Blyth is all due to Sindi's wrong notion of detachment. Babu drives himself to his death after learning that Sindi too had been June's lover. June died in the act of abortion of the reproduce that was Babu's.

Sindi accepts a job in Mr. Khemka's factory. He does not see eye to eye with him. Mr. Khemka has three houses in New Delhi and he earns thirty thousand per day, while the daily wage-earners in his factory get only three rupees per day. Thus, there is a wide difference of misunderstanding between him and his employees. Mr. Khemka has only one end of his life; to build an empire by opposing the company and tax laws which in the end puts him behind bars and factory under lock-out. So, Sindi has plans to leave it to get a new job either in Calcutta or Bombay. But at the intervention of Muthu, Sindi becomes aware of his meaningful existence. It is this low-paid employee who teaches him the positive meaning of life that "sometimes detachment lies in actually getting involved." (1968: 238). Kumar states, thus at last Sindi Oberoi is able to emerge out of the crisis of the identity and gets a new motivation on his being.
aware of the true meaning of life which he derives from the philosophy of The Bahgavad Gita (2003:71).^{16}

Mr. Khemka, Babu's father, is very strict. His son Babu has been brought up under his strict supervision. But Babu had experienced a lost childhood because there is no mention in the novel about his mother. Babu is sent to America to be an engineer and after coming back with a degree to India to manage his factories, but all this remains a dream.

Babu failed all his exams at the M.I.T. and was removed from it. He then applied in about two dozen engineering institutions for his admission. He was never serious with his studies and he compared the American system of education with the Indian. He wrote of exams to his sister Sheila. He was failing his examinations and in this, belying the hope of his father. He plans his marriage with June Blyth but postpones it fearing what his father might say. Meanwhile when he learns that June Blyth has also been in love with Sindi Oberoi, in his tense mood and rash driving, he puts an end to his life.

When June Blyth does not hope to get married to Sindi Oberoi, she turns to Babu, who physically seems to be carved out for her. She tries to find relief in the embraces of Sindi Oberoi. When Babu learns about June's relationship with Sindi, he rushes out and in a fit of anger drives himself to a suicidal accident. The death of Babu moves up both June and Sindi. June has kept her pregnancy by Babu a secret from Sindi for a time. But ultimately when she lets him knows about pregnancy, it is too late to do anything. She violently asks him to see her urgently at Boston. Sindi's visit to June is delayed by a week because of his unconcern, born of his sense of detachment. June dies while undergoing an operation to terminate her pregnancy.

The tragedy upsets Sindi. He realises and regrets his indecision and his negative content of detachment. "Now I had begun to see the fallacy in it. Detachment consists of right action and not escapes from it. God had set a heavy price to teach me just that" (1968: 193).^{17}

Sindi Oberoi is a Senior Executive Officer in Mr. Khemka's firm in India. He feels sick of Khemka's deceitful way of life and remains detached and unconcerned to their serious condition with the income tax people. Sindi Oberoi wants to go to Bombay in search of a fresh job. But his visit to Muthu, a poor assistant of Mr. Khemka's firm, makes him reverse his decision. Muthu pleads with him strongly to hold the reins of business for the sake of people employed in the concern. He ultimately believes that right meaning of detachment consisted in getting involved in the world. He involves himself with a positive detachment because; the fruit
of it was not his concern. The real concern of Sindi is from negative philosophy of detachment to its positive aspect. Sindi Oberoi learns that real detachment from men and matters comes when one performs one's duty sincerely without any desire for the result as laid down in *The Bahgavad Gita* i.e. connected with Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Thus Arun Joshi agrees that the philosophy of *The Bahgavad Gita* is involved in *The Foreigner*.

Sheila, Babu's sister, is very harsh with June and she calls her "a harlot (prostitute) and a witch", who laid traps for her brother. When Sheila insists that June had never been a virgin. Sindi points out to her that "codes of morality differ from country to country. Girls do certain things in America; women never do here (India)" (1968: 60). Mr. Khemka wanted to marry Babu to a fat Marwari girl in which dowry might bring him half a dozen new factories (1968: 59-60).

Sindi Oberoi may be confused in personal life, though not in the academic, yet he has been able to identify the root cause of Babu's tragedy in America. It is for his immaturity and innocence that Babu gets ready to give up his Indian roots where he may not be accepted with his American wife. Babu thinks America to be a wonderful country and says, "I would never go back to India if I had a choice" (1968:95).

There was a strange contradiction in Babu's character. He did not know his father and sister. He blows hot and cold about them and says that far from being afraid of his father, he had deep respect for him. He says about his sister that, "she is very broadminded and all" (1968: 120). June Blyth gets disillusioned with Babu for his strange behaviour in postponing the marriage and in not having the courage to bear that before him some other could have also loved June. Sindi, too, feels responsible for Babu's death. It is this detachment that cause all this.

Sindi Oberoi is a bundle of contradictions in being "cynic", "an eternal joker", "saint", "a sage", a honey brown Indian. He goes on knowing his anxiety, loneliness, emptiness, absurdity and misplaced detachment as a lost individual.

All this is the mode of sock opinions of existentialist philosophers and writers who have had their influences upon the authorial voice of Arun Joshi. *The Foreigner* is not only existentialist philosophy but also *The Bahgavad Gita*'s karmic philosophy i.e. Nishkama Karmayoga.

*The Foreigner* is written in the form of things past. Joshi takes us to Nairobi where Sindi, the central character and the narrator of the story, was born. Sindi studied in London. He worked
as a dishwasher, barman, and librarian. He also studied in Boston for six years and met June and Babu. He ultimately settled down in Delhi.

Sindi's life takes him to Kenya, London, Boston and New Delhi. He has his education in London where he meets Anna, Soho, and Kathy. He identifies the dead body of his friend Baburao Khemka who has been killed in a car accident on mass Turnpike. He goes to June and breaks the news of Babu's death.

When Sindi visits Babu's family, he finds that Sheila and Mr. Khemka have accepted Babu's death with a clam resignation. Sindi realizes that Babu was brought up amid all these material luxuries.

Contrasted with this is Sindi's visit to Muthu's family towards the end of the novel. Muthu lives in a one-room tenement with a dozen other people. This makes evident the population explosion and overcrowding in India amidst poverty and hunger and disease. Sindi is deeply touched by the dirt of the place and the miserable Muthu's lot. He had sympathized with the labourers and indicted Mr. Khemka for exploiting his workers. Sindi feels pained at man's exploitation of man and denial of rights to people in spite of declared democratic and socialistic polity.

Mr. Khemka had sent Babu to America for higher education in the hope that Babu would be an asset to the family's social status. But Babu is thrown out of college when he fails in his courses the second time. Babu's emotional involvement with June leads to his death. He belongs to an orthodox Hindu family. His moral inhibitions and orthodox background restrain him from marrying June. The father's fear and intellectual weakness of Babu drive June to despair. The Babu-June marriage does not come off when Babu realizes that June has been sleeping with Sindi and uses this as an excuse for driving himself to death.

Sindi had met June Blyth, a beautiful, sensual, affectionate, feminine American at a foreign student's party. He loves her intensely and has sex with her but avoids getting married to her. June turns to Babu when Sindi does not respond to her insistent pleas to marry her. He feels depressed and agonised when June refuses to meet him; Sindi cries at June's refusal. He visits the various places where he had been with June earlier.

Sindi drifts over the surface of earth because he feels himself to be a misfit in the ultra-modern society of Boston. But his foreign background makes him a misfit in the Indian society also. He is a humane person who sympathizes with Baburao, June and Sheila when they are in
trouble. When Babu fails in his exams, Sindi meets the Dean in order to save Babu from being thrown out of the college. Later, when June informs him that she is carrying Babu's child and seeks his help and advice, Sindi decides to marry June. He decides to give up his philosophy of detachment. He goes to Boston but only to learn that June has died in the course of an operation for abortion. June's death leads to his realization of the fallacy of detachment concerned to Karmayoga.

Sindi's involvement with Sheila and her father's business further reveals his humanness. Sheila asks Sindi to tell her about his relationship and death of her brother. He assures Sheila that Babu died in a car accident. Sindi owns up that he was responsible for Babu's death. His painful realization that he had "driven a man (Babu) to his death" (1968: 174). reveals his humanness.

When the dishonest business ethics of Mr. Khemka lands him in the jail and his firm is sealed by the income tax people, Sindi works in the interest of the employees. Muthu persuades Sindi to take charge of Khemka's business and save them from starvation. Sindi realizes that detachment means getting involved with the world with a talk with Muthu. He saves the various clerks from losing their livelihood. His secret love for Sheila is another ray of hope with which we put the novel down.

2.2.2 Introduction to The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971)

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas is a novel in which the normal and the abnormal, the ordinary and extraordinary, illusion and disillusion, resignation and desire rub shoulders. Billy Biswas returns to India after earning his Ph.D. in anthropology from U.S.A. He has everything going for him, happiness, travel, education, status, wealth, job and a loving wife.

This novel is like Conrad's Lord Jim. Romi (Romesh Sahai) is the narrator in this novel, who is a friend of the protagonist Billy (Bimal Biswas) whom he met as a student in New York. Romi had met Billy Biswas while hunting for accommodation in New York. Billy offers to share with him his apartment in Harlem, the black ghetto of America. Billy has chosen to live there because as he tells Romi, he finds it "the most human place" (1971: 9). Thus, Romi accepts Billy's offer and the sharing of the flat develops into an unusual friendship which lasts till the end.

Billy Biswas is a man of brilliant, intellect, profound sensibility and extraordinary obsessions. He belongs to a rich respectable family; his father being a judge of India's Supreme
Court. His father expects him to take up engineering as a career and Billy does go to America for a degree in engineering. However, he earns his Ph.D. in Anthropology because that is his first love. Billy is basically an anthropologist and studies deeply the tribal attitudes and customs. In fact, his whole life is organized, "around his interest in the primitive man" (1971: 14).

On Romi's first day in his room, Billy talks of Avocambo, a play running off Broadway. Billy has liked the play because, "one can quite imagine something like that happening to oneself" (1971: 11). the statement gives Romi a glimpse of restlessness of Billy's soul and in a way anticipates Billy's disappearance in the 'Saal' forests.

The Bhubaneshwar episode makes evident how at the impressionable age of fourteen, Billy had experienced the urge to live like a primitive man in a primitive world. It had seemed to him that the sculptures at Konark could give him a solution to his questions about the problems of his identity. "Who was I? Where had I come from? Where was I going?" (1971: 122). Billy has tried to answer the above question throughout the novel.

Billy's Swedish friend, Tuula Lindgren, who has come to the United States for advanced training in psychiatric social work, is "the second person who had any clue to what went on in the dark, inscrutable, unsmiling eyes of Bimal Biswas" (1971: 19). after his father's death, Romi returns to India and enters the Indian Administrative Services after passing the competitive examination. Billy also returns to Indian and starts teaching anthropology at Delhi University.

Billy’s marriage to Meena, a sophisticated and most beautiful girl of his own Bengali community is not a success. All of a sudden, on one of his anthropological excursions to a hilly region of Madya Pradesh; Billy mysteriously vanishes. His love for the primitive in life makes him leave his wife, his only child and his aged parents. Billy disappears in the Saal forests of the Maikala Hills. He forsakes meaningless existence in civilized world because he feels choked by the phoney atmosphere of the modern society. He rejects the artificiality, hollowness, and snobbery of the sophisticated people.

Billy finds his fulfilment and the essence of human existence in the primitive tribal life. He likes living with the foresters because they are not materialistic. "Nobody here is interested in the prices of food grains or new seeds or roads or elections and stuff like that" (1971:113). He likes the unrestrained lifestyle of the primitive people who go in for uninhibited drinking and dancing and open orgiastic love-making.
Billy explains his mysterious disappearance to Romi; and he chooses to respond to the tribal girl Bilasia's call. He is madly in love with Bilasia who he feels is, "the essence of that primitive force that had called me night after night; year after year" (1971:142). Her sensuality lures Billy. The sexual union with Bilasia is the climactic moment of the forces of darkness claiming Billy, "Her hair was loose. Just behind her left ear there was a red flower ..... come, come, come; she called, and Billy Biswas, son of a Supreme Court Justice, went. It was closer to madness, the terrible madness of a man who after great sin and much suffering finally finds himself in the presence of his God" (1971: 141).

Billy's union with Bilasia makes him discover, "that bit of himself that he has searched for all his life and without which his life is nothing more than the poor reflection of a million others" (1971: 142). The mysterious brightness of the Chandtola Peak comes after the idealized union of Billy and Bilasia in the tribal world. They believe that Billy is endowed with magical and super-natural powers. Dhunia claims that he has seen Billy send away a tiger who had been roaming the jungle for a week killing their cattle and bring back his grandson to life who had been dead for two hours. He believes that Billy's return signifies the end of their evils and miseries.

In *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, Arun Joshi moves from New Delhi to Satpura Hills in Madhya Pradesh. Billy's unconscious self drives him to give up the unchangeable respectability of his high middle class society and seek his roots in the company of a primitive tribe. The sophisticated Meena represents New Delhi's anglicized class immersed in the phoney materialism whereas the primitive Bilasia represents the Satpura bhils.

Billy hears the voice of his soul and renounces the materialistic society. The novel is divided into two cultures: civilized culture and primitive culture. These cultures are connected with Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. But primitive culture is more superior to civilized culture. Haunted by nature, the primitive man in Billy yearns to lead a simple life. Billy renounces a life of hypocrisy and deceit to take to a life of noble savageness. He gives up civilized human society and adapts himself to the primitive and even has a native mistress.

Ten years after his mysterious disappearance, Billy meets Romi in the jungle. Romi, now a District Collector, is on a tour of the Maikala Range and is startled at Billy's appearance. Billy is completely tribalized. He is in a tribal dress. He reveals to Romi that he had been drawn by an irresistible urge towards the tribal people. He had settled to a primitive existence.
Billy visits Romi again after a few days. Romi cures his wife Situ's agonizing chronic migraine with some herb. Romi promises not to open his whereabouts to anybody but his nagging wife forces him to tell her about Billy. Situ lets Billy's wife and father knows about Billy's being alive. Billy's father is a retired ambassador now, move the higher authorities to retrieve Billy. Mr. Rele, the Superintendent of Police, zealously carries out the search. During one of the raids on the tribal people, a constable is speared to his hidden lair and despite Romi's best efforts; Billy is killed by the hasty bullet of a policeman. Romi feels "as though we had killed one of the numerous man-gods of the primitive pantheon" (1971: 236).³²

The biggest irony lies in the title which marks out Billy Biswas as a "strange case" because of his quest for the truth. The basic emphasis is on spiritual awakening and reintegration with the self. All the protagonist’s affirmations in different novels are personal but the eternal quest for self-realization and spiritual fulfilment is distinctly one i.e. Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

In the novel, Arun Joshi portrays how a man of extraordinary sensibilities is destroyed by the process of individualization. Billy Biswas is driven to death by the mad, absurd world. He tries to set his soul right from the labyrinth. In the novel Arun Joshi seems to be mediating between two conflicting forces: the primitive world and modern world.

The first part of the novels gives us a short glimpse of the restlessness of Billy's soul in the midst of the upper class Indian society, which is lost in the superficialities of life. The restlessness is not only to some negative attitude or error of judgement but also to the loss of traditional values in the materialistic pursuits by people in general. Billy's choice of books, music, places reflects his deep interest for the primitive life. Throughout the first section, Arun Joshi gives a view of the rich inner recesses of Billy Biswas' world.

Tuula believes that the conflict is between the primitive world and the civilised world. But according to Arun Joshi, it is a recurring conflict of an essentially Hindu mind. On Billy's return to India, he is appointed lecturer in anthropology at Delhi University. He does not enjoy his role and finds it difficult to get used to the workings of his job and place. He marries a Bengali girl named Meena Chatterjee. At that time, he finds no better girl than Meena.

Romi once again observes Billy's fat interest in the supernatural element. Billy believes that the tribal world is in tune with its own norms and that it should not be judged by yardsticks of our own world. He is unhappily married. Meena is a product of the phoney society. She has no
idea of human suffering (1971: 183).\textsuperscript{33} She fails to communicate with Billy. Billy feels that he has been caught in a cobweb. He understands that he can overcome his alienation only through true, spiritual love i.e. connected to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

Gupta states, Billy seeks a world impure by hypocrisy and selfishness. He considers himself a misfit, misplaced and does not enjoy the role he has earned for himself by virtue of his qualifications. He finds happiness neither in family nor in teaching (2010: 152-153).\textsuperscript{34} He is dissatisfied with the modern civilised culture. He realises that all his efforts to integrate with society are futile; these are simply adding his restlessness. He listens to his inner self. He knows that Meena has failed to bring him out of the illusions. He tries to find his identity in Meena, but fails. He knows that the urge to live like a man in a primitive world has become stronger. He transcends the mind, and once he is beyond the mind, all his problems look as if they are somebody else's problems. He wants to detach himself from the illusory situation as he has experienced his freedom in suffering from mind.

Billy leaves the civilized society because he is conscious that staying in it will yield evil consequences. He responds to the call and becomes one of the primitive people to find not only his roots but also identity. The civilized world called him a rebel while tribals considered him as their friend as he cured Dhunia's niece Bilasia. He finds his fulfilment in the love of Bilasia "the essence of that primitive force that had called me; night after night, year after year" (1971: 140).\textsuperscript{35}

This is a state of consciousness where Billy's identity merges into the cosmic identity. Billy eats their kind of food, speaks their language, and wears their kind of dress. He experiences their joys and sorrows, living their beliefs and the tribal people soon worship him as their "Mahaprasada." Billy is becoming a tribal himself divine and some sort of a priest. Divine he himself becomes, he is accepted as the king of the tribals.

Bilasia is an integral part of nature and an embodiment of the primitive world and it is she who helped Billy to replace his restlessness with "Divine" tranquillity i.e. near to the Nishkama Karmayoga.

Romi a part of modern society becomes an instrument in the final tragedy of Billy. The tribal world joined together to face the encounter but failed and the tragedy finally struck. Billy spears down a police constable and is shot dead. "Billy, I cried, Billy. He opened his fast gazing
eyes for a moment and appeared to look at me. 'You Bastards', he said hoarsely. Then he died" (1971: 231).36

Billy in a way finds his self in the primitive world and his search is a conscious search. He thinks that a change could be brought about in society through Romi. Billy cannot have existed simultaneously in two worlds. The protagonist is killed in the end and this reflects the indifference of the civilised society. He is aware of this secular force since his childhood; when he visited the tribal world. He finds an abstract reality. He stays among tribals for their faith, their love, which helps him to understand his self. He stands midway in his life and takes the path that leads him to his salvation first in love and then in death.

Romi is the narrator of this novel. He is invested with a perspective with which he judges and comments upon the limited perceptions of others as to the role of fate and chance, of heredity and environment, of primitivism and civilization, and about the nature of Ultimate Reality. The novel is the tragic fate of Billy in the beginning to till the end of the novel. The story revolves around Billy Biswas, who is as much involved in knowing the nature of objective reality as the narrator is in substantiating the former's psychic determinants. Billy's action and behaviour in Harlem, Delhi and Maikala Hills are recorded with perfect sincerity.

Romi is armed with a vision with the help of which he is able to portray Billy's thoughts and actions. His close association with Billy in Harlem is important in two ways; first, it brings him close to the character of Billy Biswas; second, it brings Tuula on the narrative scene. Billy's heightened awareness as to the nature of ultimate Reality is misconstrued by the narrow defined vision of the technologically advanced society. In Delhi, he is misunderstood by his parents. He attributes his ill-fated marriage with Meena to the ill-fate of "a ship that gets smashed up in a gale" (1971: 185).37

The narrator highlights the deep desire of Billy to know the roots of man's existence. Billy's interest in studying anthropology was mooted by this near obsession to go down the tribal areas. It helps Romi frame the view that the so-called civilized society has wrought havoc upon his hypersensitive mind choked by the atmosphere of the phoney society.

Romi gets deprived of the title confidante. Tuula's role is twofold: first, to advance the psychoanalytic proposition of Billy as a mere puppet, dancing to the tune of his unconscious: Second, to assist Romi in grasping Billy's musings of the true nature and the meaning of his existence. Tuula's observation explains much of what Billy inform Romi about the
Bhubhaneswar episode, as well as the dance at drink ritual in Dhunia's tribal village. When Romi asks Billy whether his desire was to become a primitive the latter aptly remarks that "that was only a means to an end" (1971: 189). The end being his spiritual awareness.

Billy is called by Dhunia as a dead king come alive, a magician and a tribal priest; his traits are near to a demigod. The significance of Billy's cosmic consciousness can be treated to his kundalini, while in the forest he could indulge in sex as well as in his pursuit of spiritual awareness. Tuula could only perceive Billy as a man with a primitive force; Dhunia saw him as a man having great healing powers, as one whose divine power is but the manifestation of 'kala-pahar's will.

Romi's close association with Billy Biswas is being presented. The visit to the remote temple of fate in the Maikala Hills lets Romi recognize Billy's quest for spiritual awakening i.e. near to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Romi seems to hear a voice which meant; "There are things that the like of you may never know. There are circles within circles, and worlds within worlds. Beware where you enter" (1971: 192).

Romi's wife Situ compels Romi to declare that it was not a local doctor or a magician but Billy Biswas who had cured her that night. He makes her believe then the true story about Billy's disappearance. After three weeks, the narrator confronts the real trouble of his fault when Menna and Mr. Biswas (Billy's father) emerge on the scene. The whole machinery of government is used to find Billy and bring him back to Delhi. The tragedy comes when Billy is shot dead by a 'Havildar'. Mr. Biswas and Meena could only carry the urn containing the ashes of Billy.

The novel has beautifully portrayed the developing horizon of the narrator's consciousness towards an understanding of the true nature of Reality of the role of heredity and environment; of fate and change and the necessity of primitivism against civilization. Romi is assisted by the two important perspectives of Tuula and Dhunia (1985:76). His point of view besides justifying the subjective nature of reality brings out a possible interplay of two sets of values, two frames of reference, and two psychic universes. He (Romi) admires the heroic as the spiritual qualities of Billy and seems to encourage the idea of surrendering to the dark forces of the psyche. Although Romi hates the chief secretary, Mr. Biswas and Meena, and even his own wife Situ; he does not bid farewell to these representatives from society.

The central tension between the dialectic of primitivism and civilisation delineates the characters need to belong somewhere in the novel. Romi's point of view helps Arun Joshi to
explore complex human motives and actions. This novel carries the exploration deeper, combining the Lawrentian quest for the essence of life with the Upanishadic and *The Bahgavad Gita* search for soul’s spiritual and autobiographical journey throughout the novel.

The extraordinariness of Billy is suggested throughout the novel and is brought into sharp contrast with the banal and meaningless life around him. The novel is divided into two sections: The first section deals with Billy's social and intellectual background and offers insight into the strong primitive urge in him; which impelled him to leave the civilized society. The second section concentrates on the transformation of Billy through his contact with the organic life in the primitive world of central India, his new life as a primitive, his renewal of contact with Romi, and the final disaster.

The first section of the novel is, therefore, an attempt to establish the character of Billy as well as the spiritual decay of his environment, and make his strange case appear convincing. Billy Biswas is concerned with deeper and far more serious problems, with the question of his spiritual identity and with the mysteries of life. The strange case portrays not only the protagonist's search for identity but also his uncompromising quest for self's spiritual destination.

Ghosh writes, Bilasia is prakrtti and Billy is purusha. Bilasia represents the feminine principle of the Sankhya system which postulates two ultimate realities - purusha (self) and prakriti (primordial nature) and the manifestation and evolution of the human spirit in the union of the two (1996:82), i.e. very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

### 2.2.3 Outline of The Apprentice (1974)

This novel is in the form of monologue. It treats of the past memories of Ratan Rathor, who narrates them to his student companion. In India, he comes into contact with Himmat Singh called Sheikh with whom he signs a deal, takes a bribe for the purchase of war material. He is arrested and remains in prison for some time. Having viewed his rapid moral downfall in the background of his glorious heritage, he becomes an apprentice to his moral and spiritual reconstruction and begins to learn to be of use.

*The Apprentice* is writing in the form of a dramatic monologue. Ratan Rathor is the protagonist in *The Apprentice*, who is the narrator who must tell all, all or nothing. Ratan tells his life tale to a silent listener - a young student who has come from Punjab to Delhi to rehearse for
the N.C.C. parade on the Republic day. Ratan finds the young student to be a fit listener to his tale.

The novel is set in an India familiar to the urban middle class. Ratan Rathor is both the hero as well as the anti-hero of the novel. Though he does not feel at home in society; he embodies the very world of material values. He is neither a rebel nor a dissident. He is a victim. After feeling alienated from society; he adapts himself to the ways of the world. Ratan fully succumbs to the worldly pleasures. At every stage, he puts up an initial resistance only to discover the futility of his endeavours like so many of his kind, for nobody seemed to know: "What was right? What was wrong? ... That was where the rub lay" (1974: 64).42

Ratan is a child of double inheritance, the idealism of his father is matched by the pragmatism of his mother. He was ten years old, when his father, responding to the call of Mahatma Gandhi's movement, abandoned his practice as a lawyer: once as he stood at the head of a procession of freedom fighters, he was gunned down by a British Sergeant.

While Ratan studies in his college, he is haunted by the memory of his father who had advised him to be good, to be respected and to be of use. His mother also advises him not to be fooling himself because, "man without money was a man without worth. Many things were great in life; but the greatest of them all was money" (1974: 20).43

Ratan leaves home to seek a career in the capital of Delhi; for it was of city of opportunities. He fails to get help from his father's friends. He undergoes a humiliating experience while hunting for a job. He ultimately gets a job as a temporary clerk in a government office for war purchases. So his only aim in life is to make his career.

In order to get confirmation of his job, Ratan has to agree to marry the boss' niece. He knows only too well that the world runs on the basis of deals; and "if men forgot how to make deals the world would come to a stop... It is not the atom or the sun or God or sex that lies at the heart of the universe: it is deals" (1974:51).44 He has added a new dimension to his life; and he has become, at the age of twenty one, a hypocrite and a liar. He acquires a sense of docility and obedience. He readily accepts bribes and now owns a car, a flat, a refrigerator and also has twenty thousand rupees in the bank.

At the time of Indo-China war; Ratan feels strongly for his country. He wonders who should be held responsible for the debacle in war: the ill-equipped military or the incompetence
of the politicians. In his essay on "crisis of character", he hits at the corruption in society and describes the Indian people as "a glorious monument in rain" (1974:59).

Ratan Rathor doggedly struggles through the political and ethical questions involved when making war purchases until one day he comes in contact with Himmat Singh; popularly known as Sheikh and accepts a bribe from him.

Ratan derives solace from the annals of corruption which is luxuriant in society. He gives a cross-section of Indian society: "It had taken a bribe I belonged rather to the rule than the exception. ... Men took bribes to facilitate the seduction of their wives, women for seduction of other women. All this I knew and had known for twenty years (1974:112).

At Bombay, Ratan signs a deal with the Sheikh and takes a bribe for the supply of substandard war material. Even a Member of Parliament, "a trustee of the Republic" feels unconcerned about the war: "Nobody lost a war these days, the M.P. said, "There were always compromises. He whispered, who cared for wideness that we were quarrelling over" (1974:86).

Sheikh has understood the Indian reality more than anybody else: "This country had two kinds of people the rulers and the ruled. The ruled were brainless" (1974. 84). When Ratan, before entering the deal, shows some reluctance for the fear "that people would come to know" (1974:75). The Sheikh admonishes him by telling that only fools like him believe that there is a law laid down by God which they must follow: "There was no such law book, Rathor, he said, what existed, he said, was not written by God but by a silly society that would do anything for money" (1974:76).

Ratan Rathor is interested in wine and women. The war is allowed to be lost and the Brigadier, upon his return home from the battlefront has a nervous breakdown. The Brigadier during the war had deserted his post, and this desertion was due to the fact that he had been supplied with defective war materials which had been approved by none other than Ratan Rathor. It is a strong irony of fate that the same Ratan becomes responsible for the Brigadier's death. The situation reminds one of Arthur Miller's All My Sons (1947) where Joe Keller's supply of defective gas-cylinders leads to the death of his own son, Larry.

Ratan resolves to revenge upon the Sheikh. To his utter disappointment, he learns from him that he alone has not been responsible for the deal: the Secretary and the Minister have also been a party to it. Ratan has been made a scapegoat because he is "a spineless flunkey" (1974:136). He is only a tool in the hands of high-ups.
The Sheikh makes shocking and candid observations of Ratan's character; which are bogus. He reveals to him, that is callous and corrupt society that has made his mother a whore and sister a vagrant and that he has been driven to sell his soul to the Devil.

Ratan's morality is completely eroded that he cannot bring himself to confess before the authorities. He visits the temple to seek peace and courage but he meets a priest who is ready to grease his palm to save the skin of his son, a contractor who having used substandard material in the construction resulting in the collapse of many roofs was facing punishment. Ratan concludes that even religion is not free from corruption and no aid can be drawn from it. The novelist presents an Indian riddled with corruption. God can be pacified or calmed by gifts in black money to his temples; where the priests themselves are as corrupt as the narrator. Really God or religion is forever away from corruption. Even Karmayoga is one important part in the religion.

At last Ratan Rathor realizes the futility and hollowness of his whole life. He has neglected India's rich heritage and not created a new order the once envisaged. Each morning before going to work, he goes to the temple and wipes the shoes of the people and then begs forgiveness of "my father, my mother, the Brigadier" and those entire people he has harmed "with deliberation and with cunning" (1974: 148-149). This symbolic act of penance, he thinks, will bring him humility.

At last Ratan tells the listener "might yet hold back the tide." (1974:150). The novelist pins his hopes on the new generation and ends the novel with a positive not of affirmation. There is hope as long as young men are willing to learn and ready to sacrifice: Ratan exhorts the young to rise to the occasion and make a second start. It is never too late and late is better than never. In the end of the novel is mentioned sacrifice which is connected Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

This novel is not only the identical theme of crisis of existence and quest for survival, but also informs the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. In The Apprentice, Arun Joshi presents an individual who suffers the agony of the soul not due to his rebellion but due to his conformity to, and victimization by; a crooked and corrupt society. This novel is about a dark crisis in the human soul. It is a story of crime and punishment, of dislocation and search. Structurally the novel has much similarity with Albert Camus' The Fall (1957) and S. T. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner(1963). The total influence of the Karmic principle i.e. Karmayoga of The Bahgavad Gita and that of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi are important in this novel.
Ratan Rathor is the protagonist from the point view of the narrative is told and his internal struggles. He calls himself an "apprentice" because in the course of his monologue, Ratan gradually strips himself of all protective pretences and reveals more and more of his hypocrisy, cowardice, corruption, debauchery and finally his great betrayal.

The confession serves a threefold purpose in Ratan's case. First, the need for confession is an attribute of criminal consciousness. Secondly, it offers him the possibility of cleansing his soul of the layers of filth piled upon it during his successful career as a government official. Finally, through his confession he seeks to achieve a perception which is, however, deeply personal.

The proximity of the Krishna temple where Ratan makes the first part of his confession; the last and the darkest part being made in the student's room at the night before the Republic Day, may give the impression of a religious confession.

Two major narrative devices used by Arun Joshi in *The Apprentice* are (a) mirror and contrast; and (b) irony. The mirror symbol reflects certain aspects of the hero's nature and his self-examination. Himmat Singh, the Sheikh is Ratan's mirror. Ratan's father, the auditor, the Brigadier, and the young officer are his contrasts. It is this irony, directed at himself and his self mockery together with his uninhibited self revelation that add a complex dimension to Ratan's character.

Ratan relates the circumstances that led to his father's martyrdom - an event whose meaning is still not understandable to him - in a language that seems to verge on the melodramatic. There was another person whose memory haunted Ratan throughout his life and who performed an important role in his confession; It was his friend the Brigadier.

Naik states, "The most disturbing phenomenon on the socio-political scene has been steady erosion of the idealism of the days of the freedom struggle, the new gods of self aggrandizement and affluence having rather too easily dethroned those of selfless service and dedication to a case" (1996:96)." This comments on selfless service and dedication as mentioned in the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

Arun Joshi's protagonist Ratan Rathor would chalk out his destiny on the basis of his Karma or action. Since the Superintendent's God did not bother about good and evil and the consequences of one's action. He had cut himself off from everything and everybody else; Ratan's extreme helplessness, his agony and solitude are also like the Ancient Mariner:
"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide seal!
And never a saint took pity on

This is the anguish of a man when he finds himself alone and robbed of all familiar ties and is faced with the emptiness and darkness of his guilt tormented soul.

Ratan and his mind are in a great whirlwind. He did not know where his new apprenticeship would lead him. But he was sure of one thing; that "without vanity and without expectation, and also without cleverness" (1974:149).56 He was learning to be of use. All the plot of this novel is not only crisis and confession but also connected into Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

Kumar writes the action of the novel takes place in India, though there are references to the British rule. Educationally, Ratan Rathor, the hero of this work of fiction, is a "home-spun" one. The main thrust of the novel is a contrast between pre-independence idealism preached by Mahatma Gandhi, "a man of suffering" and post-independence disillusionment. Ratan is torn between the world of his father's idealism and mother's pragmatism (2003:115).

The Apprentice not only deals with Ratan Rathor's adolescent innocence, manly experience and saintly expiation; but also Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Ratan narrates the episodes ranging from his childhood to his apprenticeship as a shoe-shiner on the steps of a temple as a sort of expiation for his sins. Ratan, in the course of his rising corruption; feels not only restlessness but also apathy and indifference within himself. Ratan's distinction between zero and negative contains in it a subtle point of life's philosophy.

The novel traces four distinct phases in Ratan Rathor's life: 1) the phase of youth and idealism, 2) the phase of adulthood and coming up in life the hard way, 3) the phase of disillusionment and guilt, 4) the phase of repentance and atonement. The novel is added to this is the natural psychological need of the child to win maternal admiration for uncommonly heroic achievements.

The superintendent's offer of "officer ship" to Ratan as a reward for marrying his niece marks a turning point in his life. During the war, he becomes conspicuously patriotic. He emerges as the most willing and enthusiastic donor of blood in his locality and when no newspaper publishes his pedantic article on fall of moral standards in post-independence India,
he gets copies of it cyclostyled and gets them distributed all over the town. The height of hypocrisy is to be found in lashing at corruption in India while all the time he was trying to sort-out in his mind his reasons for accepting a huge bribe.

By the time, Ratan wakes up to the fact that in the process of adjustment unacceptable to his higher self, something fine in his own soul is destroyed, things have already gone from bad to worse. He finds himself cornered into a veritable moral aridity with no company other than of his own fury. He has to realise that his role, in connivance with the fraudulent arms dealer, Himmat Singh, in clearing the defective war weapons has caused the death of the Brigadier.

Himmat Singh succeeds in getting orders for his release. The Superintendent of Police makes a mocking reference to his friend i.e. Brigadier who is facing court martial on charges of desertion and his only chance of relief was in Ratan's confession. Ratan prepares a letter of carefully worded confession with enough loopholes for him to wriggle his way out, once the Brigadier's name is cleared. He never sends the confession to the Superintendent of Police and after two weeks, he comes to know that the Brigadier had shot himself dead.

Ratan goes to the house of Himmat Singh to kill him. Ratan is deflated when informed by Himmat Singh that the Minister and the Secretary were the instigators of the plot to make a fast back out of the arms deal. Gupta writes, he recollects talking to him about God late into the night. He particularly recalls Himmat Singh's telling him that may be; the only cure for God's darkness is God himself. He tries to do penance for his misdeeds by going to the temple every morning on his way to the office and wiping the shoes left near the threshold by the devotees who have gone into pray (2010:110).

The death of the Brigadier removed any fear there might have been of Ratan's being found guilty, and interestingly, this knowledge triggers off Ratan's confession instead of encouraging him to keep the secret locked forever in the recesses of his own heart to him on many occasions. But she has her own loyalties.

2.2.4 The Last Labyrinth (1981)

Som Bhaskar is the protagonist in this novel. He is an industrialist married to Geeta a woman of his choice. His desire to know is a labyrinth. He seeks to overcome his hunger by possessing an object; a business enterprise, a woman. He meets Anuradha and later Gauri. After the disappearance of Anuradha he prays for forgiveness.
The narrator - hero is Som Bhaskar; who is a wealthy young industrialist, who relates the events of his life in flashback. Som Bhaskar belongs to the upper strata of society and his quest of life is for the meaning of life. He becomes a millionaire by the time he is twenty five years old. He has an extraordinary wife and a fine education. He returns from Harvard to inherit an empire in plastics factory. He has learnt the way of life. He is a name to reckon with in the industrial world of Bombay. His primary aspiration is to grab failing industries to add to his dominion.

Som's father was a scientist who delved deep into psychological truths and hungered to know what the first cause was. At Harvard, Som Bhaskar completed a paper on Pascal. He knew of Krishna and the Buddha at Sarnath. Though affluent, he knew that money was dirt, a whore. So were houses, cars, carpets cause of violent i.e. near to Karma.

Som Bhaskar flits from one pleasure to another; he becomes the incarnation of the quest for the joy of life. He goes in search of new experiences whether they concern business or fornication. But ironically, far from attaining a sense of fulfilment; he has a terrible sense of emptiness of voids within and voids without. It is the voids of the world, more than its objects that bother me" (1981: 47). Even in this mysterious world, he finds is "a haze."

Som's cry of "I want, I want" (1981:11). It haunts him all the time. His search does not take him to a merely old Africa but to an infinitely mysterious Benaras. He gets fascinated by an obsolete world; decaying yet urbane - the world of Anuradha and Aftab - and by the labyrinths of the Haveli they inhabit.

Som Bhaskar encounters Anuradha for the first time when he is already thirty five in a Delhi hotel at a reception organized by Aftab Rai for the plastic manufacturers association. He is irresistibly drawn towards her. He himself realizes that a demon has got hold of him but he feels helpless. The quaint house in which she lives with a lover strikes as being grotesquely labyrinthine. It is Aftab Rai who had invited him to Benaras and when Som Bhaskar visits him at his residence, Lal Haveli, he feels that, "It was a maze that we were moving through. Perhaps, the entire haveli had been built either with no plan or with a most meticulous plan, though directed at an elusive objective: "it was a labyrinth" (1981:35).

It is darkly alluring Anuradha who casts a spell on Som Bhaskar. He is fascinated by her charm: "she was not self conscious about her body of whose grace and sensuousness she seemed unaware" (1981:41). That means the grace and sensuous function in the mind is not know
anybody in the world; but which is only known to the Nishkama Karmayogi i.e. called God. Indeed Anuradha, the Haveli and its owner Aftab Rai represent antiquity and are a mystery, a labyrinth to the rational mind of Som Bhaskar. He wants to grab the plastic company of Aftab Rai acquiring its shares as also Anuradha, Aftab's mistress.

Aftab Rai, also a plastic manufacturer, is Som's double. He is a man of culture and refinement; but more oriented than Western. His conversation with Som invariably tends to be philosophical. He is not good at handling business but he has finer feelings of life. Though he loves Anuradha, he does not claim any ownership of her. His love for her is deep but not possessive. In fact, he respects her personality and would never imagine imposing himself on her.

Anuradha exercises such an overpowering fascination over Som that he neglects his business; his family and his health in an effort to win her. He makes frequent trips to Benaras and is considered to acquire her for himself; her soul and body. And Geeta, his own wife; is all that a wife could be trusting, beautiful and well bred. She shows tremendous loyalty and courage in standing by him despite his erratic conduct. And yet, Som Bhaskar is drawn into an aching, painful obsessive love for Anuradha.

In a way, Som Bhaskar is similar to Billy Biswas because, he is in search of something. There is a similarity between the two. The faceless God is prominent in Billy Biswas' inner thoughts. One finds the same facelessness in Som Bhaskar.”

All his life Som seeks someone who has the capacity to resolve the contradictions of his life. He does not find it in his wife, or in Leila Sabnis, the clever young professor who could readily quote from Freud or Descartes: "Oh yes, Leila Sabnis knew a lot." (1981:79). She is a scholar, an M.A. and Ph.D. from Michigan, something else from London." (1981:75). She is married and divorced. Her husband, she claimed proudly, divorced her for reading too much" (1981:77).

Leila is an embodiment of reason and tries to explain Som's sickness through analysis: "you are a neurotic, a compulsive fornicator" (1981:80). Indeed she offers Som the joy of her small and sweaty breasts, she analyses all Som's problems. She kept the two worlds - the world of matter and the world of spirit - separate. These two worlds are only mentioned in Karmayoga but Nishkama Karmayoga is not informed two and one world, because Karmayoga is included
into Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. At last Karmayoga is turned in Nishkama Karmayoga i.e. socio-cultural activity throughout the world.

Anuradha was an illegitimate child born of an insane mother. Her mother earned her livelihood by singing for strangers. She was taken away by one of her lovers who killed her with a broken whisky bottle. Anuradha, whose name was Meera then, was brought up by one of her aunts who gave her education. She was molested as a child and underwent many sufferings. She became a film star and was seduced by many producers. She left the profession with the help of Aftab Rai. Now, she had been living with Aftab without any formal marriage. As she says, "You can't marry everyone you love. So why marry anyone at all?" (1981:43). Som Bhaskar is amazed to learn that she wanted to be nobody's wife. When he asks her if she would like to be married to someone, she says, "I can imagine I am married to Aftab. I can imagine I am married to you. My mother used to imagine she was married to Krishna" (1981:128). The imaginary action is mentioned extra-ordinary Karma. So its result is near to the Nishkama Karmayoga.

Anuradha inherits from her mother a belief in faith; Som Bhaskar is son of a scientist, who is a rationalist and a believer in intelligence and expediency. Though he is lowly born and scarcely educated, Anuradha has wisdom higher than Som Bhaskar's. She is fond of Som and yields to him on many occasions. But she has her own loyalties. Som wants to win her heart and not only possess her body. At the height of their love affair; the enigmatic Anuradha disappears. She embodies the concept of sacrifice. Arun Joshi says, "Anuradha's role in the novel is to lead Som Bhaskar through the subconscious. Then he loses her. I was hinting at the old classical dictum that you do not get anything without sacrificing something. So she is to be taken away from him" (1986:33). The comment is informed here that "sacrifice", "subconscious" ideas in the novel. Without sacrificing and subconsciousness we are not know about the Karmayoga's ultimate goal i.e. called Nishkama Karmayoga. So without sacrificing we are not achieved the Nishkama Karmayoga.

Though Som Bhaskar has sex with Anuradha and earlier with Leila Sabnis, he is not happy because of his spiritual hollowness. He does not attempt to resolve the contradictions of life through faith. He fails to sublimate his desires from the animalistic to the spiritual. He becomes a spokesman for westernized Indian aristocracy which has lost its spiritual roots. The sex action is increased more sex, so we are away from spirituality, peace and happiness. The westernized Indian aristocracy has lost spirituality and peacefulness. If anybody needs the
peacefulness we must follow the way of Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma; because it is a very easy way to follow the spirituality and peacefulness in the human beings life in the world. A more rational approach to life as represented by western-educated and affluent Som is not sufficient. The labyrinths of life can be resolved through intuition and faith rather than science and reason. The labyrinths of life are connected to Karmayoga because labyrinths are various actions in the human beings life and all these actions are included in their own place. Even science and reason are connected to Karmayoga.

Som Bhaskar cannot achieve unwavering faith, for in order to do so one has to make a complete surrender of oneself; including one's intellectual rationalism. The complete surrender is a very important part in Karmayoga, because without complete surrender we do not know Nishkama Karmayoga.

As Aftab tells Som, "You have to sacrifice before you are given. You can't have your cake and eat it too... You want to have faith. But you also want to reserve the right to challenge your own faith when it suits you." (1981:168). The novel fails to resolve Som's dilemma. He had always been vexed by the question of life and death; his mystical craving remains unfulfilled and he continues to remain alienated. So the novel is not only alienated but also directly or indirectly connected with Karmayoga.

All Arun Joshi's heroes progress from alienation to existential affirmation with Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. The novel ends with Som Bhaskar making a suicidal gesture by putting the revolver casually to his temple. As he tries to kill himself; he is stopped by Geeta who shakes him "gently as though rousing a man from sleep" (1981:224).

*The Last Labyrinth* deals with the world of business relationships as well as the personal. Som Bhaskar in this novel runs his own plastic industry. The novel is dealing with the theme of alienation, the absurd, the sordidness and seediness of the human existence. The novel also deals with the problems related to the academic and the industrial world.

*The Last Labyrinth* is a quest for meaning in life and function of Karmayoga. The narrative located mainly in Bombay and Benares; is an account of Som Bhaskar's business deals and love-story. It is running alongside with Som Bhaskar's crisis of identity. Som Bhaskar is a businessman. At the age of twenty five he has amassed a large fortune and everything that is needed for worldly success. His wife Geeta is well-bred, beautiful and trusting and remains loyal to her husband despite his erratic love affairs with Leila Sabnis in Bombay and Anuradha in
Benares. His father was professionally a scientist. He spent over a quarter of a million on his son's education in the prestigious American institutions. Som Bhaskar writes a research paper on Pascal at Harvard. He is also deeply aware of the philosophical implication of the teachings of Krishna and Sermons of the Buddha at Sarnath.

In his personal life he is a seeker after pleasure and hungers for the joys of life. In both the worlds of business and love he explores possibilities of new experience. But his indulgences have also an inner contradiction in that the more he runs after the material needs and sensual pleasure, both the worlds are very close to the Karmayoga.

Leila Sabnis is a philosopher and psychologist and polyglot. She divorced by her executive husband for her reading too much. She has rightly analysed the character of Som Bhaskar when she refers to his problem of identity. Som does not go beyond his being attached with his business, his inheritance and the family. He denies having any quest of his for mystical identification as a Hindu. Som Bhaskar psychoanalyses his own character in the context of his family background. His father was perturbed by the perennial questions of science and philosophy and this gave father melancholia. His grandfather had been a contrast to his father.

In business life Som has little of his father's character. His mother died of cancer when he was just fifteen years old. Som is neither devout like his mother nor inquisitive like his father. The quest for the unknown labyrinths touches him in his associations with Anuradha and Gargi.

Leila Sabnis and Anuradha are contrasted to one each other. Leila Sabnis has an M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Michigan and some other degree also from London. She is not impressed by his philosophy because he kept the two worlds of matter and spirit separate.

Som Bhaskar's encounter with Leila Sabnis does not make him learn anything else to fill in the voids of his personality. His next encounter with Anuradha becomes a kind of an obsession and has an abiding influence upon him. Som sees her at a Delhi hotel at a party hosted by Aftab Rai for the plastic manufacturer's association. Som Bhaskar is thirty five years old. He finds himself attracted by her magnetism. She is a symbol of antique beauty. The demon of love so overpowers him that he visits Aftab's Lal Haveli in Benares. This mansion is built like a labyrinth in the novel. The structure of Lal Haveli is a maze within a maze in the maze like structure of the city of Benares.

Aftab Rai's family has a great ancestry. His great grandfather had been a courtier of Wazid Ali Shah. He settled in Benares where Lal Haveli was erected. He is a man of culture and
refinement. He is more rooted in the oriental culture than western. He has a business instinct and finer feeling of life. He lives with Anuradha as man and wife, but does not claim any possession of her.

Anuradha's history is a different one. She was born in Biharsharif of a senile mother. She earned her livelihood by singing for her customers. Anuradha's mother was killed in her drunken state with a broken whisky bottle. Anuradha was known in her childhood as Meera; she was brought up and educated by one of her aunts. She suffered many humiliating experiences. She joined the film world where she was seduced by her producers. One of the reasons why her mother had been killed by her lover might be that she refused to marry him on her logic that she was married to Krishna. This is a very small event, but it is shown to us that the union of two souls is called Karmayoga. Its ultimate aim is Niskama Karma.

Som Bhaskar considers everything about Lal Haveli to be enigmatic. Like the building, the persons and places also become symbols in The Last Labyrinth. Anuradha is as mysterious to him as her sudden disappearance from Lal Haveli. Aftab Rai takes Som to the other side of the Ganga. He is introduced to Gargi who is deaf and mute and communicates by writing on her pad. She is a forty years old ascetic woman. Her father was a prince who later became a Sufi pir, who used to live with Aftab's father. He had also supernatural powers and restored eyesight to Aftab, but Som did not believe in it.

Som Bhaskar hungers for possessing not only Anuradha forever from Aftab Rai but also to acquire his shares in the plastic market. He develops a kind of obsession for her. He tours Europe, America and Japan with his wife, but this does not remove Anuradha from his mind. He seeks the blessings of Gargi in Benares. She asks Som not to quarrel with Anuradha because "she is your Shakti" (1981: 95). She also realizes that Anuradha is necessary to him and keeps on visiting Lal Haveli for her sake and enjoys. Thus the various small events are connected to Karmayoga and Som Bhaskar's various actions in the novel.

In his hectic business life in Bombay, Som suffers a massive heart attack. On his mysterious recovery from it, he contacts Anuradha who expresses her inability to see him anymore. Som determines to take revenge on her and Aftab by ruining the latter's business.

Anuradha went to Gargi after Som had suffered a heart attack. Dr. Kashyap (friend of Som) reports: "She (Anuradha) begged you to save him... She said to you she could not live without Som and she would eat poison if something happened to him" (1981:97). Gargi in the
end agrees to do the miracle on the condition that Anuradha would give up Som forever. Gargi advises Som and writes on her pad: "God does not work in the simple manner, God does not seek revenge" (1981:99). But "man's vanity brings him revenge enough" (1981:100). These lines are at lastly connected to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. Yet Som searches for Anuradha in Lal Haveli where Aftab advises him against it: "You don't understand us. You work by logic or with your brain. You are proud of your education or what you consider education. There is an understanding that only suffering and humiliation bring. Anuradha has that. Even I have a bit of it. You are empty of that understanding" (1981:101). This comment is very suitable for the ultimate aim of Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. Yet Aftab allows Som to see Anuradha who advises him to leave Lal Haveli for his safety.

Anuradha's disappearance is a mystery. Gargi had done the miracle of saving Som's life on the condition that she would never see him. Som Bhaskar comes back disappointed to Bombay where he sees Tarakki. Aftab's driver used to kill snakes at Lal Haveli. Aftab had once written about him to Som Bhaskar that Tarakki was a snake. He declares revenge upon Som and curses him, "while you live, you will rot ... from one graveyard to another, you will wander... a million years" (1981:102).

Som's life becomes a big mess and strange mad thoughts carom around his skull. In one of his frenzied outbursts, he reflects: "Anuradha, listen. Listen to me wherever you are. Is there a God where you are? Have you met Him? Does He have a face? Does He speak? Does He hear? Does He understand the language that we speak?" (1981:105). Answers of all questions are given by the Sadaguru i.e. God or Karmayogi or Nishkama Karmayogi. But we must be dedicated to the service of God or devoted to the service of Divine Power or Nishkama Karmayogi.

The opening sentence of the novel hints the revenge motive in Som Bhaksar, "Above all I have a score to settle. Forget nothing, forgive no one" (1981:106). But instead of acting against Aftab, he acts against himself and taking his grandfather's revolver from the cabinet, he takes it casually to his temple. His wife Geeta stops it from getting fired. "He is shaking me gently as though rousing a man from sleep" (1981:107).

The character of Som Bhaskar, as revealed in The Last Labyrinth, is that of the violent inner world of an industrialist. At the age of fifteen he loses his mother and at the age of twenty
five, his father. He has become a chronic patient of insomnia. He is always accompanied by his family physician Dr. Kashyap. He runs after satisfying his undefined hungers and it is this that leads him through a haunting world of life, love, God, and death; the greatest of all mysteries and The Last Labyrinth.

The protagonist of the novel is tormented by a great roaring hollowness inside his soul. His life of richness has simply added to the boredom and the fadedness. He feels void both within and without and the physical labyrinths existing in Lal Haveli at Banaras and its lanes as also the intricate allies of life make him conscious of the labyrinthine ways of life and death, which is also The Last Labyrinth. The images of the labyrinth, maze, void, vanity; along with certain comfortless imagery associated with the animal life emphasize this point in Bhaskar's life.

Life is a complicated maze, "a labyrinth within a labyrinth" (1981:118). Like the Biblical preacher Ecclesiastics life to him is "vanity of vanities" (1981:121). Som thinks, "Life is the voids and the empty spaces within and without" (1981:121). "Both within and without ... Voids all" (1981:123). All it is very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Som Bhaskar views Lal Haveli to be the "sepulchral, sensual den of Aftab's amidst the labyrinths of Benares" (1981:126). At the symbolical level; the Lal Haveli stands for the maze of life and The Last Labyrinth of the title is death itself which is even more mysterious than existence itself. He is aware of the roaring hollowness, terrible loneliness and the overpowering void about himself.

He got some of the questions and answers from the Upanishads of which he had a copy. The problems of life posed by Pascal, Krishna, Buddha, Yajnavalkya, Kierkegaard, Darwin, Descartes etc. crop up. But none of these is able to alleviate the inner crisis of Som's life. The "mantra" that resounds within him is not that of his identity with any godhead but with "I want, I want, I want." (1981, 11) i.e. Som Bhaskar is not given "mantra" by any Sadaguru. So his Karma is not dedicated to the divine power. Then he is not alleviating in his life not only one generation but also many generation.

Gargi wrote for him on the pad, "There is no harm in believing that God exists." The crisis of identity in this novel is not due to the confrontation "with society but with forms and forces beyond the recurring of reason and science" (1981:132). Som Bhaskar is not ready to associate himself with any mystical identification Aftab too finds him empty of that
understanding that only suffering and humiliation bring. The text of the novel has predominance of use of image associated with labyrinth and void. All these are related to Som Bhaskar’s crisis of identity and of consciousness.

Som Bhaskar does not even believe in Kierkegaard’s saying, "Prayer does not change God but changes him who prays" (1981:142). Till the end Som Bhaskar fails to get reconciled with the problems of life and death, science and religion, miracle and reason. The novel opens with the vow of revenge and closes with Som Bhaskar's abortive suicidal gestures as Geeta intervenes.

As a modern philosophic movement, 'existentialism' deals with man's disillusionment and despair and Nishkama Karma. Existentialism is developed into a powerful revolt against reason, rationality, positivism, and the traditional ways in which earlier philosopher’s portrayed man. Som Bhaskar carries with him a sense of alienation, loneliness and pessimism, perceiving himself to be in a hostile world which is one side but other side is totally opposite. The novel probes his turbulent inner world as a modern Hamlet whose problem is whether to become materialistic or spiritualistic. Karmayogi is aware of the problem of materialistic or spiritualistic; but when Karmayogi is dedicated to Nishkama Karma then that Nishkama Karmayogi has no any problem of materialistic or spiritualistic.

Pandey observes, "Som Bhaskar is torn by the inner contradictions and his consciousness wanders in a maze of opposite impulses. He suffers from an intense feeling of inadequacy, a feeling of rootless and a feeling of rudderless boat being tossed on turbulent waves"(2010:7).

Som Bhaskar says, "Life is without or empty of the world, more than its objects that bother me without and the empty spaces, within and without" (1981:121). He is suffocated by such voids when he knows the real disillusionment of Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. Then he becomes calm and quiet but it is not happening. He rushes about in search of happiness and meaningfulness. The question about life and death haunts Som Bhaskar throughout his life; because without Sadaguru who does not know real meaning of life, who does not know Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma, who does not know Nishkama Karmayoga. Som Bhaskar is representative of the world with many problems in his life.

Bhutt and Alexander states, "Som Bhaskar is like Abhimanyu in The Mahabharata who is not able to come out of 'chakravyuha.' He loses himself in the chakravyuha of life and death,
reality and truth, doubt and faith" (2010:8). But Karmayogi, Jnanayogi, Rajyogi and Bhaktiyogi is going beyond the all the problems in the world.

Geeta is his wife. He finds a trust and in Leila Sabnis, a philosophy professor, a fusion of his urge of freedom. So he turns to Anuradha, his Shakti. But she too, fails to understand him. She tells him; "you don't know what you want. You don't know what is wrong and you don't know what you want" (1981:106). Som Bhaskar's scientific approach does not get anywhere near the secret of life.

In his depression he even plans to visit temples every evening. A peaceful death, that is all he wants for he is mercilessly torn apart by his doubts. Without Sadaguru and his blessings no one couldnot reach to the peace in the merciless world. So Sadaguru and blessings of Sadaguru is very important in all religion and all the human beings in the world.

Finally, Som Bhaskar tries to commit suicide. When he tries to kill himself, he is stopped by Geeta. We are given to believe that the unquesti oning trust of his intelligent and understanding wife will restore peace to his life. The Last Labyrinth, thus, delineates the existential despair in the psyche of its neurotic protagonist Som Bhaskar. Thus, The Last Labyrinth is not only the sense of alienation, rootless; but also the inner sense of Karmayoga with Nishkama Karmayoga.

2.3 The Protagonists of the Four Novels

Sindi Oberoi, Billy Biswas, Ratan Rathor and Som Bhaskar are akin in their predicament, their torture and agony. All his heroes are rogues and pilgrims.

Sindi Oberoi a rootless young man is the protagonist of Arun Joshi's first novel, The Foreigner. Joshi shows a sensitive awareness of the agony of loneliness in uncovering the psychological conflicts in the character of Sindi Oberoi in his quest for meaning through a maze of relationships that compel him to grapple the metaphysical problems of detachment and involvement. Sindi's detached view of the world; his typical relationships with others make him very much akin to Albert Camus' Meursault in The Outsider (1942), as the title of the novel The Foreigner also suggests that Sindi feels himself a foreigner, an outsider, a stranger, not just because he is a Kenya born Indian living in the United States and later in India without home or family but because he is obsessed by the impermanence of things. He is a lover, a spectator who wants to stand out of the maze of action, dreading involvement.
The Foreigner is about Sindi Oberoi's involvement with June Blyth. After his break up with June he goes to India where he becomes quite a humanitarian and a successful businessman by rescuing an almost bankrupt company.

The novel opens in a morgue in Boston where Sindi identifies his dead friends, Baburao Khemka. He breaks the news of Babu's death to Babu's fiancée June Blyth. Months later, he comes to Delhi in search of a job and sees Mr. Khemka, father of Babu. Mr. Khemka gives him a job in his firm. Sindi recounts of Sheila, the sister of Babu.

Sindi has his early education in England and then he goes to America for his doctoral degree in Engineering. There he meets Babu and their friendship begins. He had large relationship with Anna and Kathy. He loves June intensely and experiences a lot with her. June fails to understand the practicability of his detachment. She wants him to marry her but he does not believe in marriage.

Sindi as a student of Engineering at Boston meets June at a foreign student's gathering. June in America and Sheila in India feel the detached nature of Sindi. He is alien everywhere physically as well as metaphorically. In the beginning Sindi is disinterested and detached towards June and feels: "All love ... whether of things, or persons, or oneself was illusion and all pain sprang up from this illusion. Love begot greed and attachment, and it led to possession."


When June does not hope to get married to Sindi she turns to Babu who physically seems to be carved out for her. But fed up with Babu's excessive dependence on her; June tries to find satisfaction in the embraces of Sindi. When Babu learns June's relationship with Sindi; he rushes out and in a fit of anger drives himself to a suicidal accident. The death of Babu shakes up both June and Sindi. June has kept her pregnancy by Babu a secret from Sindi for a time. But ultimately when she lets him know about it; it is too late to do anything. She desperately asks him to see her urgently at Boston. Sindi's visit to June is delayed by a week because of his unconcern born of his sense of detachment. June dies while undergoing an operation to terminate her pregnancy.

The detachment of Sindi ultimately alienates June from him. He sends her to Babu who needs her much more. She gets betrothed to Babu. But Babu gets badly disappointed both academically and emotionally. He quarrels with her, as he (Babu) suspects that she sleeps with
Sindi. He leaves his flat in a huff and drives blindly in his car resulting in his death in a car crash. When Sindi comes to know of his death; he feels badly shocked.

Sindi is foreigner everywhere, in Nairobi, in India and England and even in America. The tragedy upsets Sindi. He realises and regrets his indecision and his negative content of detachment. "Now I had begun to see the fallacy in it. Detachment is consisted of right action and not escape from it. The gods had set a heavy price to teach me just that" (1968:193). This statement is very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

As a Senior Executive in Mr. Khemka's firm in India, Sindi feels sick of Khemka's deceitful way of life and remains detached and unconcerned to their plight with the Income Tax people. He wants to go to Bombay in search of a fresh job. But his visit to Muthu, a poor assistant of Mr. Khemka's firm, makes him reverse his decision. Muth pleads with him violently to hold the reins of business for the sake of people employed in the concern. He ultimately believes that right meaning of detachment consisted in getting involved in the world.

Sindi is the kind of foreigner who feels the pangs of his foreigners in any circumstances and any country.' In fact, Sindi "becomes aware of the despair so long enveloped by being like a fish surrounded by water." (1968: 195). The signifier in the novel is not the narrator's detachment from self but the awareness of despair as a persistent human condition. He works strenuously and with the co-operation of all the employees sets the establishment in order. He involves himself with a positive detachment because the fruit of it was not his concern.

The real concern of the novelist is with the gradual evolution of Sindi from a negative philosophy of detachment to its positive aspect. Sindi learns that real detachment from men and matters without any desire for the result as laid down in The Bahgavad Gita. Arun Joshi too agrees that the philosophy of The Bahgavad Gita is involved in The Foreigner.

Toward the conclusion of the love affair between Sindi and June, Sindi has moved from being reconciled with being involved, with being in love, to being involved, in the lives of his subordinates at the Khemka's factory. In the first phase of his reconciliation with being involved, he is reluctantly involved with June i.e. connected with Nishkama Karma. In the second phase, he is involved at the societal level as he saves representatives of the working class from possible starvation.

Sindi's transformation is clear in his detached, yet compassionate commitment to work in order to involve himself meaningfully in community. He has towards the end found a heaven
after the vigorous quest of meaning that has shaped his life and tormented his psyche. He withdraws from the world. It is based on Lord Krishna's message of detachment in *The Bahgavad Gita*. He is as like as Arjuna. He searches for perfection and peace in life. But his mind is confused and restless. So his unwillingness for involvement is not outcome of any spiritual development; because it is the product of ignorance and selfishness.

Sindi finds the value of positive detachment with his committed involvement with other. Billy Biswas of *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* abdicates his place in the society in order to seek fulfilment in the elemental concerns of primitive life. The novel introduces an unusual protagonist who suffers from a sense of alienation about the world around him; and finally opts into a primitive world. Although Billy Biswas is alienated from the modern civilization, he seeks and finds fulfilment in his communion with the tribal. There is, however, an unmistakable sense of affirmation in Billy's painful journey from alienation to community i.e. connected not only Karmayoga but also Nishkama Karmayoga.

Arun Joshi's elemental concerns in the novel are not only alienation and community but also Karmayoga and Nishakama Karma. Billy's identity with the tribal is total and for him it is not an escape from the realities of life but an escape, if that is the word, into real life from the sordid meaningless existence in the so called civilized world.

The novel is about a 'mystical urge' that makes Billy Biswas, a scion of the upper class Delhi society, to abjure his family and friends and go to the primordial forest in central India for spiritual healing and for achieving the highest form of self-realization. It is a study in the total estrangement of its protagonist, Billy Biswas, from the upper crust of human society with its material concerns, spiritual shallowness and blind imitation of western culture in utter defiance of its traditional values and beliefs. Joshi uses Billy's strong primitive urge - his 'urkraft' is called in the novel. Tuula Lindgreen is Billy's Swedish girlfriend and Bilasia is his tribal wife. The tribal life of Maikala Hills in central India becomes a concretization of this world view and Billy's return from white America to India and his ultimate rejection of the post-independence, pseudo-western values of his Delhi society to join the primitives and accept their life. Thus, they turn out to be a symbol of Billy's quest for self-realization and for his identity.

The protagonist, Billy Biswas is presented in his own inner struggle. He is a man of extraordinary obsessions and a rebel. He is a man of conviction and has the courage to translate
his vision into a reality. He is capable of facing the crisis of his life courageously and with absolute self confidence.

The first section of the novel is, therefore, an attempt to establish the character of Billy as well as the spiritual decay of his environment, and make his strange case appear convincing. The novel is not only the protagonist's search for identity but also his uncompromising search for self's spiritual destination.

The second part of the novel begins ten years after the disappearance of Billy, with his accidental meeting with Romi. Romi, now a district collector in central India, runs into Billy under extraordinary situations. There is a conspicuous change of tone in the second part of the novel.

Bilasia symbolizes the primitive ethos. It is only natural that she could enliven Billy's soul as Meena Biswas and Rima Kaul had repelled and deadened it. After the tremendous volte-face in his life; Billy settled down in the primitive society, which was characterized by innocence, peace and a vital personal relation with the natural world.

Billy comes out in a new role that of a healer, a priest and a magician who cures dying children, wards off tigers, and helps the primitive people with their worldly problems and spiritual troubles. The primitive world becomes credible and something solid. The primitive ethos is brought into focus through the contrast of Meena and Rima Kaul with Bilasia, and Tuula.

Billy’s death accentuates the contrast between the ephemeral authorities of the so called organized, civilized society. Romi represents the primal and invulnerable force of Billy's world. The contrast overwhelms Romi so much so that he suffers from self doubts and almost feels like giving up his job. This change in Romi adds an extra interest to the novel. Billy's renewal of contact with Romi is not at all accidental but a deliberate act of decision. Billy is deeply worried about his friend and his corruption.

The entire authority of the government is brought against Billy Biswas, by his act of rebellion, has put the civilized society to shame. This is Billy's final verdict on the civilized society which is not natural but 'bastardly' and which has put an end to his quest only a handful of ahs in a mud pot is all Billy that reaches the civilized world, and his 'strange case' is "disposed of in the only manner that a humdrum society knows of disposing its rebels, its seers, its true lovers" (1971: 240).
Billy is totally uninhibited, a trait rarely Indian. He shows a total disregard for decorum which culminates in his alienation from society. At first, his alienation from society seems to be an oddity, a whim, but it accelerates when he gets married to Meena, at which time he is sure that 20th century life is not for him. The recurrent dream he has of a girl and a mountain become real when he deserts his students from a field trip. Once ensconced among the tribal; Billy, who is given up for dead; adopts the way of life he admired for its simplicity. Nature worship; tribal medicine, primitive relationships - he accepts these without any qualms for this is what he had sought all along.

The novel has been hailed as a tragedy. Except for the pathos that centres on Billy Biswas' death - the futility of it; the waste of it. There is very little of the tragic in this story. Billy is no tragic hero; he does not rise to noble heights from which he might fall. He does not possess noble traits. The tribal believe him to be a reincarnation of a past king but he does not himself believe this nor does he have that necessary flaw which might cause his downfall. His case is a well presented by a well meaning; sympathetic friend i.e. connected Karmayoga and Niskama Karma.

*The Apprentice* is Joshi's third novel; reads like a confessional. Ratan Rathor is the narrator of this novel; who is also its hero, its anti-hero. He is born into the professional class. Ratan Rathor struggles to stay within it. He does so only after he compromises his principles by sycophancy what really confirms his belonging to the middle class is his acceptance of bribe, an act committed not because he needed the money but because he cannot think of any reason to refuse it. This act reveals how corrupt he had finally become. To atone for his past, he polishes the shoes of the devotees at a local temple every morning of his way to work.

The narrator is the apprentice who turns a fake object, a sham, a corrupt official and an exhausted family man. When he comes to know of the blatant error he has made and that the direct victim of his act happens to be his close friend the Brigadier in the novel.

The contrast between the earlier Ratan, the apprentice who has hitched his wagon to the star of success and Ratan *The Apprentice* who has passed through the dark night of soul, is brought out in the anger, remorse, and intense suffering that one can feel in the tone of the narrative. So Ratan Rathor with a deeply troubled conscience goes to Himmat Singh to avenge his friend's death but soon realises the absurdity of the whole thing and reflects: "That is a
terrible sensation ... one's life has been a great mistake; without purpose, without results. There are many sorrows in the world" (1974:194).

That Ratan Rathor is not an intellectual like Sindi or Billy but an ordinary man of less than ordinary deeds should appreciate the distinction between zero as negative and implicit zero as positive speaks for the character's development. So out of sorrow and mortification groping to understand the meaning of life and as if to expiate his sin Ratan Rathor undergoes the strangest apprenticeship in the world; name wiping the shoes of the congregation sitting on steps out the temple every morning on his way to the office.

_The Apprentice_ is a confessional novel which employs psycho-narration. Ratan Rathor narrates the way in which he becomes a victim of corruption in a metropolitan society during the war between India and China. He has a friend; the Brigadier who absconds from the front when Indian army is suffering reversal and humiliation at the hand of the Chinese. The intelligence branch of the army suspects Ratan Rathor and authorizes a Superintendent of Police. to interrogate him in a prison cell. But Himmat Singh gets Ratan Rathor released from police custody. The Superintendent of Police once again contacts Rathor and tells him that if he confesses his guilt, it may help the Brigadier escape court-martial. When he makes a decision to confess, Rathor learns that the Brigadier has killed himself. Rathor goes to Himmat Singh in order to wreck vengeance, but Himmat Singh tells him that the secretary has double crossed him.

Ratan Rathor started his life as every young man full of ideals and illusions does. He moves out of his village and goes in search of a job in the metropolis of Delhi. He leaves his home hoping to be worthy of his father and his ideals.

At first Ratan is mentally resolved to save his friend. He writes his confession. He was surprised to find that the secretary of his department and Minister concerned came to his rescue and got him released quite magically. The Brigadier could not wait for his confession and killed himself. Ratan realizes that his life has been a great waste. He realizes that one cannot live for oneself because no human act is performed in isolation and without consequence. He would like to expiate his sin of cowardice, dishonesty and even indirect murder. He learns the lesson of humility. He seeks his fulfilment in this symbolic act. Ratan has lost his self and felt the anguish of loss. His existential decision to recover the lost self through an act of penitence reveals the need to realize and prize one's integrity.
The protagonist; Ratan Rathor comes of an impoverished middle class family. He has to find his own way and pay his own price in this world. He is the child of a double inheritance. His father was patriotic and courageous; but his mother was endowed with worldly wisdom.

Ratan's humiliating experiences of job hunting make him realize the cruelty of the human lot. He is nevertheless always hunted by the morbid fear of losing his job and suffers from a keen desire for getting promotion and an intense preoccupation with work.

Ultimately, he succumbs inescapably to the needs of his job and rewarded with security and promotion; ends up by accepting a bribe when he needs money. At every stage he puts up an initial resistance only to discover the futility of his efforts. The whole business of living in a muddle confuses him all the more and he fails to differentiate between right and wrong.

Ratan is keen on finding out the purpose of life and all its activities. He discovers there that even religion is not free from corruption. It is corrupt and can hardly be expected to provide any solutions to various problems of this meaningless world. Ratan's exposure to knowledge has been limited. Presented in a confessional tone, Ratan reveals his past to a quiet collegian who listens with the patience of Coleridge's wedding guest.

Chander states, a picaro from the Shivalik Hills to the metropolis of Delhi; Ratan is the son of a patriot who gave up his profitable legal profession and died as a heroic believer in the Gandhian creed of non-violence. Professionally he climbs the ladder and accepts the bribe for the purchase of defective war material. As a result of this deal he experiences intense self-hatred which mounts to a crisis when his Brigadier friend becomes its victim (1976:31).

Ratan ultimately decides against the violent recourse, for "primitive solutions, he would have known; never worked" (1974:141) i.e. Nishkama Karmayoga. He realizes that only way to retrieve his soul lies through an honest act of contrition and service to mankind. The rationale of this self renovation is provided by his father's belief that whatever you do touches someone else (1974:149). Ratan's religion of humanity stands in sharp contrast to the dogma of the temple priest who cannot distinguish between practice and profession.

In The Apprentice are two apprentices: the listener and the narrator himself. The student listener, if discerning, has much to learn vicariously from Ratan Rathor's experiences and Rathor, whose confessional is itself an indication of his having acquired some wisdom has learned humility and that serving one's fellowman provides a pathway to personal salvation.
In the end his decency is so completely eroded that he cannot bring himself to confess even in order to save his friend the Brigadier. Ratan Rathor is shaken out of his moral inertia only by the faceless head of the dead brigadier and the outspokenness of Himmat Singh who in his pitiless way contrasts their two lives; "My father, he said, was a revolutionary, his mother a whore" (1974:144). While Ratan Rathor was selling himself, he realises that life may well be a zero; but "it need not be negative." (1974:148). The above ideas are not only negative but also positive. But the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga is beyond both of them. The Apprentice is a striking study of belief in Karma and it commends the abiding values of humility and self purification in human life. Ratan's sense of individuality comes into conflict with his life of hypocrisy. Ratan finally realises that one cannot isolation and without consequence. Therefore each act should be performed with a sense of responsibility.

In The Last Labyrinth the word acquires complexity and a multiplicity of meanings and functions of various levels. The issues explored in this novel - life, love, God and death are basic human preoccupations. Som Bhaskar is sometimes assailed by doubts about its existence and Anuradha laughs it away as one of Aftab's make-beliefs, certain images - 'photographs of the soul' as Som calls them associated with the "bhul-bhulaiyan" (1981:44) confirm the reality.

Lal Haveli is in essence, a microcosm of the labyrinth of life and death. Som Bhaskar's obsession with it is a reflection on his deep concern for these two aspects of the human reality. But the labyrinth is not confined to Lal Haveli alone. Som is drawn helplessly into "the labyrinth of this mysterious world" (1981:60). Som's insane pursuit of Anuradha, her body and soul, is as torturous as his bizarre journey to the hills in search of the missing shares of Aftab's company.

Moreover, Som Bhaskar's serpentine and inconclusive quest is worked out in terms of parallels and antitheses. He is a millionaire industrialist. He apparently leads a happy life with his wife and two children. In fact, he belongs to a crepuscular zone of consciousness in which the Eastern and the Western ethos strangely co-exist with Karmayoga.

Som's troubles get multiplied by an awareness of the irrelevance of life. Life becomes a complicated affair 'a labyrinth within the labyrinth' i.e. connected Karmayoga. It is struggle of Som to come to terms with himself and with desire to know everything in life, whether it is the outcome of his business shares or of one's belief in God; 'the secrets of the universe' (1981:129) or the unfathomable mystery of a woman. Out of deep anxiety Som questions, almost like Hamlet, the purpose of his life.
Som's consciousness of the world with its mysteriousness, its baffling appearances, and his painful awareness of his own imperfections and frailties raise serious questions about life, its meaning and its ultimate goal. He has developed a fear of death ever since his mother died. Som's fear of death is in fact, the obverse of his fear of life. Kashyap tells him, "But all in all, it is not death but life that you are bothered about" (1981:203). What Som, like Hamlet, shrinks from is not death; but the whole burden of living in a world which holds out no meaning to him, unless he apprehends the mystery of life and death.

Som reflects on his dilemma when he and Kashyap are on their way to the temple of Krishna on the mountain in search of the missing shares of Aftab Rai's company. His reflection is the fact that this scepticism, this refusal to take anything for granted without concrete evidence; is not indigenous but something imported. He is a westernized Indian who is devoid of any faith in the religious beliefs of his community with his spiritual homelessness and loss of faith; he is given to pragmatism and rationalism which in turn, lead him to an impasse of intellectual doubts and anxiety. He inherits his curiosity, scepticism as well as his logical approach to life from his father. His father was a brilliant chemist. His mother poses a contrast to both Som and his father. As his faith in science and reason tottered, he turned to philosophy and metaphysics.

Som has inherited the afflictions of both his father and his grandfather, their hunger of the spirit and of the body. When he demanded a proof of the existence of souls, he replied; "we assume certain things a priori in all exercises of logic." (1981:75) Som's obsession with Anuradha is one of love, a love that does not liberate him and sublimate his desires, as the love of Bilasia did to Billy in The Strange Case. Anuradha becomes more and more the centre of his existence. Som feels, she could be his ultimate salvation. His pursuit of Anuradha and his quest for identity become inseparably blended. As Som's lady-love Anuradha plays a vital role by helping him to know himself. Gargi advises Som, "Go.... with Anuradha .... Don't quarrel. She is you shakti" (1981:121).

Anuradha is mystery incarnate and Som comes to believe that she may well hold the answers to his perplexing questions. Som recognizes this mystery when he says, "she was like the ocean; one could never reach the bottom of her" (1981:132). Som, with all his rationalism and logic, constantly suffers from illusions. His problem is that he is not sure of himself. Just as
he does not know what he wants, he knows not what to believe. He remains in a state of waking dream, half asleep, half awake. He trusts nobody, not even himself.

Som clings to Anuradha for fear of losing her. He throws the entire weight and the turbulence of his life on her which she bears patiently. He decides to go abroad with his wife Geeta. They tour extensively in Europe and America. In a hotel room in Tokyo, Som receives, while sleeping with his wife, a trance-like flash of Anuradha in her erotic pose.

The last two sections of the book bring Som a bigger fund of mysterious experiences which he cannot rationally sort out. His miraculous survival from the heart attack is followed by Anuradha's inexplicable disappearance from his life. Som's tortuous quest for the ultimate reality of life is worked out in terms of parallels and opposites. His encounter with the old man is his encounter with death and with the mysterious other world of the spirit that has always puzzled and threatened him. He feels himself to be a stranger to this world as much as he felt to the world of Aftab and Anuradha.

Som introduces him to Gargi, "This is Dr. Kashyap. He saved my life"(1981, 202). In fact, by his understanding Som was as good as dead when Anuradha came to see him in the hospital. Anuradha had telephoned Dr. Kashyap. She told him that from Som's sick-bed she had gone straight to Gargi and requested her to save Som. Anuradha persisted, begged; wept and threatened. She said that she could not live without Som and would commit suicide if anything happened to him.

The novel ends where it began. Som Bhaskar stays awake, listening to the roaring hollowness in the crevices of his soul and putting down in his minute book the thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season. His loneliness and spiritual agony remain acute.

The novel is a deep psychological exploration of a lost soul. Som Bhaskar is woefully aware of the baffling human predicament of being lost between two worlds. His predicament appeals to the readers so powerfully as a paradigm of the life of modern man. Som Bhaskar is deprived of understanding; it is also because he has never experienced suffering in the way Anuradha and to some extent Aftab has done.

Som Bhaskar, devoid of such suffering and of the understanding that suffering brings in its wake, is lost in introspective solitude. He has lived a life of illusions; of indecision and negation. His intellectual pride counter balances humility and his delusion subverts
comprehension of reality. He does not let himself be guided by the light of his soul. He does not make any metaphysical leap of leap of faith.

The failure of Som Bhaskar to resolve his dilemma is, thus, his individual failure. The novel suggests ways through which Som could come out of his ego-centric isolationism and the maze of intellectual doubt i.e. connected to the Karmayoga. Though he has sex with Anuradha and earlier with Leila Sabnis, he is not happy because of his spiritual hollowness. The labyrinths of life can be resolved through intuition and faith rather than science and reason.

Finally Som Bhaskar tries to kill himself; he is stopped by Geeta; who shakes him "gently as though rousing a man from sleep" (1981: 224). We are given to believe that the unquestioning trust of his intelligent and understanding wife will restore peace to his life.

The Last Labyrinth concerns Som Bhaskar's existentialist angst and agonized mystical carving that remains unfulfilled till the end of the novel.

2.3.1 Sindi Oberoi

Sindi Oberoi is the protagonist. He is a man not only totally alienated from his surroundings and society, but also Karmayogi and Nishkama Karmayogi from all over the world. He gets over his inner pricks and the hope of successful, cheerful life brightens up.

The narration keeps moving from the recent past in Boston to the present in Delhi. Arun Joshi takes us to Nairobi where Sindi Oberoi, the central as well as the narrator of the story, was born; in London where he worked as a dishwasher and barman; to Scotland where he worked at a small village library and discussed religion; God and mysticism with a catholic priest; to Boston where he studied for six years and met June and Babu; and to Delhi where he ultimately settled down.

Sindi is born of an English mother and a Kenyan-Indian father. He is a child of mixed parentage. Since both his parents died early in an air crash near Cairo, Sindi is brought up by an uncle settled in Kenya. All his life is rootless. Sindi’s life takes him to London, Boston and New Delhi. He has his education in London where he meets Anna; a minor artist separated from her husband. Later he is deeply involved with Kathy; an English housewife, who hungers for adulterous love. She leaves Sindi and goes back to her husband because, "she thought marriage was sacred and had to be maintained at all costs" (1968: 168).
The novel opens like a thriller with the scene set in a morgue where Sindi identifies the dead body of his friend Baburao Khemka who has been killed in a car accident. Sindi goes to June and breaks the news of Babu's death. When Sindi visits Babu's family, he finds that Sheila and Mr. Khemka Babu's sister and father have accepted Babu's death with a calm resignation. There is no violent show of grief. Sindi realizes that Babu's family has become rich.

The action of the novel begins with Sindi's affair with June in America which is significant in the wake of his rootless background. June remarks, "Sindi, you are beautiful as a God, and you'd be a foreigner anywhere" (1968: 33). The Foreigner is a moving portrayal of Sindi Oberoi's unhappy, lonely and meaningless existence. His girlfriend June Blyth finds him to be a queer person because he lacks the spontaneity and warmth of a person who enjoys being with others.

The problem that Sindi is facing is that of finding a meaning in the absurdity around him. He considers this life to be full of illusion. He is unable to find his roots anywhere in the world. Thus Sindi is a psychic case. For an insecure man, everybody around his is an enemy and everything is purposeless. His ponders over the purposelessness of his life i.e. called Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Somebody had gotten me without a purpose and so far I had lived without purpose. Throughout the novel, actions of Sindi Oberoi are purposeless, which is function of Nishkama Karmayoga.

Sindi's cause is not only a study of an individual, but also the whole of rootless, powerless, normless, cultural estrangement, social isolation and self estrangement i.e. near to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. He confesses to Khemka that he has no sense of morality and he does not belong to any culture. After the death of his parents, he goes to Scotland and works in a library in a small village for three months. There he discusses thing with a Catholic priest who is interested in converting him but discusses religion, God and mysticism. Sindi also reads a lot of literature and philosophy there and draws the conclusion.

"All love, whether of things or persons or oneself, was illusion. Love begot greed and attachment and it led to possession" (1968: 180). The entire world is full of illusion and disillusion but Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma is beyond them. Like a Vedantic he finds relief in oriental philosophy and the knowledge that he attains is very much in tune with The Bhagavad Gita. When Arjuna saw his relatives standing in the battlefield ready to fight, he suffered from 'moha' and fell a victim to greed and attachment. He says, "My whole body is trembling and my
hairs are standing on end. My bow Gandiva is slipping from my hand and my skin is burning" (1968: 74). Sindi is a devoted to pleasure, and a pleasure seeker. He knows in merry-making and has unlawful relations with Anna, Kathy, Judy, Christine and June. He avoids marrying anyone of them because he convinces himself that he shall remain detached.

Yardi states, Lord Krishna talks of Jnanayoga and Karmayoga. God talks about Jnanayoga in the context of body and soul. Soul impresses upon Arjuna that ultimate reality is soul because it never dies. But Sindi does not see the ultimate reality. He bothers himself about dead parents, dead uncle, dead baby, dead June. *The Bahgavad Gita* preaches that, "wise men do not grieve for the dead or for the living" (1991:29).

A man who practices Jnanayoga is a self controlled person, who treats pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat alike. But Sindi makes a difference in pleasure, gain and loss. He does not want to enjoy pleasure, gain and victory, but he wants to run away from pain, loss and defeat. In order to justify his actions he takes the help of the concept of Karmayoga. According to Ranganathanand, *The Bahgavad Gita* says, "You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of action, and never and never be attached to inaction" (2000:177).

There are three considerations, prescribed duties, capricious work and inaction. Sindi forgets the last tenet altogether. He courts June Blyth, but he believes that accepting its fruit is not right; rather he tries to disown its fruit. He does it only to please his ego on the sweet pretext of not wanting any involvement and detachment. So, he refuses to marry her. In fact, Sindi wishes to become a 'yogi' without acquiring the pre-requisites for becoming one.

Sindi does not check on his senses but talks of acting as if in detachment. He even keeps himself aloof from performing daily routine duties. He does not want to fall in love because, 'to love is to invite others to break your heart.' He does not want to discharge his duties. He feels the pangs of pain time and again. He is not a detached person. He loves June to the extent of possessing her. Detachment in Sindi's case is another name for inaction i.e. called Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. He confesses:

Detachment at that time had meant inaction. No I had begun to see the fallacy in it. Detachment consisted of right action and escape from it. Sindi felt alienated and considered himself a foreigner but because he did not understand the real meaning of detachment. He considers this world to be only illusion since it is not permanent. Sindi meets Muthu who is not only really a Karmayogi but also Nishkama Karmayogi. It is from him that Sindi learns his
lesson of Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Muthu becomes for him the most appropriate example of the ideal man, the man of steady wisdom or a silent sage.

Sindi cancels his visit to Bombay where he has been offered a job. He refuses to be a wanderer any more. He realises that detachment in the real sense of the term should not only be from the world but also from one's own self. Sindi's sincere action restores him and his company's peace and happiness.

He mentions the concept of 'Karma' as enunciated in the Kathapnishada. He is now a disillusioned; sad but wise man who is able to look at life objectively and dispassionately with a view to doing something meaningful. He has obeyed the call of his soul. The novel ends with Sindi settling down to life and with a vague suggestion of a new relationship between Sindi and Sheila who have discovered each other amidst suffering to him; now becomes a source of amusement. Sindi is a pilgrimage from existentialism to Karmayoga. Having become a 'Karmayogi' he finds his equanimity and salvation in the land of his ancestors.

At the end of the novel Sindi visits Muthu's family. Muthu lives in a one-room tenement with a dozen other people. Sindi is deeply touched by the dirt of the place and the miserable Muthu's lot. He notices the hypocrisy and artificiality of the modern society in America. He participates at the dancing party arranged by the International Students' Association' pretend to be courteous.

Sindi finds that Mr. Khemka is obsessed with the unscrupulous accumulation of wealth. Mr. Khemka had sent Babu to America for higher education in hope that Babu will be an asset to the family's social status. He is unable to cope with the American system of education. Babu is thrown out of college when he fails all his courses the second time. The father fear and intellectual weakness of Babu drive June to despair. The Babu-June marriage does not come off when Babu realizes that June has been sleeping with Sindi and uses this as an excuse for driving himself to death.

Sindi had met June, a beautiful, sensual, affectionate, feminine American at a foreign students' party. He loves her intensely and has sex with her but avoids getting married to her. The talk of detachment alienates June from him. She turns to Babu when Sindi does not respond to her insistent pleas to marry her. When June leaves him for Babu then Sindi realises his strong love for June. He feels depressed and agonised when June refuses to meet him. Sindi cries at June's refusal.
Sindi's various experiences in life lead to his decision to leave America. He migrates to India, the land from where his forefathers had come. Sindi soon comes to realize, "In truth it had only been a change of theatre from America; the show had remained unchanged" (1968: 207). Sindi drifts over the surface of earth because he feels himself to be a misfit in the ultra modern society of Boston. But his foreign background makes him a misfit in the Indian society also.

Sindi is a humane person who sympathizes with Babu, June and Sheila when they are in trouble. When Babu fails in his exams, Sindi meets the Dean in order to save Babu from being thrown out of the college. When June informs Sindi that she is carrying Babu's child and seeks his help and advice, Sindi decides to marry June. Sindi's involvement with Sheila and her father's business further reveals his humaneness. He assures Sheila that Babu died in a car accident; Sindi owns up that he was responsible for Babu's death.

When the dishonest business ethics of Mr. Khemka lands him in the jail and his firm is sealed by the income tax people; Sindi works in the interest of the employees. After a talk with Muthu, Sindi realizes that detachment means getting involved with the world i.e. called Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma; because Nishkama Karmayogi is beyond the attachment and detachment. So the Nishkama Karmayoga is beyond both of them. He saves the various clerks from losing their livelihood and jobs. His secret love for Sheila is another ray of hope with which we put the novel down.

Sindi's individual self is estranged yet his personality has contact with the world; which is his ultimate predicament. His individual self, the truth seeker, remains submerged like an iceberg; not only in America but also during his employment in Mr. Khemka's firm. His concerns are not only unintelligible but also even alien to others in the firm and in the world. The moment he falls in love, his detachment breaks down and his refusal to marry seems ridiculous unless we think of it in terms of a booster given to the action of the novel. Sindi's all the action is directly and indirectly connected to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

2.3.2 Billy Biswas

Billy or Bimal Biswas is the central character. Novel rotates round him. The child of Nature (Billy) joins the primitive community of tribal in central India and lives happily. He is definitely a "strange-case" for the psycho-analysts and Karmayogi with the Nishkama Karma.

The narrator in this novel is Romi (Romesh Sahai), a friend of the protagonist Billy whom he met as a student in New York. Romi had met Billy while hunting for accommodation
in New York. Billy offers to share with him his apartment in Harlem, the black ghetto of America. Billy has chosen to live there because as he tells Romi, he finds it "the most human place" (1971: 9). Romi accepts Billy's offer and the sharing of the flat develops into an unusual friendship which lasts till the end.

Billy Biswas is a man of brilliant, intellect, profound sensibility and extraordinary obsessions. He belongs to a rich respectable family; his father being a judge of India's Supreme Court. His father expects him to take up engineering as a career and Billy does go to America for a degree in engineering. However, Billy earns his Ph.D. in Anthropology because that is his first love. Billy is basically an anthropologist and studies deeply the tribal attitudes and customs. In fact, his whole life is organized "around his interest in the primitive man" (1971: 14).

Billy talks about a play Avocambo which is running off Broadway. It is quite an odd play, really. He has liked the play because one can quite imagine something like that happening to oneself. The statement gives Romi a glimpse of restlessness of Billy's soul. She anticipates Billy's disappearance in the Saal forests.

The Bhubaneshwar episode, Billy had experienced the urge to live like a primitive man in a primitive world. It had seemed to him that the sculptures at Konark can give him a solution to his questions about the problem of his identity, “who was I? Where had I come from? Where was I going?” (1971: 122) Billy's Swedish friend, Tuula Lindgren; who has come to the United States for advance training in psychiatric social work is "the second person who had any clue to what went on in the dark, inscrutable, unsmiling eyes of Bimal Biswas” (1971: 19).

After his father's death, Romi returns to India and enters the Indian Administrative Service after passing the competitive examination. Billy also returns to India and starts teaching Anthropology at Delhi University. He decides to get married. His marriage to Meena, who is a sophisticated and most beautiful girl of his own Bengali community, is not a success.

All of a sudden; Billy is seized by a phantom which makes him anxious to leave the so-called civilized world of greed, riches and hypocrisy. His love for the primitive life makes him leave his wife; his only child and his aged parents. Billy disappears in the Saal forests of the Maikala Hills. His restless soul escapes from the civilization to the jungle. Billy forsakes meaningless existence in civilized world because he feels choked by the phoney atmosphere of the modern society. He rejects the artificiality, hollowness and snobbery of the sophisticated people. Billy rejects the post independence pseudo-western values.
Billy Biswas finds his fulfilment and the essence of human existence in the primitive tribal life. He likes living with the foresters because they are not materialistic. He likes the lifestyle of the primitive people who go in for uninhibited drinking and dancing and orgiastic lovemaking. He explains his mysterious disappearance to Romi. He chooses to respond to the tribal girl Bilasia's call. He is madly in love with Bilasia who he feels is "the essence of that primitive force that had called me night after night, year after year" (1971: 142). The sexual union with Bilasia is the climactic moment of the forces of darkness claiming Billy: "It was closer to madness, the terrible madness of a man who after great sin and much suffering finally finds himself in the presence of his God" (1971: 141-142). Madness and God are very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Billy's union with Bilasia makes him discover, "that bit of himself that he has searched for all his life and without which his life is nothing more than the poor reflection of a million others" (1971: 142). The ideal union of Billy and Bilasia is an ideal Karma in the tribal world. The people believe that Billy is endowed with magical and supernatural powers. Billy's unconscious self drives him to give up the unchanging respectability of his high middle class society and seek his roots in the company of a primitive tribe. He hears the voice of his soul and gives up the materialistic society. The sophisticated Meena represents the phoney materialism whereas the primitive Bilasia represents the Satpura hills. Ten years after his mysterious disappearance, Billy meets Romi in the jungle. Romi is now a District Collector, who is on a tour of the Maikala Range and is startled at Billy's appearance. Billy is completely tribal. He is a tribal in dress, behaviour and speaks in his impeccable English accent.

Dhavan states Billy visits Romi again after a few days and cures his wife Situ's agonizing chronic migraine with some herbs. Much against Situ's husband's warning, Situ lets Billy's wife and father know about Billy's being alive. Mr. Rele, the Superintendent of Police zealously carries out the search. During one of the raids on the tribal people, a constable is speared to death by Billy. The police party hunts Billy down to his hidden lair and despite Romi's best efforts; Billy is killed by the hastily shot bullet of a policeman. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is thus "disposed of in the only manner that a humdrum society knows of disposing its rebels, its seers, its true lovers." (1986:23)

Billy's predicament results from his bi-cultural situation. He is presented in his own inner struggle. The novel is a critical of the upper class Indian society. Mathur and Rai aptly remark that the Strange Case is a fictional representation of the "universal myth of the primitive in the heart of man ever alienating him from the superficial and polished banalities of modern
This novel is not only the primitive alienating but also primitive Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Billy Biswas is a man of extraordinary obsessions. He belongs to this third category, the category of rebels and visionaries and lovers of humanity. He is a rebel. He is a man of conviction, and has the courage to translate his vision into a reality. So his reality is connected with Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

The novel is divided into two sections. The first section deals with Billy's social and intellectual background and offers insight into the strong primitive urge in him; which impelled him to leave the civilized society. The second section concentrates on the transformation of Billy through his contact with the organic life in the primitive world of central India, his new life as a primitive, and the final disaster.

Ghosh writes, Billy's death accentuates the contrast between the ephemeral authorities of the so-called organized, civilized society. Romi represents the primal and invulnerable force of Billy's world, its weird unintelligibility and inexplicable glory. After the death of Billy, they all very ruefully realize that Billy was "one of the numerous man-gods of the primitive pantheon" for whom the "civilized world had no equivalent." Dhunia beautifully sums up the real significance of Billy for the tribals: "He is like rain on parched lands, like balm on a wound. These hills have not seen the like of him since the last of our kings passed away" (1996:87).

Billy's case has been terribly pathetic indeed; and it satirizes the insupportable suffocation caused by our modern materialistic society. The novel mentions two cultures throughout the novel with Karmayoga.

Billy is not a tragic hero. He does not rise to noble heights from which he might fall. He does not possess noble traits - the tribals believe him to be a reincarnation of past king but he does not himself believe this nor does he have that necessary flaw which might cause his downfall. The most important act of Billy in the novel is, however, his disappearance from home, family and the civilised world and whatever he says or does earlier is but a movement in that direction. Billy fails to establish any communion with his wife and the life around him because of his uncompromising character. So far as he is concerned it is not an escape from the realities of life but an escape into real life from the sordid meaningless existence in the so-called civilized world. Billy is a movement from darkness to light.

We gather from Dhunia; Billy's closest friend among the tribes as well as Bilasia's uncle, that Billy has been a priest and some kind of magician to these tribes. The sexual union with Bilasia is the climactic moment of Billy's life for which he had searched all through his life. The
primitive Bilasia represents the Satpura Hills and through her, the author aims at connecting culture with culture and tradition with modernity.

Though Billy is mad, he responds to Indian standards. In America, he likes the company of the Negros. Meena fails to satisfy his thirst and he is attracted to Tuula and finally turns to Bilasia. He looks like a stranger to our culture. The novel describes two cultures. Billy is not only connected to civilized culture but also connected to the Negros culture. At last he is away from both of them and connected to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. He finds enlightenment far away from corruption and material civilization and now he is renouncer of Meena, Romi and modern world. Bilasia fulfils his choice of right woman; so Billy is a real Nishkama Karmayogi because he is not only renouncer of the modern world but also ancient world.

Billy marries Bilasia, the tribal girl with beauty and dignity. He tells Romi that without such a choice, his life would have been disastrous. It is Billy's resolve to flee suffocation that supplies energy to the novel and it is his death at the hands of predatory world that lend pathos to a story of heroic idealism. Billy as clash between 'nature' and 'art' symbolised as 'tribal' and 'civilised' lives constitutes the pivot around which the theme of alienation revolves.

Billy dies of bullet wounds. His ashes reach the civilised world, from which Billy had opted out. The novel has been disposed of in the only manner that a humdrum society does with its rebels, its seers and its true lovers. In brief Billy; as Romi believes desperately pursued the tenuous thread of existence to its bitter end, no matter what trails of glory or shattered hearts he left behind in his turbulent wake i.e. connected Karmayoga.

*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, on the contrary, is almost entirely devoted to the hero's experiences in the tribal world. Billy's is not merely a search for the tribal way of living; he is "seeking something else" (1971: 189). And his quest is the search for truth. When the purusha (Billy) comes into communion with the prakriti (Bilasia), he is capable of realising his potential and attaining godhood. Billy's renunciation represents his reaction to the so-called sophisticated way of life. As the novelist he tells us; what Billy rejects is the post-independence pseudo western values. It is this revulsion to the modern pseudo-culture that determines Billy's actions, words and behaviour.

Billy's life is cut short by the bullet of a havildar and he dies uttering "you bastards His case is disposed off in the only manner that humdrum society knows of disposing its rebels, its seers and its true lovers (1971:238). He himself seems to be aware of such a development. He
represents in a way the collective unconscious of human beings which give a definite, but less intelligible; form to psychic contents and human actions.

The most significant aspect of the novel is the way in which Billy's quest for the absolute merges with the quest for his personal identity.

Prasad says, "Billy is like those saints of India who want to realize unity with the divine through awakening of their senses. Like the Sadhakas of Tantra, Billy hankers after self realization; the experience of identification with the cosmos, the divine. He gets a taste of it and he cannot return to Meena or Mr. Biswas. For him Bilasia is 'prakriti' and he is 'purusha' and the cosmic whole can be experienced in their union" (1999:30).131

i.e. connected with Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. In this sense, Billy's quest is more through going and comprehensive for a solution ranging beyond the philosophic religious texts of the Upanishads, yet Indian and spiritual through and through.

2.3.3 Ratan Rathor

Ratan Rathor goes to Delhi to make his career. He rises to a special assistant and finally becomes an officer of the Government of India. He becomes a cheat, a bribe taker, a money-maker, a drunkard, and a womanizer. So he is called Mr. Crisis of character. In The Apprentice, the social reality becomes the nucleus of the novel and Ratan Rathor's story is a response to it and his consequent suffering and salvation i.e. not only connected to Karmayoga but also Nishkama Karmayoga. The father of Ratan Rathor is the hero of the novel who is like Mahatma Gandhi. Ratan's mother was critical. She coughed, groaned and spat blood. But new India forgot Gandhi's values. Here Ratan is disillusioned.

The protagonist Ratan Rathor is caught in the meshes of his own confusions, leading to greed and corruption resulting in the death of his friend, the Brigadier, for which he himself is indirectly responsible, for it was he who was instrumental in the supply of defective ammunition resulting in the Brigadier's desertion and his consequent ignoring and suicide. Ratan Rathor comes of an impoverished middle class family. He has to find his own way and pay his own price in this world. He is the child of a double inheritance. His father was patriotic and courageous; but his mother was endowed with worldly wisdom i.e. connected with Karmayoga.

Ratan Rathor finds torn by two conflicting philosophies of life extremely difficult from the very beginning to live smoothly in the "petrified" and "frozen" world of civilization. He faces tension and resentment precisely because he has to put up with totally divergent social norms and
expectations. His life is characterized by chaos, absurdity, brutality, disorganization and insensitivity. He is endowed with a heightened sensibility, feels crushed under the growing weight of the meaningless and isolation for his innermost nature and surroundings i.e. near to Karmayoga.

Ratan Rathor's humiliating experiences of job-hunting make him realize the cruelty of the human lot. He himself becomes "at the age of twenty one, a hypocrite and a liar; in short, asham" (1974:28). As a clerk he works "harder than almost anybody in the department except the Superintendent himself" (1974:37). Ratan is nevertheless always haunted by the morbid fear of losing his job and suffers from a keen desire for getting promotion and an intense preoccupation with work. Ultimately, he succumbs inescapably to the needs of his job and rewarded with security and promotion; ends up by accepting a bribe when he least needs money" (1974:61).

Ratan grows violent and rebellious even at the thought of "careers and bourgeois filth" (1974:41). He tries to seek "solace from the annals of corruption" (1974:112). At every stage he puts up an initial resistance only to discover the futility of his efforts. The whole business of living in a muddle confuses him all the more and he fails to differentiate between right and wrong. "The feeling generated in me a great confusion. What had I done? What had I done which I should not have done? What was right, what was wrong? What was the measure for doing things or not doing them?" (1974:72, 73). This confusion is called action or Karma, but when at last this Karma turn into Nishkama Karma, then Ratan also turns into Nishkama Karmayogi which is the aim of the human beings in the world.

Ratan Rathor's dilemma is typical of an average product of this highly sophisticated civilization. With a troubled conscience, Ratan Rathor goes from place to place without finding any peace or solace. He confesses to Himmat Singh, "That is a terrible sensation...the realization that one's life has been a total waste, a great mistake; without purpose, without results. There are many sorrows in the world, but there is nothing in the three worlds to match the sorrow of a wasted life. All else thoughts of revenge, of pleasure, of pain, pale before it, are made pointless" (1974:140). This action is directly or indirectly connected with Karmayoga and at last it should turn into Nishkama Karmayoga which is very close to without purpose, without results and pointlessness.
Ratan is keen on finding out the "purpose" of life and all its activities. But he takes almost a lifetime to free himself from the shackles of the valueless urban civilization. In his eagerness, he visits the temple to derive courage from the world of religion. He discovers that even religion is not free from corruption; it is corrupt and can hardly be expected to provide any solutions to various problems of this meaningless world i.e. not only Karmayoga but also Nishkama Karmayoga. The religious corruption and the meaningless world are included into meaningless world at last both of them turn into Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Ratan Rathor is shaken out of his moral inertia when he sees the faceless head of his friend; the Brigadier. He tries to restore his mental peace by undergoing; finally, the most difficult penance in the world. Every day he wipes outside the temple the shoes of the congregation i.e. very close to Karmayoga.

This novel has suggested common man's life's problems remedy. Ratan Rathor comes to realize and rightly so that life may well be a zero, but "it need not be negative" (1974:142). He learns, ultimately, the lessons of humility and resignation to the will of God which is also called Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma and what he can without vanity, without expectations, and also without cleverness. Ratan is symbol of Karmayogi and at last he tries to turn into Nishkama Karmayogi.

In fact, it is not only the story of Ratan Rathor alone but also may be of every one of us. He is the narrator who is The Apprentice who turns into a fake, a sham, a corrupt official and an exhausted family man. When he comes to know of the blatant error he has made and that the direct victim of his act happens to be his close friend, the Brigadier in the novel; he is horrified at the atrocity of the whole thing. Ratan Rathor is not an intellectual like Sindi or Billy but an ordinary man of less than ordinary deeds should appreciate the distinction between zeros as negative and implicitly zero as positive speaks for the characters development.

Ratan is a temporary clerk. He cannot afford to lose his job. He departs from his father's ideals. He is no more heroic. He has lost his courage. Ratan's decline is the process of depersonalization. He makes compromises but every compromise bites his conscience. He still feels upset. Corruption has not seeped to the last layer of his soul. The Superintendent hints one day that if Ratan marries his cousin's daughter, he may become an officer. The holy book asks people to perform 'Karma dispassionately and if a man wants to attain self-realization; he should renounce actions and submit himself to God. Ratan gropes for God; wants to realize Him not for
salvation, but for knowing the relevance of his actions. His unconscious reminds him of a different set of norms where good and evil do not overlap. God has no concern for man and it is only his "Karma" that matters.

The death of the Brigadier is catalytic. In fact the Brigadier is betrayed; he betrayed; loses honour, even his life. He acts as a catalytic agent and participates in the sense of evil in Ratan and tormenting him with repentance. Repentance is the key to redemption. He develops a philosophy that works in practical life and is an offshoot of the doctrine of "Karma". He feels that God lives in human hearts and not in the temples. Shoe shining kills his vanity and contracts his inflated self. Ratan gets peace because he has discovered an equation in practical life. Old memories haunt him; but in course of time, he hopes to get rid of them after he is purified. He finds faith to work out his own rehabilitation. The purification is to be attained not only by "sadhana" or any ritual; but also by "Karma" and Karmayoga, at last it should turn into Nishkama Karma i.e. called peacefulness.

Ghosh comments, Ratan strips him self of all protective pretences and reveals more and more of his hypocrisy, cowardice, corruption, debauchery and finally his great betrayal. An important aspect of Ratan's character, as that of his confession, is his candour and sincerity. His extreme helplessness his ineffable agony and solitude are also reminiscent of the Rime of the Ancient Mariner (1963).:

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony"(1996:112).140

The impact of Ratan's fall from innocence and virtue on his psyche had been devastating. But the experience had enlightened, enriched and humanized him. The Apprentice is a striking study of belief in Karma and purification of the soul, and it commands the abiding values of humility and self purification in human life. He begins his life with high ambitious ideals to be honest, true to his self and make a mark in the world like his father. But he finds himself a misfit in the modern world. So he is away from ideal world. He finally realises that one cannot live for oneself because no human act is performed in isolation and without consequence. So each act should be performed with a sense of responsibility; so out of acute sense of alienation and a quest to understand the meaning of life. At last, he would like to amend his sins of cowardice, dishonesty, and even indirect murder. So his penance is not physical but spiritual. He is willing to pay the price by suffering humiliation.
The Apprentice shows a remarkable self awareness in ruthlessly exposing his over subtleties, fads, preoccupations, self deceptions, ego and boredom of the dark phase of his life. Kumar comments, the contrast between the earlier Ratan and The Apprentice has hitched his wagon to the star of success. Ratan has passed through the dark night of the soul; is brought out in the anger, remorse, and intense suffering that one feel in the tone of narrative (1997:115).

Ratan clears the defective war material. The Suprident of Polic who makes a penetrating enquiry exposes Ratan Rathor's grave offence but for lack of proper evidence helplessly pleads with him of confession as a final act of saving his Brigadier friend. Ratan, of course, bravely walks out, mentally resolved to save his friend, but the way he relaxes, dodges and finally writes out his confession, modifies it instantly and tries to justify his act by convincing himself of his "innocence" and finally pocketing the letter for ever shows his efforts to glaze his cowardice with something that passes for martyrdom and innocence by turns. The poor Brigadier, however, cannot wait till his friend makes up his mind and he kills himself. So Ratan Rathor with a deeply troubled conscience goes to Himmat Singh to avenge his friend's death but soon realizes the absurdity of the whole thing and reflects: "There are many sorrows of a wasted life. All else, thoughts of revenge, a pleasure, of pain pale before it are made pointless" (1974:140).

The Apprentice is neither an existentialist novel nor is a confessional story, nor a modern novel depicting human angst, nor even a success and failure story but an Indian tale which goes to the deeper resources of the tradition to seek more than snap solutions to problems, to involve oneself in an exploration which gives an inner strength in the presence of such contemporary anarchy i.e. very close to Karmayoga.

The novelist pins his hopes on the new generation and ends the novel with a positive note of affirmation. Ratan Rathor started his life as every young man full of ideals and illusions does. Although Ratan is well-settled in life, he cannot feel a sense of satisfaction because he holds his career dear and sacrifices the principles that have guided him all the while for the sake of confirmation and promotion. Ratan is forced to marry a girl related to the Superintendent; so Ratan becomes a hypocrite. His hypocrisy brings him a car, a bungalow, and a good place in society at the cost of his peace of mind. In short, he becomes a whore in the pursuit of his career and ends up by accepting a bribe when he least needs money.
Ratan realises that there is no end to human vanity or for that matter; to human stupidity. He realises the gravity of his sin. At last his alert consciousness alienates him from the degenerated society. He realises that his life has been a great waste. He has lost his self and felt the anguish of loss. His existential decision to recover the lost self through an act of penitence reveals the need to realize and prize one's integrity.

The protagonist Ratan Rathor is the son of a freedom fighter. He feels sad after refusing the enormous bribe of Rupees ten thousand offered by a contractor's son. In his degradation he goes to the extent of passing defective war material accepting bribe; which results in the death of his own friend the Brigadier. The whole business of living is so much muddled and confused that he fails to distinguish between right and wrong.

Ratan Rathor bears a striking resemblance to Conrad's Jim. He is full of revolt against the bourgeois ideal of self-preservation; loses his dignity and honour in a moment of crisis. His life is characterized by chaos, disorganisation, absurdity, cruelty, brutality and insensitivity. The unclean political and administrative set up has prevented universally accepted ethical norms and has encouraged the unscrupulous pursuit of wealth and power.

In Ratan's quest for self discovery, quite unlike those of the other protagonists, he has betrayed true self, pawned his soul which needs to be retrieved. Ratan, however, does not know the right path on his soul, his self, his authentic existence. Ratan is placing himself at the doorway calls to mind the Biblical tax collector waiting at the doorway calling unto God. His invocation is an expression of helplessness and humility, the greatest of prayer. Hari Mohan Prasad states that Joshi "develops a philosophy that works in practical life and is an offshoot of the doctrine of "Karma". The solution is not far away from the spiritual limits. He is an apprentice to God as much as to men. He is just beginning his lessons from God and Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Prabhakar writes, he finds strength in spiritual humility which prompts him to seek for the second time a basis for action. He starts the lowest of low levels - polishing the shoes of the congregation at a temple door. In his search for an absolutely personal value system subservient to a subjective understanding of life, the modern man is bound to lose himself in the quagmire of meaninglessness, as the quest for pleasure destroys his capacity for happiness (1995:282-283).
The colonial consciousness in the novel has divided Ratan's soul. He is tempted by women, drinks and easy life. He finds changed values, truth, honesty, hard labour and character, all meaningless i.e. near to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

2.3.4 Som Bhaskar

_The Last Labyrinth_ (1981) is dedicated to his three children. Som Bhaskar is the protagonist. He is married to a woman of his choice, Geeta who has borne him two children. Som Bhaskar is an ever dissatisfied, restless person. He is relentlessly or mercilessly driven by undefined hungers of possession of an object a business enterprise and a woman.

The protagonist becomes an inheritor of the modern complex forces of tradition existential, absurdist, Vedantic and atheistic, and therefore a true modern Indian. _The Last Labyrinth_ assimilates the existential anxiety, the Karmik principles, the longing for the vitals of life in the mystical urge of Som Bhaskar. He is a millionaire, educated in the world's finest universities. He has knowledge of "Krishna" and of "Buddha". Aftab introduced Som to Gargi as a lucky one with "no problems in life" (1981:98).

A part of Som's legacy was certainly his father's concerns. Later doctor Kashyap tells Som "you are like your father" (1981: 203). He meets Aftab along with Anuradha, at the International Hotel in Delhi. Delhi and Bombay are represented as the centres of the earth in the novel. Som is apparently after Aftab's business, but Anuradha has different insights, sitting significantly in the 'dargah'. Som considers himself lucky to get an invitation from Aftab to their place, Benares.

The singularly striking thing to Som in Aftab's house is the haveli, for its size and more for his own state of mind. Aftab takes Som around the Lal Haveli, which appears to him a maze and labyrinthine.

Anuradha would not agree to Som's description. She finds nothing labyrinthine about the 'haveli'. The haveli looks a labyrinth to both Aftab and to Som but not to Anuradha. She had great insight into the mystery of life but Gargi like her legendary namesake was a mystic with supernatural powers.

Som becomes conscious of the pressure of the voids only when he visits the Manikarnika Ghat. He is aware of the voids that press him though yet ignorant of their origin and object. Som's affair with Leela Sabnis fizzled out precisely for this reason. Som felt that he needed a
A unified world of matter and spirit. "... something, somebody, somewhere in which the two worlds combined" (1981: 82).\textsuperscript{146}

Som is resolved to have no struck with Aftab and Anuradha anymore. He dismissed them as impostors and their claims to mystery as ridiculous. He along with Geeta undertakes a tour of Europe, America, and Japan. He is back in India thoroughly exhausted and drained of energy confines himself to bed for days. So he leaves for Delhi on business. Som was driven to Benares to meet Gargi. "For he, felt at home with her... She understands, the only one who understands." (1981: 117).\textsuperscript{147}

When Som begs Gargi for help, she says that God would send someone to help him; intimating mildly but unequivocally that an enduring solution is obtained largely through a reference to a domain beyond i.e. connected to Karmayoga.

Later, Anuradha, deeply devoted to Krishna suggested to Som to go to the temple on the hills to pray to the God there when he had been deeply harassed. Som scorned such proposals. He would love to be sufficient unto himself, but feels helpless, and terribly limited in the following night after Anuradha request to him to go to the temple.

On the day of the Janmashtami, Aftab, Anuradha and Som set out for the temple. Som was soon backing in Bombay. His vanity suffered humiliation at Anuradha's refusal. He thought could be retaliated only by buying up all the shares of Aftab's company regardless of the cost.

Anuradha sent a package to Som through Aftab, after his recuperation. It was a small statue of "a little silver Krishna, flute and all - I got this from Gargi. You must always keep it with you" (1981: 169).\textsuperscript{148} Som says that he wants to meet Krishna "personally." The third part of the novel is a hunting for the shares which is also a doomed journey of the soul, a pilgrimage undertaken not in the right frame of mind. Vasudev; the panda, tells Som that everybody goes there - the old, the crippled, and the blind.

Som visited the temple in which there was no deity, but only a flame. He wanted to test and verify. He could not encounter God. The pilgrimage is doomed, even though he secured the shares. The problem is one of belief and he says, "Probably I want to believe. But one cannot order belief" (1981: 213).\textsuperscript{149} This is the basic questions all over the world's people.

Abraham states, Krishna fails him finally even Anuradha turns away. Back in Mumbai, Som is pursued by Aftab's agent to take revenge on him. He puts the revolver "casually" onto his temple. But for Geeta's intervention, Som would have shot himself. His quest is a doomed one which terminates with a whimper long before he attains his self, peace and
harmony. His life is an apparent failure. He knows he badly needed belief; but it could not be ordered. He could find himself provided by related himself to the realms of the spirit. Som understands it as a possibility, but only as a possibility which he fails to realise in himself. Som's quest thus ends on a very unsatisfactory note, because when he knows his Karma is attached something for selfishness then who is unsatisfied (1999:48).  

But when he knows that his Karma must turn into Nishkama Karma then he may be completely peaceful in his life. Som Bhaskar is representative of the common men in the world, but when he knows our Karma is selfless i.e. Nishkama then he has achieved peacefulness in his life.

In the end, Som's disbelief is not a haughty disregard of metaphysical domain as it was in the beginning i.e. very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. He confesses to Gargi: "I want to assure I am not vain. I am not arrogant. I am curious. I want to know. He may be overcurious but not vain" (1981: 214). This is promising and he is hopefully on the way to realisation.

A multitude of possibilities were open before Som that he failed to exploit, having been cocooned in his self. There was Anuradha who, Gargi had told him, was her Shakti, the animating fleshly form and who was on her way to resurrect Krishna for him; but he being always in a labyrinth, could not get to that depth in her even in and through her sexuality.

Prasad point out, "Som Bhaskar's dilemma takes full cognizance (knowledge) of the post-Neitzschean Western world where God is dead and the Indian life suffused with the teachings of Krishna in The Bahgavad Gita that he is everywhere and in everything"(1986:236).

The Bahgavad Gita mentions four yogas. Karmayoga is one of them and Nishkama Karma is its ultimate result.

Arun Joshi seems to say that rising up to the crack is well within the capability of ordinary mortals. Hence an encounter with his genuine self Som could not because he was not earnest enough. Benares did not fail him. Krishna did not turn away. Only Som Bhaskar bungled it Gargi and Anuradha testify against Som. Even as Som Bhaskar fails, the possible proposed solution is well within the Upanishadic - advaitic framework i.e. solution is also called Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

"The presence of Krishna in the mother's room, in the human forms of the dancing pain on Janmastami day in Benares, in the mountains, in the blue flame burning since ages, is an implicit demonstration of the essence of Indian spiritual heritage that the Atman (Brahma, God)
is in every atom. And Som Bhaskar himself sadly thinking that many individual only by beholding "such flames had discovered their oneness with the Brahma" (1981:120). That means when any yogi is meditated to the Sadaguru or God or Brahman at last he had discovered the flames in everywhere which is only one like Sadaguru or God or Brahma. But when that Karma turns into Nishkama Karma then there are no two flames or one flame i.e. called Nishkama Karma or peacefulness all over the world. Then that yogi himself is peaceful and the entire world becomes an embodiment of peacefulness.

Som Bhaskar is not only the narrator hero but also a wealthy young industrialist in The Last Labyrinth. He has everything - an extraordinary wife, a fine education. He returns from Harvard to inherit an empire in plastics factory. He is a name to find out with in the industrial world of Bombay. His father was a scientist who delved deep into psychological truths. At Harvard, Som completed a paper on Pascal. He knew of Krishna and the Buddha at Sarnath. He knew that money was dirt like a whore.

Som Bhaskar flits from one pleasure to another. He becomes the incarnation of the quest for the joy of life. He goes in search of new experiences whether they concern business. He has a terrible sense of emptiness of voids within and voids without. Everything in this mysterious world, he finds, is "a haze".

He gets fascinated by an obsolete world and the world of Anuradha and Aftab and by the labyrinth of the haveli. Som Bhaskar encounters Anuradha for the first time when he is already thirty five in a Delhi hotel at a reception organized by Aftab Rai for the Plastic Manufacturers Association. Anuradha lives with a lover (Aftab Rai) strikes as being labyrinthine. Aftab Rai had invited Som Bhaskar to Benares and when Som visits him at his residence, Lal Haveli, he feels that "it was a maze that we were moving through. Perhaps the entire haveli had been built as a maze. It was a labyrinth." (1981:34-35). It is darkly charming Anuradha who casts a spell on Som.

Indeed Anuradha, the haveli and its owner Aftab Rai represent antiquity and are a mystery, a labyrinth to the rational mind of Som. He wants to grab the plastics company of Aftab acquiring its shares as also Anuradha, Aftab's mistress.

Aftab Rai is also a plastic manufacturer, who is Som's double. His conversations with Som invariably tend to be philosophical. Though he loves Anuradha, he does not claim any
ownership of her. His love for her is deep but not possessive. In fact, he respects her personality and would never imagine imposing himself on her.

Anuradha exercises such an overpowering fascination over Som that he neglects his business; his family and his health in an effort to win her. He makes frequent trips to Benares; his soul and body. And Geeta, his own wife, is all that a wife could be trusting, beautiful and well bred. And yet, Som is drawn into an aching, painful obsessive love for Anuradha.

In a way Som Bhaskar is similar to Billy Biswas because he too is on search of something. Arun Joshi says, "Yes, there is a similarity between the two. The faceless God is prominent in Billy Biswas inner thoughts. One finds the same facelessness in Som Baskar." The above comment is very close to the Nirgun Nirakar i.e. also called Nishkama Karma and Nishkama Karma is outcome of Karmayoga. The faceless God is called Nirgun Nirakara and Nishkama Karma; which is needful all human being in the world.

Som Bhaskar has the capacity to resolve the contradiction of his life. He does not find it his wife, nor in Leela Sabnis. She is the clever young professor who is a scholar, an M.A. and Ph.D. from Michigan and London. She is married and divorced. She is an embodiment of reason and tries to explain Som's sickness through analysis. "You are much too high strung without reason. You are a neurotic, a compulsive fornicator" (1981: 80). Indeed she offers Som the joy of her small and sweaty breasts; she analyzes all Som's problems. There are the two worlds - the world of matter and the world of spirit - separate.

Anuradha was an illegitimate child born of an insane mother. She was molested as a child and underwent many sufferings. She became a film star and was seduced by several producers. Som is amazed to learn that she wanted to be nobody's wife. She has wisdom higher than Som's. Som wants to win her heart and not merely possess her body. She is to lead Som Bhaskar through the subconscious. She is to be taken away from him.

Som Bhaskar has sex with Anuradha, and earlier with Leela Sabnis. He is not happy because of his spiritual hollowness. The labyrinths of Som Bhaskar's life can be resolved through intuition and faith rather than science and reason. In this way Som Bhaskar is not only connected to the Karmayoga but also to the Nishkama Karmayoga. The novel fails to resolve Som's dilemma.
The novel ends with Som making a suicidal gesture by putting the revolver casually to his temple. As he tries to kill himself, he is stopped by Geeta, who shakes him "gently as though rousing a man from sleep" (1981: 224).

*The Last Labyrinth* absorbs the existential anxiety, the karmik principles, the longing for the vitals of life in the mystical urge of Som Bhaskar; who is a young, educated, intelligent, millionaire industrialist who reflects: "Hunger of the Body and Hunger of the Spirit. You suffer from one or the other or both." Som Bhaskar is a modern 'anti-hero' embodying chaos and uncertainty. He cannot believe between life and death, illusion and reality, body and spirit.

Som is a psychological case. He visits Ajanta and experiences a terrible void. Insecurity and inadequacy trouble him. He calls himself a child of Bombay if Aftab is a child of Benares. The contradictory impulses of reason and intuition, doubt and faith, resistance and and submission create a tension in him. Emotionally, Som has become a labyrinth who is a split self. His mind is a labyrinth and so anti life, reality and existence. After every relationship, Som feels more discontented. Leela Sabnis attracts him more powerfully than others. His hunger is of body and spirit both. Hunger of body is a cry for emotional authentication and hunger of spirit is an yearning for self realization.

Som is tormented by his knowledge. Geeta has been married to him for the last ten years and has begot him two daughters. He is a man of two selves. His oneself is a lover of the material, analytical, scientific and sensual world, the womanizer and the scientific analyzer. There is another self inside, his everything is clear cut, transparent, and comfortable till he keeps himself confined to Bombay, his business and merry making.

Som has to make love to Leela Sabnis. He needs something, somebody, and somewhere in which two worlds combine. He cannot understand why his fornications are matched by Geeta as self effacement. Gargi is the daughter of a Sufi pir who has performed miracles. She tells Som that God will send someone to help him. She is a god woman. Her words refresh Anuradha and her look tranquil Som. At last Gargi says that Anuradha is Som's Shakti and he must not quarrel with her; but she is not Som's Shakti in tantrik sense.

The labyrinth symbolism emphasizes the mysteriousness experienced by a man in quest of his identity and truth. Som dislikes Lal Haveli and Benares and Aftab. He has to communicate with Anuradha and Gargi. Som goes to the mountains to encounter Krishna. He is like the character Abhimanyu in the Mahabharata who is not able to come out of the chakravyuha. Som
Bhaskar tries to wriggle himself out of the chakravyuha. Som Bhaskar looses himself in the chakravyuha of life and death, reality and truth, doubt and faith. Som Bhaskar is modernized, secularised, empiricised, sceptical Nachiketa who has been denied the faith and resolution of the Upanishadic model i.e. very close to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Som Bhaskar's dilemma lies deep down in his own self and consciousness. His dilemma has crystallized the sociological, psychological and metaphysical dimensions of human existence. He is an archetype of the new man and *The Last Labyrinth* is a fictional tour-de-force on the chaos of existence and the crisis of consciousness.

Som Bhaskar becomes an inheritor of the modern complex forces of tradition - existential, absurdist, vedantic and atheistic and a true modern Indian. *The Last Labyrinth* assimilates the existential anxiety, the karmik principles, the longing for the vitals of life in the mystical urge of Som Bhaskar. His quest is a doomed one which terminates with a whimper long before he attains his self, peace and harmony.

Som Bhaskar only partially succeeds in his quest for meaning. His wife is not less worthy of attention, as the last act of the novel suggests, in which she offers him warmth, loyalty and understanding. Som Bhaskar, in the novel does not know what he wants. He fills his bourgeois idleness with gossip, parties, conferences and women while the muffled cry "I want, I want, I want" (1981:127) haunts him. His lust of knowledge and women is expressive of his fear of the lack of familiarisation with the world and himself. In this way, Som Bhaskar is directly or indirectly connected with his various functions in Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

In *The Last Labyrinth*, colonial consciousness inflicts Som Bhaskar. He has his education abroad at some of the best universities of the world. In fact inflections of contradictions are in his blood. A close examination of his personality shows insecurity, inadequacy, hollowness and a kind of restlessness in him. On the one hand, he inherits love for womanising, drinking and sexuality from his grandfather; on the other hand he gets the impulse to believe and surrender from his mother. In between two emotions; he becomes a labyrinth. He is torn between the faith and doubt. He is helpless in his effort to explore the possibility of an equation between his colonial consciousness and self realization.

Finally, he neglects his health, business, sanity and undergoes varied changes. The novelist discovers his dilemma and problem of identity as such, there are people whose sense of identity at the end of life does not go beyond... may be what you want is a mystification ...
sooner or later. Som's dilemma is born at the meeting point of colonial consciousness and Indian ethos and there is his futile attempt to escape it. Thus throughout the novel Som Bhaskar is going to do various roles in various events. In this way all his events are connected with various actions and functions. Hence his actions or functions are also connected to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. In this way, Arun Joshi's novels do not only mean but are also directly or indirectly involved with Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

2.4 Conclusion

The novels of Arun Joshi hover between the opposing pulls of attachment and detachment; action and inaction; love and hate; possessiveness and dispossessiveness; down to earth materialism and eternity bound urges of spiritualism and Karmayoga i.e. also called Nishkama Karmayoga.

Sindi Oberoi mentions not only attachment and detachment but also Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. After June's death, Sindi ponders the question of involvement and observes that mere escape from responsibility cannot be a positive interpretation of the word "detachment". He ultimately believes that the right meaning of detachment "consisted in getting involved with the world." So that it may combat hypocrisy and exhibitionism.

Sindi Oberoi is involved with attachment into detachment and detachment into attachment. He also includes Karmayoga in Nishkama Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga in Karmayoga. At last its ultimate aim is peacefulness for the human beings in the world. Detachment at that time had meant inaction detachment consisted of right action and not to escape from it. Detachment consisted in getting involved with the world.

The Bhagavad Gita is about man confronted by the four paths of life: dharma (duty), artha (wealth), Karma (desire) and moksha (liberation). It is based on Karmayoga. Karmayoga presupposes equilibrium through the path of dharma, artha, and Karma. Once this harmony is attained; the path of moksha is smooth, and the final renunciation of the body; the chariot of the soul, take place in full realization of the ultimate soul.

Sindi, the protagonist, seems to have intuitively arrived at the truth that action is better than inaction and that one should learn to be non-attached. Save work done as and for a sacrifice this world is in bondage to work. Therefore, son of Kunti (Arjuna), do thy work as a sacrifice becoming free from all attachment. Thus, Sindi's career seems to illustrate, accordin to
Nikhilananda "one has to understand what action really is, and likewise one has to understand what is wrong action and about inaction. Hard to understand is the way of work" (2008:131-132).

Sindi is not only connected with the action and inaction but also Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma; who is also involved into love and hate but Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. *The Foreigner* demonstrates that the war against evil and inaction is never over and its fields never quiet. Sindi simultaneously narrates the stories of Babu, June, Mr. Khemka and Sheila and passes through many levels of self analysis. Every experience, even when sad and painful, is looked upon as essential to clean up the soul. Every occurrence in Sindi's life is looked upon as educating and every tragedy a part of purifying process. So at last we must go beyond the sad and painful experience and even we must go beyond tragedy and purifying process and turn into Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. Hamlet's "to be or not to be" (1987:277) is translated by Sindi into action and inaction, testing the precepts of religion in reality. It is also translated by Sindi into possessiveness and dispossessiveness testing the precepts of Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma in reality.

Sindi's attempt to detach himself from any action is an outcome of a wrong assumption that the process will free him from social binding. The conflict is in Sindi's personality too. Asnani analyses: "pleasure without involvement and love without possession are the values that condition the attitudes and overall vision of Sindi. His self inflicted alienation saps the vitality of his existence and turns him into a foreigner" (1996:82).

That means Sindi's vision throughout the novel is not only involvement into the self-inflicted alienation but also included into Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Sindi's withdrawal from human relationships is his defence mechanism and his "detachment" from action; which is partly self-imposed, is its expression. Sindi has fear, if not of freedom, because freedom is an illusion, then that of love causing pain. Sindi is a great inquisitor or investigator. While discussing Babu with Mr. Khemka, Sindi points out, "you had a clear-cut system of morality, you had a God, and you had roots in the soil you lived upon. Look at me. I have no roots; I have no system of morality. ... They are neither wise men nor fools. They are just foreigners to your world" (1968:139).

In this way *The Foreigners* are forever away from the world's all action and inaction and even away from attachment and detachment. When Sindi comes to know about June's death that is the moment of revelation. He gets an answer to his
life's quest. "Detachment at that time had meant inaction. Now, I had begun to see the fallacy in it; detachment consisted of right action and not escapes from it. God had set a heavy price to teach just that" (1968: 192). At last The Foreigner treats the theme of "freedom" and 'life' from multiple angles.

In The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, the narrator encounters a mythic underworld. Any intrusion of civilization meets its own catastrophe. Bimal Biswas, an anthropology professor at Delhi University with a professional training received in New York where he meets Ramesh Sahai, the narrator and Tuula Lindgren, suddenly disappears into the tribal world of Bhils, to take refuge against the cruel master of American civilization. He sees that his master is his father who believes in law and engineering, who has a sense of belonging to the universe based on control and rule. This invades his freedom and humanity. Among Bhils, he feels released, free and finds a certain sense of divinity in human life.

However, Billy Biswas' contact with the narrator, Romesh Sahai leads to his catastrophic death. As fish of deep waters cannot survive in shallow ones, the man of the underworld cannot survive in the world of civilization. Billy remained unconcerned with his wife and children since he perpetuated his father's world of promises. Billy's death tells us that we constantly live in spaceless, madness, in a living death. "The wood was wet but it burned for him, consuming him to the ashes we are" (1971: 235). Here he makes the narrator work it out within himself.

The protagonist, Billy Biswas hovers between the opposing pulls of attachment and detachment, action and inaction, love and hate, possessiveness and dispossessiveness, down to earth materialism and eternity bound urges of spiritualism and Karmayoga i.e. connected Nishkama Karmayoga. The novel is about a "mystical urge" and achieving the highest form of self realization. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas does not only record an existential protest against the superficialities of a grossly materialistic civilization and a romantic nostalgia for the simple mode of life of a primitive society but also Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. The novel's device in the plot, characterization, setting dramatizes this central contradiction between spiritual uprootedness and spiritual reawakening by the function of Karmayoga.

Billy's predicament results from his bi-cultural situation, which has the authentic problem of a perceptive young man belonging to the westernized Indian society that has lost its spiritual anchorage. Billy Biswas is presented in his own inner struggle throughout the novel. The novel is
a fictional representation of the "universal myth of the primitive in the heart of man ever alienating him from the superficial and polished banalities of modern civilization.

Billy Biswas is the third category of rebels and visionaries and lovers of humanity. The first section of the novel is an attempt to establish the character of Bill as well as the spiritual decay of his establish; and make his strange case appear convincing. The second part of the novel begins ten years after the disappearance of Billy; with his accidental meeting with Romi. Romi, now a district collector in central India, runs into Billy under extraordinary circumstances.

Billy Biswas settled down in the primitive society which was characterized by innocence, peace and a vital personal relation with the natural world. He comes out in a new role that of a healer, a priest and a magician who cures dying children; wards off tigers, and helps the primitive people with their worldly problems and spiritual troubles. This is Billy's final decision on the civilized society which is not natural but "bastardly" and which has put an end to his quest. Only a handful of ash in a mud pot is all of Billy that only manner that a humdrum society knows of disposing its rebels, its seers, and its true lovers.

The following variants of alienation have been mentioned. (1) Powerlessness, (2) Meaninglessness, (3) Formalessness, (4) Cultural estrangement, (5) Social isolation, (6) Self estrangement. Naturally, Billy was not treated as an outcast, not culturally uprooted, socially isolated and self estranged. He feels totally disenchanted by the Utopia and this results in the realization of wasting his time by living in a civilization where people are simply busy making and spending money i.e. connected Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

The entire novel is an attempt to discuss and justify the primitive instincts of Billy Biswas. The words "strange" and "case" in the title have thematic significance. Billy's case is both strange and not so strange either. It is strange because in a world where everybody is crazy after civilization and its comforts, Billy, the America-educated engineer-anthropologist and a member of the sophisticated upper strata of the Delhi society, opts out of civilization for the primitive life. Thus, Billy and all his events, friend's function is not only possessiveness and dispossessionness but also bound urges of spiritualism and Karmayoga with Nishkama Karma.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas not only delineates the union of the male and the female in the ultimate embodiment of the human spirit, but also the union of Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga, as laid down in the Sankhya system of Indian philosophy. The Karmic law seems to be central to the Bhagavad Gita; there is no intervening agent between you and
God. What you sow you reap. They stress ethical discipline, suffering and sacrifice as the inevitable price for attaining perfection, wholeness of being and self-knowledge.

Billy Biswas uses the image of glow of fire on the top of a distant rock, called Kala Pahar. The fire is actually consummated in the appropriation of man's union with woman and the cultural ethos they embody in their environment.

Having been graced with the vision of the ultimate order, Billy Biswas is the yogi leads his worldly life a Karmayogi; Jeevanmukta and Videhimukta, according to Ranganathananda, "who dwells in his inner self, and is the same in pleasure and pain to when gold or stones or earth are one and what is pleasing or displeasing leave him in peace, who is beyond both; praise and blame, and whose mind is steady and quite." (2011:126). This is ultimate aim of all human beings in all over the world people. Billy Biswas is a representative in the common people of the world.

Through Billy Biswas is mentioned a positive process and negative process; as well as beyond the both of them and the process is also mentioned as Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma throughout the novel.

*The Apprentice* is the third novel. Ratan Rathor is the hero and the narrator. An agonised self-searching follows that ultimately leads him to admission of his defeat. He finds strength in spiritual humility which prompts him to seek for the second time a basis for action. Symbolically, he starts the lowest of low levels - polishing the shoes of the congregation at a temple door. Ratan Rathor is standing at the doorstep of the temple that offers a deserted look. The message at the end that there is hope as long as there are young men willing to learn and ready to sacrifice, willing to pay the price.

*The Apprentice* is the story of Ratan Rathor's progressive corruption and compromises on his way from the small to the smart set, followed by the final atonement and his quest for self discovery. His life is a see-saw battle between the opposite values represented and propagated by his father and mother. Ratan is a true representative of the millions who lead a very humdrum existence.

Ratan became an officer partly as a reward for his marriage to the Superintendent's niece. He has betrayed his true self; pawned his soul, which needs to be retrieved. Ratan does not know the right path to his soul, his self, his authentic existence. His invocation is an expression of helplessness and humility, the greatest of prayer.
Ratan, of course, bravely walks out, mentally resolved to save his friend, but the way he relaxes, dodges and finally writes out his confession, modifies it instantly and tries to justify his act by convincing himself of his cowardice with something that passes for martyrdom and innocence by turns. In short, life is meaningless for Ratan Rathor and as Himmat Singh tells him, he is "not given to find his function on the earth" (1974: 110). The novel has divided Ratan's soul. He is tempted by women, drinks and easy life. He finds changed values, truth, honesty, hard labour and character all not only meaningless but also Karmayogi.

Ratan Rathor is the child of a double inheritance: the patriotic and courageous world of his father and the worldly wisdom of his mother. He has started his life as every young man full of ideals and illusions does. His hypocrisy fetches him a car, a bungalow, and a good place in society at the cost of his peace of mind. Dhavan states, he becomes a whore in the pursuits of his career and ends up by accepting a bribe when he least needs money. He realises that there is no end to human vanity and human stupidity. He realises the gravity of his sin. He feels that only sustaining basis for action is to be of use to others, "without vanity, and without expectations and also without cleverness" (1986:239). i.e. connected to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

*The Last Labyrinth* absorbs the existential anxiety, the 'karmik' and Karmayoga's principles; the longing for the vitals of life in the mystical urge of Som Bhaskar. Bhaskar is a modern 'anti-hero' embodying chaos and uncertainty. He cannot believe and torn by doubts he walks tight-rope between life and death, illusion and disillusion body and spirit.

Som Bhaskar is a psychological case. He visits Ajanta and experiences a terrible void. Insecurity and inadequacy trouble him. He feels hollow. His hollowness and restlessness is not like that of Billy or Sindi. He has no problem with the society. He is quite at home in the commercial world of Bombay. He calls himself a child of Bombay if Aftab is a child of Benaras. The contradictory impulses of reason and intuition; doubt and faith, resistance and submission create a tension in him.

Som Bhaskar is tormented by his knowledge. Awareness of Spinoza, Freud, Jung, Buddha, and Krishna tortures him. He is right because Som is definitely torn by the conflict between faith and doubt because it suits him. The novel, the urge to know the divine, to explore the mystery of the invisible to attain self-realization is absorbing. The mystery of life and the world of the divine is a labyrinth.
Through *The Last Labyrinth* Arun Joshi reveals himself as a man who is convinced that western values do not provide peace, certitude and sublimity of self-fulfilment. Arun Joshi is certainly conscious which inherits ethos of the collective Indian unconsciousness and Indian ways of life in this novel. The unconsciousness is related to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga.

The double worlds are the two inner selves of the hero, Som Bhaskar. The worlds are congruently carved out by the external correlates of certain characters and places of India. Leela Sabnis is, in a way, the symbol of the western culture. In Leela's world, there should be no dilemma, no uncertainty, no doubt. Som Bhaskar needs something, somebody and somewhere in which two worlds combined.

The characters in the novel symbolizing the mystical are mysterious. Aftab is another person occupying the mysterious world of spirituality i.e. connected to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma. Anuradha has been conceived with great force. In fact, she is the most engaging and absorbing inhabitant of the world of labyrinth. Aftab acknowledges that she underwent acute suffering. She lives with Aftab; she sleeps with Som, and she is not unfaithful to anybody. She is not married to anybody, and she will never marry anyone because she is for all. She herself is not interested in pleasure of flesh. Her attitude is that her love-making is an attempt to inspire joy in others. Thus, she has developed spirituality i.e. called Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Gargi says that Anuradha is Som's shakti and he must not quarrel with her and do as she want. She is not only a power and a shakti to the Som Bhaskar but also salvation and Nishkama Karma. The labyrinth symbolism emphasizes the mysteriousness and truth. Som Bhaskar loses himself in the chakravyuha of life and death, reality and truth, doubt and faith. Dilemma of Bhaskar lies deep down in his own self and consciousness. His dilemma has crystallized the sociological, psychological and metaphysical dimensions of human existence into Joshi's unique vision of modern man's predicament.

The novel assimilates the existential anxiety, the detachment principles; the longing for the vitals of life in the mystical urge of Som Bhaskar. The novel does not resolve Bhaskar's dilemma. It enacts, Bhaskar is a product of twin worlds, the western world of science and rationalism and the Indian world of faith and transcendentalism.
Anuradha is a symbol of the undefinable the elusive, the life spirit in woman and also of
the spirit in sacrifice which is the highest gift of Hinduism. She is a saint, sinner, adulteress
endowed with love and compassion. She is worship to the Lord Krishna; who is everywhere and
in everything. Indian spiritual heritage that the Brahma God / Krishna; who is in every atom i.e.
called Nishkama Karmayogi. Som Bhaskar's dilemma is born at the meeting point of the western
and Indian ethos. In fact, he finds himself lost in the labyrinths. All his actions become senseless,
absurd, useless which is very close to the Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Dhavan comments, Som Bhaskar is not only a twentieth century Hamlet transfixed
between to be or not to be but also adds to his dilemma to believe or not or believe; He is like
Abhimanyu in The Mahabharata who is not able to come out of the chakravyuha. Bhaskar loses
himself in the chakravyuha of life and death, reality and truth, doubt and faith (1986:238).167

Som Bhaskar is a new Indian with a crisis of consciousness. His crisis is not a crisis of
emotion or ethics; it is a crisis of consciousness. He does not know what lies in The Last
Labyrinth. He is a continuity in his anguish of alienation; in his existential problem; in his
questing but he effects a departure in the realization of the fact that a man's dilemma now is no
longer only a consequence of causes or situations but is rooted in man himself. His dilemma lies
deep down in his own self and consciousness. Thus, Som Bhaskar is an archetype of the new
man and The Last Labyrinth is a fictional tour-de-force on the chaos of existence and the crisis of
consciousness.

Som Bhaskar is a wealthy industrialist whose primary goal is to acquire failing industries
to enlarge his own business domain. He suffers from the hunger of the body as well as the
hunger of the spirit. He wants to satisfy both without sacrificing anything, and without making
an effort to achieve a balance.

The haveli symbolizes the endless drama of life and death; it is The Last Labyrinth that
puzzles Som; who finds Anuradha absolutely irresistible. Anuradha embodies the principle of
non-attachment in human relationships and the concept of love without possession, which Som
finds somewhat perplexing. All these experiences impel Som to loosen his hold on the purely
commercial, physical and empirical aspects of his life. He gets extremely frustrated in his love
for Anuradha; because he does not know the way to her heart, he does not know how to
surrender; he only knows how to possess.
Som Bhaskar suffers from excessive sexual desire; he needs to be cured of his carnality. He realizes that Anuradha is "like the ocean, one could never reach the bottom of her" (1981: 132). He is truly confused; he doesn't really know what he wants. The point is that even a small child has greater sense of detachment than Som has in his relentless pursuit of Anuradha's shares and Anuradha. He cannot see the inside of the flame. He has the experience but misses the meaning. His rational rant cannot solve anything. He does not understand Krishna, or Anuradha or Gargi. His scepticism does not allow him to understand the essential meaning of his experience.

Gupta points out, All of a sudden, Som promises to return Aftab's shares, and tries to argue with Anuradha; but she insists on his leaving. He leaves. When he returns next morning, he is told by Aftab that Anuradha has disappeared last night at the temple; it was the night of Jannmashtami; the night of Krishna's birth (1992:62). Thus, in a sense, Anuradha vanishes into Krishna the blue man, high flame i.e. called Karmayogi turn into Nishkama Karma.

Anuradha; nobody's wife', the man - high flame, the magic lover, does constitute an extremely desirable goal, but Geeta Som's wife, is not less worthy of attention, as the last act of the novel suggests, in which she offers him warmth, loyalty and understanding. Som Bhaskar says that trust is the trademark of Geeta. She trusts like birds fly, like fish swim. This trust saves her from throwing herself into the hell fire of jealousy, discontent and unhappiness when she comes to know about affair of Som with Anuradha. Gargi the saintly woman asks Anuradha to promise her that she would give up Som. At last Som forced on a quest for truth confronts over and over again the conflicting forces, the clash of "opposites", the appearance and the reality.

In *The Last Labyrinth*, colonial consciousness inflicts Som Bhakar. He is torn between the faith and doubt and is helpless in his effort to explore the possibility of an equation between his colonial consciousness and self realization. Rao states, finally, he neglects changes. Som Bhaskar, in *The Last Labyrinth* does not know what he wants. He fills his bourgeois idleness with gossip, parties, conferences and women while the muffled cry "I want, I want, I want" haunts him. His lust for knowledge and women is expressive of his fear of the lack of familiarisation with the world and himself (1994:156).

Disappearance of Anuradha in the novel is calamitous events that becomes the basis for the protagonists' introspection and the very process that helps them recover their subjectivity. As a free subject, he intuitively apprehends an order, cosmic and moral, operating in human life
where he had only apprehended chaos before. The absurd hero thus evolves into a Karmayogi and overcomes despair and alienation. The novel reflects the twilight consciousness of Som Bhaskar with his Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

Archetypes in this novel provide many useful interpretative clues. For instance, the apparently illogical conclusion of the novel, of Som's attempted suicide and Geeta's averting it loses its anomaly only when the significance of these characters as archetypes is taken into consideration.

The quest of Som is a ruined one which terminates with a cry softly long before he attains his self, peace and harmony. His life is an apparent failure when it comes to making some meaning out of life, for, meaning could be found only in relation to a world beyond. He could find himself, provided he related himself to the realms of the spirit. Som understands it as a possibility, but only as a possibility which he fails to realise in himself. Thus quest of Som ends very unsatisfactorily.

The Last Labyrinth absorbs the existential anxiety, the Karmik principles, the longing for the vital of life in the mystical urge of Som Bhaskar. The protagonist Som Bhaskar bears a name which embodies the duality of his nature, what he is and what he wants to be. 'Som' (the moon) may be said to stand for sensuous pleasures and 'Bhaskar' (the sun) for the clear light of faith.

Som Bhaskar's career illustrates the supreme message of The Bhagavad Gita:

\[ ^{\text{\textasciitilde}loZ /kekZU;ijfR;T; ekesd 'kj.ka oztA} \]
\[ \text{arga Rok loZ ikisH;ks eks{kf;';kfe ek 'kqp%AA\textsuperscript{**} (XVIII, 66)}} \]

According to Pathak it means, abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter. Be not grieved, for I shall release thee from all evils. The Last Labyrinth seems to lay stress on "Sankhyayoga" and "Karmayoga"(2000:143). Both lead to the same goal; the salvation of man i.e. directly or indirectly close to Nishkama Karmayoga.
References

Works cited:-

15. The Foreigner: pg.238.


21. *The Foreigner*: pg.120.


25. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*: pg.11.


35. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*: pg.140.


42. *The Apprentice*: pg.64.
43. The Apprentice: pg.20.
44. The Apprentice: pg.51.
45. The Apprentice: pg.59.
46. The Apprentice: pg.112.
47. The Apprentice: pg.86.
48. The Apprentice: pg.84.
49. The Apprentice: pg.75.
50. The Apprentice: pg.76.
52. The Apprentice: pp.148-149.
53. The Apprentice: pg.150.
56. The Apprentice: pg.149.
59. The Last Labyrinth: pg.47.
60. The Last Labyrinth: pg.11.
61. The Last Labyrinth: pg.35.
62. The Last Labyrinth: pg.41.
63. The Last Labyrinth: pg.79.
64. The Last Labyrinth: pg.75.
65. The Last Labyrinth: pg.77.
66. The Last Labyrinth: pg.80.
67. The Last Labyrinth: pg.43.
68. The Last Labyrinth: pg.128.

70. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 168.


72. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 95.

73. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 97.


75. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 100.


77. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 102.

78. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 105.


81. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 118.

82. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 121.

83. Ibid.

84. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 123.

85. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 126.

86. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 11.

87. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 132.

88. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 142.


90. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 121.


92. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg. 106.


100. *The Apprentice*: pg.149.


103. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.4.

104. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.60.

105. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.129.

106. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.103.

107. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.75.

108. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.121.


111. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.224.


123. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*: pg.142.


125. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*: pg.142.


144. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.98.


146. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.82.

147. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.117.


149. *The Last Labyrinth*: pg.213.

151. The Last Labyrinth: pg.214.


153. The Last Labyrinth: pg.120.


155. The Last Labyrinth: pg.80.

156. The Last Labyrinth: pg.224.

157. The Last Labyrinth: pg.127.


161. The Foreigner: pg.139.

162. The Foreigner: pg.192.

163. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas: pg.235.


165. The Apprentice: pg.110.


168. The Last Labyrinth: pg.132.

