CHAPTER - TWO

WANTER'S ALL
A hostile twin consciousness and the monologue of silence in Joshi's novels.
Writers have sought after mysteries and meaning behind solid foundations of the man-made world. The search has gained momentum in the twentieth century as the disenchanted creative mind withdraws into the prison-house of the self as a part of the survival pattern of Nature. This is an essential retreat to revitalize the flagging spirit, which has thus far engaged itself in studying the objective world, concentrating on realistic interpretations. The objective reality of today's man-made universe suffers from the folly of commercialising human sensitivity, spirituality, the privacy of finer emotions. It is part of the revival pattern, where, human creative instincts, that had been bifurcated to perform dual functions under the codes of Philosophy and Science, are now moving back to a previous position of unity where they would function once again, conjointly, as Philosophy of Nature. Literary works of today reflect this rebirth in the, presently, painful withdrawal syndrome reflected in the chunks of fictional representations.

Arun Joshi's fictional world enacts for the reader-this process of knowledge as known and unknown to man, uniting once again, preparing mankind for a global experience, of a golden era. His narrative captures the development of this cycle at its embryonic stage. Therefore the stories are woven around the Nietzschean concept of chaos. An image of the world, with orderliness as its outer cover, with chaos at its nucleus. The orderliness perceived-is one of constructions. The man-made universe is structured, where solid blocks of mortar offer security and shelter against the quick silver moods of Nature, which once terrorised and held man prisoner and slave. But as all civilizations have to run their course and give way to another, this civilization of construc-

1 Granieri, Jean 1979 'Nietzsche's Conception of Chaos.' The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation Ed. David B. Alison. Dell. New York, Pg.135
tional wonders had inbred within itself, as all earthly bodies, its own destruction. Creation as part of its function destroys. The creative forces of this civilization have destroyed man's sense of being under the cover of an individuality that served well in the imperialistic ventures of restless races. The lethargy experienced in Arun Joshi's world is caused by the faith instilled in the concrete universe, in the enduring rhythm of circularity of temporal existence. Such an assurance and faith imposes several limitations on the individuals who are fixed within the circumference of this giant wheel. On one hand this temporality seems to allow significance to the individual and on the other hand the acquisition of this significance is at the cost of emptying the being of its validity. The questions raised are based on the meaning and value of the apparently, ambiguous understanding of the term significance. The first two novels - The Forcigner (1968) and The Apprentice (1974) - are stationed at the initial step, of unraveling this puzzle. The seemingness of permanence in the temporal world, the empirical promises, are fully comprehended by the protagonists. The lowering of this first veil opens the next set of puzzles for them. Like the Pandora's box, each unveiling only throws open another mystery in their way. The brushing aside of the web of seeming significance raises the question of what is that significance which was paid as price for this seemingness.

The particular conflict pursued by Arun Joshi in his novels is the uniformity of standardised responses, expectations and stimulations which relegate to the background the role of imagination as a world-founding activity synthesizing for the further formation of patterns that activated the human senses to value their environment. Basically the type of inquiry carried out by the protagonists is termed as 'axiological metaphys-
Initially, the narrative focuses on the estranged, outsider, the protagonist, who receives his exclusive attention in being the non-conformist, failing to fall in step with the standardisation. Growing out of this isolation are the questions about other alternatives, the search for space where individuality and individual opinion could root itself to develop and continue. The arrest of the carry over of value from the past to the present requires the construction of a categorical scheme for the interpretation of the points of shift within the empirical regions, the current residence of truth and value.

The categorical scheme in the early works is what stark reality refuses to sustain, which the world of dreams provide; the necessary nourishment and temporary satiation. In Arun Joshi's novels dreams figure as part of his technique in moulding his narrative strategies. The movement is from the question of what there is in the world to the fictive 'as if' state of mind and in his last novel Arun Joshi identifies the cause for this vicious circle of 'what there is in the world' continuing to be, as a result of the 'asthough attitude' (City and the River) of the larger masses. The protagonists isolate themselves from this prevalent attitude which is partly responsible for systems formation and development of tyrannical impulses. They also have embedded in their character a flaw which is the failure to recognize themselves as objects of the sense, that they are part of this sensible world and therefore subject to the deterministic laws of society. The stubborn refusal to be a part of this is strengthened by the belief that causality is not restricted to relation-

ships with the temporal world. Their allegiance is to the determinism of nature where individuality achieves completeness.

The question of God as a being who restores order in the world is suspiciously and sceptically handled in the first four novels. Since they cannot verify and convince themselves about God's purpose and wisdom operating in the world, the protagonists look for answers within. The need for direct awareness is the cultivated response of a scientifically tempered mind. This need comes in the way, obstructing comprehension of these mysteries. Though God and Self have been categorised as other-worldly agents by philosophers and seers, the Self which gains a tangible form only in the objective world, loses its ability to fully comprehend an agent from its own sphere, in the temporal atmosphere. Religions have attempted to give God an operative function of a very powerful, benevolent, finite agent, through their imaginative powers, which later crystallised as religious canons. Arun Joshi's novels fix their gaze on the supersensible and in Kantian terms, the other self in God. The inhibitions acquired from a scientific outlook dissolves in the last novel's acknowledgment of God as the Supreme being. The Wheel of Time and Karma and man's role in this revolution finds subordination under this comprehension.

For instance, the world of Billy Biswas does not speak of Self or God as entities which intuition guides to recognise; it cannot be thought of in a particular way. Arun Joshi tries to resolve the problem of nature and interrelation of God, the self and the world. There is no final position in the first four novels, as he is entangled in resolving the apprehended conflict. In order to arrive at the final position he adapts the allegorical mode, the scheme sought for in his last novel. It is an attempt to allow the subjective
and objective viewpoints equal validity. Some of the philosophical convictions employed into the making of Joshi's fictional world are Nietzsche's interpretation of chaos, Kant's conception of the Self as belonging 'nowhere', have influenced the themes directly, whereas Sartre's attempts at preserving phenomena, the realities of earthly existence is evident in the action confined to the chaos within, while an escape from it is either contemplated or abortively attempted at. Inadvertently, Joshi seems to extract philosophy through the process of closely observing the perceivable world and not through an abstract symbol.

The narrator in such a situation is now of a contemplator. The contemplated situation is the trauma of an immigrant, who will never belong to the human society. The protagonists of Joshi's fictional creations are eternal outsiders. They suffer both physical and psychological homelessness. As most twentieth-century literatures, that reflect and represent the insecurity, homelessness, isolation and alienation, Joshi's novels pursue a dream, an impossible beauty unlike the world of here and now. This process effectively objectifies the division in the human mind, the division between dream and reality. These subconscious idealizations struggle to articulate their faith in a world which pays no attention to such impossibilities. What they seek is an alternative for the mechanical perfection achieved by man. But the perfection they seek tempts them beyond the horizon of their fantasies and plunges them into despair, as it is an impossible dream. Within the phenomenal world there can only be partial freedom as romantic logic fails in a world of commercial enterprise. But the discovery and affirmation of the beauty, of this dream is realised only in the denouement of *The City and the River*. In complete destruction, in the ugliness of violence, there lies the hope
of revival and rejuvenation.

Frontiers, borderlines, the sheer edge of life is the stage where the drama of Arun Joshi's imagination finds expression. Much of what Eliot sought through his verse is pursued by Arun Joshi in the confusion of his modern youth. He expands on Eliot's famous phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' and looks for reasons that caused such dissociatedness. In order to study this fractured sensibility he keeps the action-reveberating between the two poles of the known and the unknown. Arun Joshi's technique differs from Raja Rao's, whose comprehension of the other largely depends upon his mastery of great works, and he displays a greater proficiency in expounding this knowledge. The difference lies in the usage of the sensitive responses of an educated mind- a mind which is conscious of the world as a whole, to the very act of living in it, where overt, conscious and deliberate physical actions sway judgement. The first four novels do not reveal any signs of the essential preliminary study of the established works necessary for this quest. This technique draws to one's mind the words of Sri Sankara where he pronounces Jnana Nishta as that form of search where the seeker seeks only the truth and where the seeker seeks only the truth and where rituals are considered as obstacles and not the only means of realising the Truth. The absence of the ritual of expounding learned truth is noticeable in Joshi's art.

The apprehension of metaphysical truth is arrested in the descent. It is during the descent or on the way-down the incline, that this realisation overwhelms the protagonist. Symbolic structure is given to this in the complete destruction of the City in The

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City and the River. The decline is recorded in the four earlier works: in the trapped sensibilities of Rathan Rathor, Sindi Oberoi, Billy Biswas and Som Bhaskar. They are studied at a point, when their individualities, disintegrated and dissolved, are bailed out by the mundane matter-of-fact world that is energised purely by its ego. It is an unwanted resuscitation, which suffocates spontaneity and natural impulses. But in the case of Billy Biswas the recognition of the glory within, the stage of 'Sarvatmabhava' or the Atma becoming identical with all, is a realisation which goes unrecognised by the world around him such that, his case is dismissed as the strange case.

Comprehension is arrested by the cross-currents of knowledge which are identified as individual components of the human intelligence and not as parts of a whole. Here comprehension refers to the understanding and acceptance of the worldly activities as real and the visions of reality within themselves. Hence they are caught in the turbulence of living, of joy and sorrow. In the midst of this clamour the oft repeated question is,

"Causes of things, things that happen to me, to objects." (Pg.22 TLL.)

"..........I have wondered if there could not possibly be a first cause."

One of the observations made by Joshi through his protagonist in The Last Labyrinth sums up the nature of the puzzle. While referring to Som's father he says that, "he struggled with the weight of the centuries." (Pg.28 TLL.) This exactly, is the malady which causes confusion in the minds of the protagonists of Arun Joshi. They are caught in "the labyrinth within the labyrinth of lanes." (Pg.29 TLL.) Som Bhaskar is the most
pampered of Joshi's protagonists; such that he loathed "small towns" and is noticeably preoccupied with his own responses. Quiet naturally evaluating and grading his responses, a typical twentieth-century pastime, in other words a boredom that kills many a quality that is human within him. He is startled out of it while inspecting Aftab's timeless ruins, where he unconsciously stares into a mirror and for a moment is unable to recognise the apparition. Aftab's haveli symbolises dereliction of the ages gone by.

It draws Som Bhaskar, whose pulse beats the chant, 'I want, I want, I want....'(Pg.11 T.L.). Within the pattern of contrasts Arun Joshi introduces Aftab's world where the clocks had come to a standstill in the past, which stand out against Som Bhaskar's jet-setting life-style where the race with Time is an endless rally within its circuit. The still centre of Aftab's Haveli is Anuradha who holds and imprisons Som Bhaskar within her mysterious powers. She reminds Som Bhaskar of a monument. He says,

'I had noticed Anuradha like one notices a monument: tall, handsome, ruined." (Pg.12 T.L.).

'Ruined' is the key word and the key to Bhaskar's unredeemed state. When he first sets foot into the labyrinth of lanes in the small town, he is surrounded by antiquity and most importantly the sight of 'Aftab beside the broken fountain'. The broken fountain symbolises lifelessness, a break from the living reality as Som Bhaskar knew, which began at dawn and travelled its routine course through noon, twilight and into the lightless night. Again, the decor within the haveli is drapery of a particular shade.

'The sofas, carpets, curtains, tables chairs, all were maroon."(Pg.31 T.L.)

Maroon, reminds of a life which has bled through and is no more. Aftab. Anuradha
and the inhabitants of the haveli are like souls that have been left behind by some unknown force, having been prevented entry into another sphere. Som Bhaskar ventures into this world of the dead, living in their human forms. Confused as he is, in retrospect Som Bhaskar asks himself,

Did Lal Haveli ever exist?
Could it be a fragment of an overheated imagination.
a vapour like that little cloud beyond any window,
crossing the face of the midnight moon? (Pg.28 TLL)

This being a relationship of souls, he is convinced of its existence through 'the image-photographs of the soul that pastime and again' before his eyes. (Pg.28 TLL)
The visit to the dargah, distinctly identifies the two worlds that Aftab, Anuradha and Som Bhaskar inhabit. As a man, Som Bhaskar's reaction to the visit is very human,

"There is nothing I loathed more than I loathed
the sight of death and here amidst the cenotaphs
and the gravestones, there was death with a
vengeance. I felt tricked." (Pg.15 TLL)

Aftab's laughter too is identified as a sob, a smirk from some other world, and Aftab's visit to the ghat's in the night identifies him as "a creature of the night". (Pg.45 TLL)

Anuradha on the other hand carries within her a past, a satanic ritual, the desecration of innocence; which has left her numb and yet powerful.

'For all the precision of her art she had a vagueness
about her that spoke of a child's mind that had been
stunted by the despair of the grown-ups, even though
the body matured and learned to participate in the
pleasures of the world.' (Pg.52 TLL)

So much so, she rightly belongs to Aftab's world and does not fit into Som Bhaskar's scheme of living. She can survive, only in the Lal Haveli where they lived from 'day to day and impulse to impulse' (Pg.40 TLL.) like Aftab's ancestors. Anuradha and Azizun are the spirits of Aftab's world; Azizun, another inhabitant of this barren existence, as is evident from the description of her skin which is described as bloodless with coarse features. Anuradha 'on the other hand' stands out like the,

"....chunk of green marble against a mottled wall.

On it was carved a tall vase. Long stemmed flowers spilled out of it. There was a parrot on one side of the vase and a horse on the other. At the bottom, a verse in Arabic script was engraved. The whole piece, so like a sarcophagus, stood extraordinarily sharp amidst the dead surroundings." (Pg.34 TLL)

Aftab and Som Bhaskar tear their claws at this frozen image and Aftab, finally, succeeds in obliterating it. Som Bhaskar is destroyed by the futility of having tried to resuscitate an engraved motion.

In the prism, caught between the consciousness of both worlds, Som responds to the otherness of Aftab and Anuradha, and is better explained by Leela Sibinis,

"You live in a disaster area of life"

ghe tells Som Bhaskar.

And in his own words Som Bhaskar identifies this area of disaster.
It is the voids of the world more than its objects that bother me. The voids and the empty spaces within and without. (Pg.47 Tl.1.)

The 'voids without' he classifies as visible landscapes of the earth, noticeably uninhabited and holding within them a mystery that disturbed him. It strikes him as an adolescent, in a cave in Ajanta. Here the voids of the caves and voids of the sky, "the terrible vacancies of lokalok" (Pg.47) grip him and draw his consciousness to the voids within.

Grappling with these voids he suffers the excruciating pain of solitude which is heightened by the force of life swelling around, overwhelming him. One such scene is set in Banaras:

Boatman, jugglers, vagrants, monkeymen, idlers, beggars, flutists, bathers, the watchers of funeral pyres, junkies, medicineman, vendors, each set in its appointed place, as if on a stage, performing parts that they performed over the millenia. (Pg.48)

Som Bhaskar is like the instrument in black arts, a doll stuck with pins. Preoccupied with the self and watching his every move, he is found wrestling with the two questions:

If someone, man or god, had watched my life from a great height, would I have appeared to him like an ant threading through a maze, knocking about, against one wall, then another. (Pg.53)

AND

I want. I want. If only one knew what one wanted.

Or may be, to know was what I wanted. To know, Just
that. No more, No less. This then was a labyrinth, too, this going forward and backward and sideways of the mind."(Pg.53)

BUT

"I felt a new loathing for the squalid world that carried on beneath my hospital window. All those buses and cars and taxis and men scurrying back and forth like cockroaches. For what? But if it was loathing then why that longing to get right back among the vermin as soon as possible? ( )

The malady which afflicts Som Bhaskar is the affliction of modern man where he is conscious of the truth, that the knower of Brahman attains the supreme' (Pg. 73) a realisation which is at the feotal stage, because Som Bhaskar hankers after the fruits of enterprise; it is as if he is held by this craving, like a chord around the ankle holding him, head down, in the zone of voids. This is evident from his admission,

"Fame, that bewitching siren whose song, I knew, had wrecked better ships than mine. Yet I intended to' pursue her. Better be damned than not to be mentioned at all. Fame was factual, quantitative. Almost quantitative. You knew you were first or tenth or sixteenth." (Pg.73)

Som evaluates relationships, quantitatively too. His marriage to Geetha is based on such evaluation,

"There are the wanters of this world and there are the givers."
"There are the wanters of this world and there are the givers."

"Geetha trusts like birds fly, like fish swim."

".....If discontent is my trademark, trust is Geetha's." (Pg.63)

The emotion transfixed, in this novel is the need to identify and be identified.

Leela Sibnis. K and Gargi are at various levels of the comprehension of the 'higher goal.' The idea of soul and higher goal is introduced into the novel by the psychiatrist who treats Som Bhaskar. He says,

It is possible to conceive of this world as being populated not with people of flesh and blood with certain sexual orientations but with souls. You can imagine this planet humming with souls each wanting something. A soul might also imagine that his wants are best met through another soul, if that soul is the right one. Until he meets this right soul there is no peace. (Pg.74)

Som recognises in Anuradha' this right soul; But he fails to discover the elusive' higher goal.

Leela Sibnis, opens his eyes to the reality that this involvement with his business and the maneuvers attempted by him would never bring the two worlds of spirit and matter together. The verdict of the physical world in analysing Som Bhaskar's obsessions is
declared through the psychiatrists analysis. The conclusion drawn indicates that Som's desires to halt his life in youthfulness. Hence the fear of death and the desire for women, a time-tested confirmation of ones youthfulness. As Leela Sibnis deduces, it is his feeling of inadequacy which rouses in him the duality. But Som's response to these conclusions is a wry, "how little you, understand the roots of the world's confusion. (Pg.80) The clearing of a passage to those roots is what Arun Joshi chooses as his favourite themes.

Analysis is seen as a twentieth-century malady, constantly 'wondering, curious, analysing, correlating, getting nowhere. And the resultant frustration."

".....When you get nowhere, you get vengeful angry, all the more querulous with that someone who put you on the planet in the first place."( )

Herein enters the significance of Krishna the recognised and revered deity; a deity who occupies the first place in the lives of Som's dear ones, and thus Krishna emerges in the picture as an elusive competitor in his life and this grows into a physical chase when he pursues the shares. Krishna contributes his share to the overwhelming influence of the civilized world; as Krishna is so much part, it and whose significance depends upon human faith. The Krishna figure does not help Som in his endeavor to fuse the two worlds, instead he seeks after, as he explains.

".......what I needed was something, somebody, somewhere in which the two worlds combined."

Joshi introduces Som Bhaskar to divinity in the mountain temple. It is in the form of a blue flame which the world of discovery and knowledge explains away as a natural
element spending itself out. When divinity, as acknowledged by the human world fails
to provide an answer to his curiosity, to know 'what lay in the last labyrinth,' Anuradha
enters his world of senses assuring him of this knowledge, which is brief. It proves to
be the promise of a mirage. Yet this relentless clamour within his skull carries on".....always in various shades of coherence, the spoken or unspoken question, like a
vulture circled the corpse of my life: what lay in the last labyrinth? (Pg.122 'Il.1.').

Elaborating upon the modern man's dilemma, who is tutored to look for causes, and the
limitations of evidences, noticed and noticeable by the naked eye, Arun Joshi, identi-
ifies the mote that troubles Som's mind's eye. He questions the reason for evolution
and his role in it. Like the need to know what lies in the last labyrinth, the need to know
the purpose behind his birth is put forth thus,

"Why should there be this turn to evolution? Why should
man be equipped, burdened with this strange... this strange
sensibility or urge or drive? ....The point is that this Spirit
is there. And if man has inherited it then what is he to do
with it? In other words what is precisely expected of him,
of you and men, of Anuradha of everyone else? Darwin
didn't say how we are supposed to evolve further." (Pg.131)

Dizzied by the multi-cultural influences and the intellectual interpretations that go with
it Som Bhaskar's questions reject knowledge marketed all over the world with price
tags and fancy labels. These do not hold the key to the mystery that haunts him. Ear-
lier in the work Som Bhaskar comments about the obsession Leela Sibnis has for books,
and his observation is,
"There were little gems strewn about those ten tons of printed paper. I picked up a large assortment like a child let loose in a toy shop. I stuffed my pockets with them, stuffed my mouth, my nose, my eyes. Then the voids returned, knocked them out of my hands, emptied my pockets, made me rinse my mouth with bitter gall." (Pg.77)

He oscillates between voids and the tangible zones of knowledge. He recognises the information on the 'ten tons of printed paper' as priceless but his mouth is filled with bitterness the more he tries to stuff it into him. It is both a comment on information explosion which has created these voids within him and the overcrowding of the world by coming too close together, such that no culture can enjoy the privacy it enjoyed once, and which is essential for every culture to preserve its mystery. He is an universal man, but this gradation has only trapped and bound him instead of enlightening him. This is evident in this evaluation.

'Leela Sibnis was an explorer, trained in Michigan in the tools of exploring. But Michigan itself was crumbling; the West itself was crumbling in.' (Pg.77)

Continuing with his penchant for naming-the-condition, he concludes Leela Sibnis's problem as,

'Muddled by her ancestry, by marriage, by divorce, by too many books.' (Pg.77)

The theme of rootlessness surfaces at this point where suffocated by the closeness and neighbourliness, forced as a precondition of human existence in societies, communica-
tion gaps stretch like the voids in Som Bhaskar's inner world. Geographical explorations have ceased and now explorations, possible explorations, can be carried out only in the cosmic regions, 'the penumbral regions' (Pg.122) into the "night of man's mind."

The movement is from establishing links to silence the active voice and bring into focus the patent passive voice function into focus within which Anuradha, becomes an obstacle than the via media in this venture.

Joshi assigns the role of a demi-goddess to Anuradha, residing in the ruins. She is not the Shakthi figure, and hence the unsatiated state in which Som Bhaskar finds himself. Satiation is achieved only through a naked fusion of their senses. Like the 'blind Glacier' (Pg.143) which he sights in the higher regions of the mountains, Som Bhaskar is blind to many a truth within him and he is unconscious of the truth that his blindness is caused by the need to preserve in him the physical concreteness, the only assurance the physical world has given him. His need for physical assurance had been threatened when his mother and father died. But he comes to terms with Death through the eyes of the boy accompanying his grandfather in the mountains. Equanimity which Som Bhaskar is incapable of with his condition, he learns through the eyes of the boy.

"May be that was where the trick lay. Alongwith the oldman we had travelled to the other world, chanting free from fear. You might as well be afraid of a train travelling from one station to another. That black lake, those bronze cliffs, were certainly another station. (Pg.194)

The experience transmutes the static, 'large bit' in Som Bhaskar, into a dynamic being.
"But there was always this bit of me, a large bit somewhere between the head and the chest, just idling about like a stationary engine, getting involved with nothing." (Pg.109-110)

He seeks reassurance in Gargi. Joshi assigns Gargi the role of a signpost, which merely directs. The blue flame he encounters in the centre of temple yields 'an ounce of tranquility' but it reverses the whole development back to the 'old sorrow'.

Anuradha's mysterious disappearance, which is left a mystery, leaves Som and Aftab circling each other. The surrealistic pattern of dreams recur. In this dream, the mountain, that plays a crucial role in The City and the River figures.

....The sky above is black as pitch.........

And all the time the mountain is there, snow-covered, towering, glowing. Even though the sky is black and there is no sun, the mountain glows. From within as it were...... " (Pg.159)

The City's character, too, finds its origin in here. The interpretational fallacies that the Astrologer and the Hermit face, while interpreting a line in the prophecy, is indicated in this work.

"..Everyone declared that the city was ungovernable.

But the city was a monster with a life of its own...(Pg.154)

AND

"Who knows the truth? Who can tell whence and how rose the universe. The gods are later than its beginning.
Who knows therefore whence comes this creation? Only that God who sees in highest heaven. He only knows whence came this Universe. He only knows. Or perhaps, he knows not. This is what bothers me. If even he doesn't know then who does? (Pg.155)

Joshi introduces this who-dun-it element into his novels which adds to its dimension, an element of suspense and mystery. He ends the labyrinthine tale of Som Bhaskar with a curse and a prayer and a weary gesture. Aftab's world is disturbed, by Som's intrusion and Som's universe is shattered by Anuradha's absence and both men wait for death at each others hands. Som's prayer to Anuradha is,

"Anuradha if there is a God and if you have met him and if he is willing to listen, then, Anuradha, my soul, tell him tell this God, to have mercy upon me. Tell him I am weary of so many fears; so much doubting. Of this dark earth and these empty heavens. Plead for me. Anuradha. He will listen to you." (Pg.223)

Anuradha is the middlevoice whose function remains an uninterpreted mystery.

The weariness in The Last Labyrinth is the outgrowth of the dreariness experienced by Billy Biswas in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas. If the palpitation comprehended in The Last Labyrinth is 'I want, I want...." in the The Strange Case of Billy Biswas the anguished cry is 'Oh, how dreary, how dreary!' (Pg.43) It is an autistic attitude of the protagonist towards the organised world of high-rise buildings. a disregard for external reality and lack of relatedness to people who belong to this segment of the man-made
Such a consciousness emerges from his belief which goes as,

"All I am saying is that there are worlds at the periphery of this one, above it and below it and around it, of which we know nothing until we are in them."

The first part of the novel feels through the character of Billy Biswas; and the texture of the narration has the quality of an amateur criminal analysis. Joshi begins the novel through the eyes of Romesh Sahay.

'As I grow old, I realize that the most futile cry
of man is in his impossible wish to be understood.

The attempt to understand is even more futile.' (Pg.3 TSCBB)

Billy is identified as "a man of extraordinary obsessions" (Pg.3) A transition from one region of cultivated responses to another region of intuitively comprehended presences, is made through these obsessions. The individual mind is led by "faceless tempters" and chases them "to the very ends of the earth." (Pg.4) Billy very nearly succeeds in this pursuit, but as an occupant of the man-made society, he loses consciousness of his physical frame, such that, when he steps off the brink of this consciousness, during his flight, he breaks his vital links with Bilasia and her world which made it possible for him to experience the obsessions that pursued him all his life.

Joshi introduces the three worlds, within Billy Biswas. At their first meeting Billy is introduced to Romi as,

"This is Billy" our host said."..... Engineer,
anthropologist, anarchist...." (Pg.4-5)

The engineer in him, is a conditionally impregnated role, by "the so-called organised world" (Pg.82) whereas the anthropologist surfaces to protect against the invasion of the objective knowledge which threatens the 'arboriginalness' within Billy, that main-
ains the links with the other worlds. The struggle results in anarchy. The term used carefully to mean the needlessness of governance in a harmonious society.

Romi meets Billy in a world where the society painstakingly strives to make adolescent dreams come true. Here in emerges the next key word, 'incongruity'. Groomed in the upper-upper crust of Indian society (Pg. 5) Billy resides in Harlem, his choice of residence in another culture. He finds Harlem to be "the most human place", as against "White America" which "was much too civilized for him". Billy shows appreciation for the play "Avocambo" which is a study of an educated youth and his deranged activities, after his first contact with all that is primitive in Congo, and what strikes the narrator is his comment,

"Very odd indeed, although one can quite imagine something like that happening to oneself." (Pg.7)

What is chaotic within the organised world like Harlem is the 'most human place' to Billy. Running parallel to this observation is a noticeable characteristic in Billy, as Romi observes.

"He was one of those rare men who have poise without pose." (Pg.7)

All along Billy reveals these incongruities; in his choice of dwelling, in his choice of education as against his father's desires and in the outward demeanor, that of a "light-hearted good sport" (Pg.8) while the windows to his inner-self, his eyes remain serious.

Joshi, once again, introduces books to judge character as in the case to Leela Sibnis. Billy's collection of books included books on anthropology, copies of "the National Geographic Magazine, to the latest pornography....from learned treatises on black magic
...a critique of the theory of relativity." (Pg.9) His interest in music also inclined towards what could be identified as rhythm born out of incongruous beats-jazz music. His keen interest in anthropology was a means "to find out about the aboriginalness of the world." (Pg.10) The aboriginalness or the primitiveness of the world is a conscious choice made by him; used as a platform to perceive "the truest perceptions of life." which "have always proved to be the most elusive and the most short lived." His awareness penetrates deeper into the meaning of birth and its many dimensions.

"Most of us are aware only of the side on which we are born, but there is always the other side, the valley beyond the hills the hills beyond the valley." (Pg.15-16)

Such an undulating comprehension lies beneath his interest in the mentally-ill with whom he communicates at Topeka and also in his interest in crime stories-what is bizarre to the orderly world.

- Krishna murder case in the middle of the narrative, is introduced to throw light on the anarchy of Billy's life. Billy draws distinction between the civilized world and the other worlds on its periphery when he argues,

"Premeditation, as you use the term, is the concept of this world, the everyday world of government officers, power breakdowns, stock exchanges etc.

You do agree with me that this is the only world which your laws are made for don't you? (Pg.49)

Billy understands "temporary insanity" as a brief transportation of ones earthly consciousness to another and any transgression identified by the world around cannot be
punished by the laws of the human society. Suicides and mental disorders are escapees, not punishable crimes outside this sphere. What is an infringement in this civilized world is perhaps the law in the particular world which the individual occupies temporarily.

Tuula Lindberg penetrates beneath the surface of Billy's incongruities just as Leela Sibnis works with Som Bhaskar's fears and doubts. While Romi and Tuula discuss Billy, Tuula identifies the conflict between what Billy may want to be and what he may "allowed to be." She identifies the force within Billy as,

"A great force, urkarft, a.....a primitive force.

He is afraid of it and tries to supress it....(Pg.19)

But it is very strong in him, much stronger than in you or me. It can explode any time." (Pg.19)

Tuula, Romi and later Rima Kaul, are the three characters who identify the force within Billy as primitive. And Romi gets a glimpse of this primitive force when Billy confronts the motorist, and he describes Billy's speech patterns as "an English voice uttering thoughts that were clearly not English."(Pg.21). A comment, which applies to writings from the universe of commonwealth writings.

Further Romi's observes,

"His conversation was not clever or brilliant but was full of surprises. It twisted and turned like a firefly in a garden first this flower, then that, revealing not only the mind of the speaker, but also the dark knowable layers of the mysterious world that surround us
It stretched the ordinary into the cosmic, pulled the ethereal down to the tangible, and infused everything with an intelligence that was easily the sharpest I had ever come across.

The choice of the image of a firefly is portentous; it isolates Billy in the metaphorical darkness of the human society and instills in him a little brilliance, not enough to dispel the bleakness. His end is foreseen in this choice and in a further observation, where he says,

"....there were many things that I did not see which Billy saw and which step by step led him to the only end that awaits those who see too much." (Pg.35-36)

If the voice drew a bridge across the ordinary and cosmic, the eyes are described as 'inhumanly sharp' (Pg.33) emphasising on the primitiveness, and attributing to him the qualities of an untameable beast. There is both restraint and despondency reflected in his eyes.

"His expression was a mixture of all those emotions one tends to associate with a great predicament. It was drawn and had that particular intensity of concentration which in my life, I have seen only on the faces of doctors or rioters. Yet it had no violence in it.... His eyes shaded in the darkness wore a tortured, almost haggard expression." (Pg.39-40)

Cagey as he is in the society, his decisions swing between uncertainties. As part of his
technique, pattern Joshi introduces a dream between his indecision and decision to marry Meena. The friends of Meena and the dream lie between the two messages, "Engagement off" and "Marriage on".

It is a condemnation of culture-crossing which has complicated communication. Marriage with Meena only serves to further deepen the alienation felt by Billy.

"They were produced no doubt, by those same thousand years of selective breeding that had produced Billy and one would not have suspected that beneath the shared, facade of society there was little contact between his world and theirs". (Pg. 59)

Constant reference to the world is one way of keeping up the existential theme drumming through. The existing world of Meena and Situ is visualised as a world of locusts, through Romi's sensitive perception.

The little knots of men and women congealed disintegrated, congealed again, got tired and sat down on stools; chairs, on the grass, on anything. (Pg. 58-59)

And the stagnation of their interests highlights the falsity of civilised societies and the exclusiveness of primitive cultures.

"We talked of an impending cabinet reshuffle about which we knew very little and the beauty of the Black sea resorts which had just begun to be publicised and about which we knew even less. An Algerian joined us, listened to all that we had to say with a smile and departed without a world. Three Chinese diplomats, unsmiling in their dark tunics, paraded shoulder to
shoulder across the lawn, bull-dozer fashion, carving the
crowd before them like the dirt that it was.' (Pg.69)

The disconnected relations and the disjointed interests contribute to the completion of
the picture of a fragmented society where appearance is mistaken for relationship. Billy
is an incongruous presence in this circle; he seeks for a wholeness of experience where
existence is not the minimal contact of shoulder to shoulder but a rhythmic dance of
life in which closeness is achieved through the warmth of wrapping arms around shoul-
ders, knitting relationships in bonds of deep human feelings. Billy desperately struggles
to unentangle himself. The more he struggles the more the tangle tightens and in the
process the strange light in his eyes begins to dim.

Gone was the staggering intelligence, the spectroscopic
interests, the sense of humour. He had either turned
banal....he was turned upon some obscure segment of
himself ferreting out a bitter secret, settling an old
score. Whatever it might have been, the Billy Biswas
I had known was finished, snuffed out like a candle left
out in rain . (Pg.66)

Letters play an important role, as much as, dreams in Billy's world. In one such letter
to Tuula, Billy's otherness comes to the fore,

The curious feeling trails me every where that I am a
visitor from the wilderness to the marts of the Big
city and not the other way around. (Pg.92)

The civilised Indian society is a big city mart chasing a Western ideal of happiness
where success is measured by material gain and accumulation.
I sometimes wonder whether civilization is anything more than the making and spending of money. What else does the civilized man do? 

Trapped between Eastern and Western ideals of humanism, he struggles to slough the skin of Western notions as he had experienced it in America and the epidemic infecting the Indian society. In the woman who keeps crossing his dreams, whom he sees on the streets of Delhi nursing a child in the shade of a tree or hauling stones for the richman he sees human spirit in its utter simplicity and unpretentious honesty. He fails to find this untainted spirit, in the churned out mechanical culture, even under the temple dome under which he seeks shelter and solace.

As I stood there my eyeballs restive behind the quivering lids, it suddenly dawned upon me that it was all a great waste, that the God who awaited me now was one to which no temples could be built. What awaited me now, I realized was fate!

Billy Biswas, at the end of part-I has moved a step ahead of his vyavaharic life. Beneath his concern for the primitive folk lies the split self and at this point he begins to see the integrated whole. The dawn of this realisation needs the primal atmosphere, far removed from the world of specific identities. The futility of expressing these thoughts aloud in this atmosphere results in his desperate cry.

'To speak, I am afraid, is to address the deaf.' (Pg. 94)

The second part of the novel is the realisation of a meditation and its rude disturbance. In his sadhana for the attainment of Truth, about himself, Billy submerges himself and his future in a girl, 'pretty in a crude sort of way. "Bilasia is the medium through which Billy hopes to reach this realisation. She symbolises his future and as he says, "my past, indeed the very purpose of my life". Bilasias sets free within Billy the power
towards transvaluation and redesign.

To someone else she might still have appeared as crude, unintelligent and childish. It was I who had changed. Or, rather, quite suddenly and unaccountably I had ceased to resist what was the real me....(Pg.114)

AND

It was as though I was not Bimal Biswas graduate of Columbia, the only son of a supreme court Judge, husband of Meena Biswas and father of a handsome child; it was as though I were not all this but the first man on earth facing the earth's first night. (Pg.118)

Amidst nature where the questions of what we are and where we are, beyond studied self-interest behaviours, find answers within this closure provided.

The desire to distance himself, far, away from the 'works of man' is reflected in the 'night' specified as the 'earth's first night'. No geographical dimensions figure but the earth as a whole is referred to here.

The meeting of Billy and Bilasia is a modern enactment of ignorance or avidya dispelled by self-knowledge. This metamorphosis is explained by Billy thus.

Layer upon layer was peeled off me, until nothing but my primitive self was left trembling in the moonlight. (Pg.119)

The experience resembles his first contact with the tribal folk in Bhubaneswar, at the age of fourteen, when he had first attempted to run away from home.

'It was as though a slumbering part of me had suddenly
come awake. (Pg.120)

The consciousness is part of the formative struggles of an adolescent. But the questions had merely left him incomplete, failing to help him 'take the first mould' (Pg.120)

The questions were.

....it was a sudden interest in my own identity. Who was I? Where had I come from? Where was I going?

Like Bilasia's world, Bhubaneshwar had sported similar features,

....a sleepy little town still quite undeveloped it used to be almost as though we were living in a wilderness.... .The people were mostly Oriya, but nearly everywhere you ran into adivasis who had come into town for one reason or another.

AND

.....There was something else, something more insubstantial that lurked about the place soaking everything in a magical glow.

AND

....what appealed to me was the shades of the spirit that I spoke of although I knew, then, as I know now, that the spirit was a much much older force, older than the time when man first learned to build temples. If anyone had a clue to it, it was only the adivasis who carried about their knowledge in silence, locked behind their dark inscrutable faces. (Pg.122)
It is in Bhubaneshwar that Billy Biswas experiences his first 'shock of erotic energy followed by the same feeling of unreality....a reality sharper than I had ever known,' (Pg.123) as he admits. His response to this initial shock is as he explains,

....something had gone wrong with my life. This is

where I belong. This is what I always dreamt of.

The location becomes meaningful as an instantiated hypotheses, internally consistent. The shock of erotic energy had registered itself on his inner-self not while exploring the village fair at night, but when 'a boy and a girl loitered past' him 'giggling and tumbled into the bush beyond.' (Pg.123). This incident is another occasion when Billy attempts to escape the near impossibility of significance within the familiarity.

Billy transcends from human concerns to metaphysical explorations through erotic energy. At the age of thirty-nine, fifteen years after Bhubaneswar, the need to realise this experience and fuse himself into it had not diminished. This spirit transcends the confines of man-sculpted temples. The migration made by the spirit from one hemisphere to another is well captured by Joshi. He calls it the "displacement of air as the boy and girl, laughing went past me once again." The pain of parting from this hemisphere where his emotions and energies unconditioned, uncontained, uncivilized, could be felt and experienced without the reprimands of society, is thus expressed.

....what made me unhappy, I suppose, was the awareness

that all I wanted was just there, across the little patch

of jungle screaming to be taken...and I could do nothing

but sit in that stupid chair all tied up in a knot by a

stifling system of expectations which I did not yet

understand but in which I knew, I had the misfortune
to be born." (Pg.125)

The motif of a trap and the captured animal persists. The first experience at Bhubaneshwar not only provides an opening for this awareness to make itself felt; it also marks the locations and atmospheres in which this consciousness is preserved in the objective world. The saal forests guarded by the rocky cliff chandatola is one such. The civilized society either decorously conceals this erotic energy under its garments or markets it, in environments where it is bred as hot-house flowers. Joshi's protagonists follow a course of action, purely "on instructions from some mysterious region of my being", as Billy puts it....(Pg.128).

Apart from the conflict within Billy, the conflict within Meena Biswas and Rima Kaul is introduced. The objective world sits in judgement over Billy's actions, as an unpardonable transgression. Within Billy Biswas there two streams of influences, one, the primitive force, untouched and unattended to, and sitting suffocatingly over it is the man-made manners, which keep him transfixed between the two worlds. There is a sense of guilt which nags him at the back of his mind. In Billy's estimation,

.....it was as though a part of me, a part that had thus far been in command was watching another that had taken over and not quite approving of what it saw. (Pg.128)

Romi's interest in the novel as a narrator is not, as he announces,

.....so much the final resolution of his life that interests me as I am intrigued by what preyed upon him during the course of it. (Pg.4)

It is also an announcement made by Arun Joshi, declaring his pet theme. Along with Rima Kaul, Romesh is chosen by Joshi from "some forgotten landmark" for their com-
mon past (Pg.138). They are elevated to "a common plane of reference" in comprehending the pursuits of a man who,

....pursued the tenuous threads of existence to its bitter end, no matter what trails of glory or shattered hearts he left behind in his turbulent wake. (Pg.4)

Billy Biswas remains "a refugee from civilisation" (page 138) to the end of his flighty life. Bilasia could have been the end of the road for Billy but for the world of Meena pursuing him to his end and Billy's unrelenting flight from this pursuit. His life in Bilasia's world discovered for him that other part that troubled him by giving clues about its presence and never coming within his grasp.

It was that passing moment that rarely comes in a man's life, when he feels that he has suddenly discovered 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 million others; Bilasia at that moment was the essence of that primitive force that had called me night after night, year after year. (Pg.140)

Against this, his past seems to him, as "squandering the priceless treasure of life on that heap of tinsel that passed for civilization." Joshi's novels are attempts at giving the term civilization a new meaning.

Billy attains the state of pure consciousness in the consummation of his desires in Bilasia. Reality looms large, obliterating, the 'heap of tinsel'. There was "only one and not two" as he had thought until now.

"I arrived at the fork in my life that, without being conscious of it, I had waited for all my life. (Pg. 142)
The strange turns that shape Billy Biswas's life to its abrupt and is analytical in texture, lending itself to an explanation of the meaning of Maya. The particular tale, of Billy Biswas, is about the co-existence of contradictory states the Vyavaharic state and the Paramarthic state, but the transition that the ephemeral body wishes to make to fully comprehend the eternal, Atman, is within the many spheres, the many distinctions within the Vyavaharic state; again directed by the hand of Maya. The tribal village is only a perch from which Billy can better experience the vibrations that have rocked him constantly. There is very little opportunity for him to remove the Jagat, and unite with Brahman.

Billy's transgressions is condemned by the "rapacious representatives of civilization" (Pg.141) as an inhuman deed. He commits the crime of desertion. He breaks the laws of a culture. But in the world of Dhunia, Billy is a magician. Dhunia's world is one of unconditional belief and trust. It is Dhunia who properly understands, Bilasia's role.

Bilasia is only a wife of this perishable world. It is Devi Mata who has been his companion for five thousand years, from one life to another (Janam Janam Ki Saathi).

It is from Devi Mata that he gets his Magic. (Pg.156)

Kala Pahar or Chandatola is introduced to us by Dhunia; it is a curious sketch of the hinterland of the human mindscape. At the outset it appears to be a simple folktale. In this region of beliefs, language of men is found to be "grossly inadequate" Again, the landscape is a description of lokaloka,. The untutored philosophy of life is evident in Dhunia's account of what lies beyond the hills. Here the power of imagination shapes their Reality. The name Dhunia itself denotes knowledge as opposed to the fraudulent game of intelligence played by civilized man.

Beyond the forest are our hills. Beyond the hills is the plain. And still far beyond the seven seas...In the middle of the seventh sea is an island as blue as the sea itself and as fresh as a bride even though it
has lived for as many years as there are an in this
world, and it has seen all that there is to see. The
sea surf break on this island day and night forming a
shimmering, girdle of foam like the girdle of the moon.
Where the surf ends the forest begins. There is both
light and darkness in the forest. It is full of strange
animals, some pleasant, some not pleasant and some
positively evil. The evil ones stray out only at night
so that no one has seen anything of them except their
eyes burning like coals. In the middle of the forest,
its head high above the clouds stands the Kala Pahar."(Pg.159)
The narrative mode takes the form of a simple folk tale, with allegorical undertones,
a style fully developed in The City and the River. And again the story of the sculptor
King contributes to this development as the fairy tale in the later novel. There are two
versions of this tale. The reader hears it both from Dhunia and Billy. The two versions
are conditioned by immediate requirement of the environment, preconditioned ideolo-
gies and visions. Dhunia's version focuses on establishing Billy as the sculptor King,
returned and restored to the people of the village according to the myth. In the myth,
the return of the sculptor king meant the return of his Queen to shine on Chandatola. It
has the magic, mystery and awe that resides only in the uncritical, intuitively and
instinctively propelled tribal narratives.
Billy's version of the sculptor king's story is a psychological survey of the turbulence
he had thus far experienced. The sculptor king is unable to conceive the face of the idol
and this is the dilemma faced by Billy in placing the woman who haunts his dreams. The sculptor kings efforts are seen as futile endeavours just as Billy's search for the other part in him.

"No artist had ever infused such life in a stone figure or hewn such limbs out of common granite. But the figure had no face. That had always been the trouble. The king could never make the face of his god." (Pg.169)

Arun Joshi, too has trouble in infusing life into the women who haunt the lives of his protagonists, Anuradha in The Last Labyrinth, in the description of Bilasia, and the Head of Boatman in The City and the River. But he effortlessly captures the lack-lustre quality of a Meena or a Geetha.

"Meena Chatterjee was never short of words; so much so, in fact, that at times in my memory the very essence of a happening tends to get lost in a maze of verbiage that Meena produced at the time."

As a sociological study of the upper-class Joshi's views are splattered all along. They serve as explanations and perhaps, to the cynic, as excuses for Billy's flight. What strikes Billy and causes aversion, in the 'City Societies' is

"....the superficiality, the sense of values. I don't think all city societies are as shallow as ours. I am, of course, talking mainly of the so-called upper-classes... I don't think I have ever met a more pompous, a more mixed up lot of people. Artistically they are dry as dust, Intellectually they could no better than mechanically mumble ideas..." (Pg.177)
Imperialism is cited as one of the reasons. Achebe's favourite theme finds itself reflected in these two comments by Billy and Romi. Romi's argument is,

.....centuries of foreign rule, the period of transition,

economic insecurity and so on. (Pg.177)

Billy's response to this is, of an anarchist, expressing his non-conformity to the self-conscious exhibitionism of the indicted society....

"But, for God's sake, they have, at least got to think about it. If they don't the period of transition, as you call it is going to last for ever and ever." (Pg.177)

This is a comment which touches, not only. Arun Joshi's social consciousness but also the progress of commonwealth literature itself. The post-colonial themes in this literary area have not shifted away from the colonial experience, and thus have delayed the process of decolonising the mind.

Psychology and metaphysics run hand in hand in Joshi's analysis of the human condition. Decisions, causes swing between scientific knowledge and spiritual infinity. Billy's hallucinations are traced back to the car accident and head injury and the pathedine administered as cure. But, the mysterious forces relegate such explanations to the background. The moment of decision takes place in the temple ruins. The ruins lie as the line which separate the two hemispheres, the edge where metamorphosis is made possible. As Billy explains,

'I arrived here and sat down on this stone. The moment

I sat down, my mind went blank. All my will-power drained

out of me, I felt as though I were in the presence of fate. I
knew I would never be able to leave these hills alive. (Pg.182)

Ringing with the dreaded tone of a soothsayer, Billy predicts the inevitable end of such a pursuit. A strange cure seems to pursue him even in this zone of Bilasia and the tribal force. His failure to keep his promise to Meena and his son is explained away, thus, 'I had greater responsibilities towards my soul.' (Pg.184)

It seems to be a callous admission, for, the court rooms of the earth, depending purely upon the objective, do not consider the search for abstractions as commendable pursuits. Billy also carries upon his head the guilt of using Rima Kaul's trust to test himself. Between Meena and Billy there lay the lack of empathy and an insufficient idea of human suffering.

'The point, of course, was that I had come to acquire
a taste for the shamming for its own sake. I came to
like it even more than I like the sex part.

....The mendacity that I had seen all around me had
finally grabbed hold of me. I was well on my way to
becoming all that I had always despised. (Pg.186)

Billy Biswas at this juncture, is exposed as a self-centred escapist, who is always on the
run chasing elusive ideals, neglecting earthly responsibilities and trampling over the individuality of people who offer their willingness to participate in the drama of life.
He clears his name by pointing the finger at the mendaciousness of City-societies, as
the cause for his relationship with Rima Kaul.

It gradually dawned on me that a tremendous corrupting
force was working on me. It was as though my soul was
taking revenge on me for having denied it for so long
that Other thing, it had been, clamouring for. "Here you
swine, if you haven't the guts to break away from this
filth, well then, I am going to wallow in it until it makes
you sick.

Billy, chooses to satisfy the demands of his very demanding mistress, his soul, and
openly admits.

That the other thing was and is after all what my
life is all about. (Pg.187)

His frustrated search has been a medium through which he could perceive the "some-
thing else". The "something else" was God or rather" in his words 'Yes, something like
that'.

'Becoming a primitive was only a first step, a means
to an end.....I realised then that I was seeking something
else. (Pg.187)

Continuing to look for causes outside himself for his condition, he zeroes in on a 'mas-
termind' that was operating behind these developments and the role played by Rima
Kaul in this.

It was as though a mastermind had arranged the whole
thing to give me a preview of what awaited me if I
continued to defy its call. Poor Rima had crystallised
for me the alternatives. (Pg.187)

Billy’s excuses, identify a built-in-apparatus within the human mind, which performs
the task of mediating between two strands of diverging thoughts. His explanation deci-
phers for him the rightness of his choice. All these explanations given by Billy provide
a good case study for the psychological examinations carried out by Joshi, before he
steps into a metaphysical understanding in the novel.

Sometimes I think the human mind is equipped with a
built-in-apparatus for compromises. As soon as you
are faced with a difficult choice this apparatus is
switched on. It runs about here and there brokering
between various parts of man, rationalising this,
postponing that, until what is left is the conventional
expedients of the age and hardly a choice. Deep down
we are afraid that the price of making choices is
terrible, not realizing that the price for not making them
is even more terrible. (Pg.188)

Allegiance to norms and isolation from the structure of the same norms, is the duality
presented here. Ironically, Billy Biswas in this novel and Okonkwo in Things fall
Apart are forced to make an exit for making the choice in one case and for not making
the choice in the other case. The question is not one of making a choice, it is one of
disrespecting a certain power, which they reject. In both the cases, it is the human
society which is the shaping force. They bleed to death, by severing part of their body
of influences.
Romi, the biographer of Billy Biswas's tale, senses this otherness which haunts Billy, in the incomplete temple. It possessively hovers over Billy, as if its survival depended on him, silently warning Romi off its territory, ancient and sacred. The presence is described as 'neither good nor evil, but terribly old'.

Beware, it seemed to say 'These are things that the likes of you may never know. There are circles within circles and worlds within worlds. Beware where you enter.' (Pg.190)

Instances such as these retain the reader's sympathy for Billy, establishing him as an alien in Meena's society. As Romi regrets, later, it was 'perverse fate'(Pg. 199) that thrust Situ rudely into this atmosphere. She acts as an emissary from Billy's abandoned world. Strangely enough Chinua Achebe, introduces the idea of 'worlds within worlds; in his latest novel 'The Anthills of the Savannahs while, all along, he has maintained, steadily and strictly a theme of secular humanism.

With the discovery of Billy, by Situ, the action picks momentum as far as the story is concerned. But Billy the character loses his foothold on Bilasia's territory and the downfall, is much quicker than the time taken to reach this much longed for goal. The demand for his extradition follows soon, while the narrator desperately seeks to avert the feared disaster. Romi's desperation is reflected in his cry,

I have often wished I were a better liar. I have no doubt that a certain skill at passing untruths is essential to the mode of life which most of us are required to lead. (Pg.199)

The mendaciousness referred to by Billy is affirmed by Romi's comment. The ex-
posed truth about Billy's whereabouts, brings to the fore the contradictoriness of the
two worlds. The world of Meena, Situ and Mr. Biswas converts 'the story of Billy
Biswas into a stereo-type childish escapade' (Pg.204). The story loses its iridescence,
like a sea creature, when thrown out, on to an alien element, earth. While Romi hasten
to prevent the inevitable, he passes such a location which is symbolic of the place
he and Rina occupy in this work.

The road went through the string of little villages,
precariously clinging to the base of the hills at
this point like a girdle of brown-green beads. They
are neither tribal nor non-tribal but hand perpetually
in that uncertain world that lies in between. (Pg.215)

Romi's description of Billy's flight is like the image of an animal smoked out of his
natural habitat,
',....his freedom threatened. By his father, his wife,
my wife, by the so-called organised, civilized society
and its instruments' (Pg.216)

Billy's death, pathetic as it is, a shattering of his beliefs and disappointment at the termination of a cherished experience, stumbles out in the form of an accusation
directed at his extirpators who reduce his endeavours to an insignificant, 'wisp of wish-
fulfillment'. (Pg.237)

Billy Biswas's life is the enactment of a dual consciousness and the futility of trying to sever one in favour of another. The inner form, or the acknowledgment of universals within that particular innerform is the interconnection unrecognised in
this work.
The two other works The Apprentice and The Foreigner are explored to trace the origins of this full-grown pattern of the conflicting dualities within the human mind.

The mystical inclinations of Billy Biswas and Som Bhaskar find their growth in Rathan Rathor in The Apprentice. He is the first sketch of Som Bhaskar and in him lies the junction from which branch out the disturbances felt, both by Som Bhaskar and Billy Biswas. The quality of the mystical experience in both these characters is at the preverbal stage. The explicitness of feeling does not find coherent human terms to relate it. This insight into reality is not completely detached from sense and suspicions in Som Bhaskar, while Billy Biswas prematurely alienates himself from these zones, where cynicism and scepticism and a tirade of-isms mock such views. He reaches out for the unity and indivisibility of reality embodied in the world of Bilasia, by running away from a twentieth-century reality. In The Apprentice, Rathan Rathor finds himself in a world that is inharmonious. Behind the semblance of organic unity it is chaotic and it seems to grow out of his bad conscience. The barren, landscape of the Grand Master in The City on the River has its blue print in this novel.

'Acres of mortar, an occasional park. Box upon box of identical flats, Yellow by day, colourless at night. Trees that die as saplings; a dispensary short of medicines, library without books, a boys school; a girls school, a substation; an area neither poor nor rich, hostile, nor friendly offering its embrace to all who from the ends of the Republic flock to the Capital. Who, I ask you, would build a home or sink roots in the desert. (Pg.3)
The narrative technique employed is in the form of an outdated mode of journal keeping. It is an inner-monologue, an extended soliloquy. The quest is for identity. Here the 'no-man's land' and 'the desert' stand for the 'organised societies' orbiting around the routine of existence. The germ of Billy Biswas's struggle lies here; the need to free oneself from the uniformity of lifestyles. The idea of fleeing away from these structures is conceptualised in Rathan Rathor's cross-country races, his preference over the two hundred meter dash.

'.....what I enjoyed most was the cross-country'.

'The long distance runner is nothing if not a breed'.

'The thing about cross-country is you get very close to the people you run with. The silence of the wilderness, the smell of grass just after rains, mist on a winter morning laced with wood-smoke, steaming ponds and the creaking of a rahat, they sort of bind you as a two hundred meter sprint never can.' (Pg.6 TA)

The novel is a conscious collection of observations about human societies. Life in a 'civilized segment of the man-made world is visualized as .'a funeral with a band but without a body.' (Pg.12 TA)

The picture is one of hopelessness, a bleak atmosphere bereft of everything else. of value, except,

'.....stupidity, cowardice. That was all that was left.' (Pg.15)

'The wanting or desire felt in this novel is the need to fill 'the great cavity' in human lives. The 'great cavity' transposes itself to 'the voids' in The Last Labyrinth.
Rathor's growth as a character is turbulent, as he represents the battle of youth against social conditions and the power games of a hardened adult-world. The Brigadier friend explains it away as 'ideals or illusions of youth' Anuradha and Bilasia fail to fill the great cavity in Som Bhaskar and Billy Biswas because the cavity within these men craves for a fulfillment which is beyond the human plain and human form. The great emptiness and extreme isolation gives the protagonist the feeling of being, 'abandoned on the planet.' (Pg.17 TA) This feeling is the result of their lack of a sense of being in a man made society. The sense of isolation is self-inflicted. Like Billy Biswas who could sense the stillness of the otherwise fleet-footed time, Rathan Rathor recollects those moments of his youth when time moved with the leisure, grace and naturalness of.

'......a woman turning, gaghra twisted, around her waist to look at the train.' (Pg.17)

The present, in contrast, distances these memories not only in spare time but by its sheer debased state of affairs. His nostalgia is reflected in this,

'How distant they all seem from these smog-laden streets, this stench of sewers. Memories from another life.' (Pg.18)

This nostalgia triggers off a set of reactions and strategies to tackle this "smog-laden" world. The Brigadier, in Rathan Rathor's life, symbolises optimism against the passion which characterises Rathan Rathor. To the Brigadier 'the world was a beautiful where to be assaulted and taken'.( Pg. 18) where as to Rathan Rathor, 'it appeared as a bundle of mirrors tempting and somehow held together, but on the brink always of falling apart'. (Pg.18) Poised on this brink of uncertainty he fears the future; the image
of the labyrinth finds its origin here.

'...what clouded my horizon was the future, my friend,
the unknown ominous future...its blind and unlit tunnels.' (Pg 18)

'The mystery of the Universe' as disclosed to him by his mother is the power of money, that Billy Biswas shuns and Som Bhaskar utilizes, in their pursuit of an unidentifiable vision. The throes of pain that grip Som Bhaskar and Billy Biswas during the birth of this knowledge, is explained by Rathan Rathor, thus.

'I had felt the elevation that we feel when something within us, some vital essence, manages to break out and lose itself in objects that are bigger and beyond us.' (Pg.23)

This inner monologue, a technique effectively executed by Arun Joshi in this novel is given accurate description by Rathan Rathor,

'There are days when the past crowds you. From every side.
Pins you down. It helps then to talk. (Pg.22)
The fear experienced by him is the fear of failure and the loss of hope, of an identity; like the cry heard in The Last Labyrinth, 'I want, I want....' and the 'how weary' how weary....expressed in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas Rathan Rathor's anxiety is expressed in these lines.

"What if I fail?: What if I fail: what would happen
to us if I fail? (Pg.24)
The cause of this anxiety lies in the 'stagnant waters of a humdrum and anxious life.' (Pg.18) Out of such life grows 'panic and foolishness' panic and foolishness. (Pg.25) and the resultant 'discontent and discontent'. Desperation and disillusionment is the theme of this novel and it is evident from the disclosure quoted above. Again the pattern of
looking for causes outside, in the objective world, is evident from the list below.

Stupidity, cowardice. That was all that was left' (Pg.15)

'What he feared was the humiliation of defeat'. (Pg.15)

'There was nothing in the world as sad as the end of hope. Not even death. If you die the matter is ended.....The slow leakage of hope does other things.

things corrosive and irreversible. (Pg.29)

AND

'I had become and at the age of twenty-one, hypocrite,

and a liar, in short, a sham.' (Pg.32)

Suspicion of the known, the familiar grows out of this disillusionment after having sought justice in the world and finding it absent. The disappointments grow out of expectations, from his wife, children, boss and God. When they are proved false he suffers from a deep sense of hurt. This causes the split within. The disillusioning patterns of human transactions force him to withdraw against the scrutiny and the ignominy of rejection.

What I found more unbearable were the times when I

was looked at examined, interviewed, interrogated

and rejected. (Pg.35)

The split within occurs as a natural process, as part of an instinctive camouflage, a technique employed by living things. One part of the self begins the game of deception while protecting the vulnerability of the other half. Rathan Rathor conceals it under a demeanour of 'docility'. (Pg.42)

'It comes to me naturally enough, the obedience and
the docility.' (Pg.42)

Billy Biswas and Som Bhaskar adopt for each other nonchalance and disobedience as
the device to safeguard their weaknesses. The difference in the pattern of development
of the three protagonists, from Rathan to Billy to Som Bhaskar, is well-explicated in
this observation.

The mode of survival of a tiger is not the same as
that of a dog or a mouse. A tiger does not think of
dashing into a hole or like a dog, lick the hands of
his adversary. Some survive through defiance, others
through ability. Still others through obedience,
others through ability. Still others through obedience,
by becoming servants to powers of the world. They
are like those heavenly bodies that in themselves are
nothing but reflect only the superior and more
powerful lights (Pg.42)

What rings with the tone of a cliche, is a poignant representation of a commoners trauma,
choking over the hastening of the world towards intellectual heights, in other words the
'bourgeois filth' (Pg.51). From the consciousness of the tangible world the focus shifts
to the existence of other worlds and their mysteries. This consciousness is magnified in
the later works.

There are the hardways of this world. But there are
other worlds and their hard ways are different. (Pg.52)

Yet, at the same time Rathan Rathor's attention is fixed to the empirical world and
Joshi discloses his plans to be realised in this novel with the comment,
'...to keep to one world at a time.' (Pg.52)

His attempts at getting along in life through manipulations and maneuvers is not for the end itself. It is the maneuvering which is an end by itself.

'Onc was like a sailor on a lake concerned with a destination but only with the manipulation of the sails, the riding of the wind.' (Pg.53)

The Great Machine, initially, in the novel is the bureaucratic structure and its corrupting forces. Rathon Rathor challenges this system, a Goliath whom none desired to disturb. Momentary triumph awaits him and at the end of it the two faces of the world rise before his eyes. The world as the manipulator and the world as the subservient recipient of Rathon Rathor's moves. The bourgeois world is seen as both the dictator and the vasal.

If earlier.....my back had nearly been broken by the world's unjust thrashing, I was now struck dumb by its other face, the absurd servility with which it was willing to turn about and worship the very man whom it had earlier thought nothing of annihilating. (Pg.55)

The duality, as he understands, is the split within him and the fluctuation of his confidence. The undulation that rocks him from within, further deepens the disillusionment.

.....the night had seemed darker than before and the world a place without law, a planet turning in the darkness, going heaven knew where. (Pg.55)

As against his unsteady faith in the world and himself, Rathon Rathor comes face to face with definiteness and a strength of conviction in the Superintendent. The truth that
he learns from the superintendent is not merely to believe in the existence of God but
the necessity to anchor ones faith, to survive.

"You know Rathor" he said nothing but God exists." You
can be certain only of Him."

He meant he said, that there was no point in looking for
truths aside from the Truth of God. Money in the world
always changed hands. God was only concerned with what
one did with the money. Did man, for example use it for
good. (Pg.56)

The Krishna figure in The Last Labyrinth, as a God whose significance depended
upon the devotion of the civilized world, is evolved here. He is not sure if there was a
power that judged and guided every move or if he should concentrate on 'the problems
of this world'. (Pg.57) as his father had,

.....If others invoked God, involved him in argument
of beseeched him, he let them carry on until they were
ready to return to the problems of this world.' (Pg.57)

Darkness becomes the conditional medium of survival. Aftabs nightly haunts in The
Last Labyrinth and the grand Master's nightly operations in The City and the River is
reflected in Rathor's observation.

The Sun takes away something with it. Your capacity
to fool yourself to lie and conceal. As my friend the
sheikh used to say darkness reveals all; darkness of the
night, or of death (Pg.63)

The darkness of the night is metaphorically suggestive of the inner self. The fire fly
The image in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* suggests this revelation of dark secrets; when these dark secrets reveal themselves for exploration. The voids that fill Som Bhaskar, trouble Rathon Rathor who is involved as intensely as Som Bhaskar in 'Deals' that are there'. The sweeping movement covering the landscape indicate the flow of thoughts unconfined by geographical concreteness. The momentum of this flow visualised in this description is similar to the nightmare that haunts Som Bhaskar.

*Telegraph poles flow by monotonously. Beyond them*
*were the trees and still beyond, the void - a void*
*incidentally, that has harassed me many times since.* (Pg.64)

The voids remain undisturbed because of the existing scepticism and hopelessness reflected all around. With the corrupting force dominating judgements and decisions, there is no place or power to nail ones faith in. Even God is seen as part of this conspiracy. The God who is introduced to Rathor by the Superintendent is no less than the Grand Master in *The City and the River*.

*God sees all we say but having seen, goes his way,*
*twisting the walking stick. He sees all but does not*
*necessarily at the same time judge. His judgement we*
*like to believe, comes only in spurts, if it comes at*
*all and can be influenced with a lumpsum.* (Pg:57)

*This society ropes in God at the drop of a hat. God*
*indeed is our major argument, whatever the issue, which*
*ever the side.* (Pg.58)

Incomplete answers, to the termination of the vulgarity of the transactions of this world, pursue him from all sides which create the fear of termination. Panic stricken he clings
to youthfulness, as Som Bhaskar does, to ensure continuity. He convinces himself that life is a complicated algebraic equation.

Life, more than ever reminds me of those complex sums in algebra that we do in the high school........ (Pg.65)

'Success' is the elusive 'X' in the sum, which lies beyond twenty equations that are interrelated. It is the maneuvering of these equations, that illuminates this 'X'. The equations themselves either support each other, blend or destroy themselves. The mysterious could be reduced to a zero through self-destructions. It will be lost forever if the equations are inadequate or inappropriate. The zero continues to be the void, a vacancy that is complete, not as a plot where an emergence could be contemplated. The puzzle and pursuit of 'X' can be stilled by the hand of Death. 'The mystery of Death does not concern him as much as maneuvering equations. In the process he makes 'strange bargains with the world' (Pg.66) There is Death certainly experienced by one part of him, the sensitivity which is part of the self.

'I felt as though some tender surface beneath my skin was congealing, hardening into cartilage and bone, forming the shell against which all future messages, advice or recrimination, well-meaning or foolish, would merely bounce off leaving me untouched, free to pursue my ends without distraction.'
Between the individual, society and God, Joshi draws the society in for questioning and unhesitatingly directs the tone of accusation at it, for keeping itself conducive for such depravity. Nation is discussed for its strangeness, as Billy Biswas and Romi discuss in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas.

Rathan Rathor, is looking for a way around the emptiness and silences of life. As he is looking for solutions, he looks for causes to begin with.

Not much remains in a nation whose youth has lost its sole. (Pg.68) (As spelt in the text)

AND

....what was at the root of our downfall was not the military nor the politicians nor yet the treacheries of the weather but the INDIAN CHARACTER. In short, I would inform my audience, we are facing a CRISIS OF CHARACTER.

The hunt is for the new recentering of truth and values. At such moments the character fades into the background and Arun Joshi moves forward to appeal to the reader.

The few lines from "a silly-article". (Pg.76) as Rathor refers to, contains the image of a ruined temple, which occupies the centre-stage during Billy Biswas's self-imposed exile in The Strange case of Billy Biswas. The function of this ruined temple in The Apprentice is to gauge the degradation in a local society, the Indian Nation, while in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas the ruins dispel, faith in the constructed sanctum sanctorum. Billy Biswas unconsciously visualises his within as the sanctum sanctorum.

The Indian people, I wrote were a glorious monument in ruin, a monument of which even the foundations had caught canker. The pillar has gone. So were the
sculptures and the sanctum sanctorum... so nothing
was left except tottering walls and dark rotting
holes.' (Pg.77)

The freedom movement and post-independence Indian situation is woven into the fabric of the theme. The underlying concern of a creative artist, who is pained by the despondency that has set into the nation is evident from the following thoughts. There is also a comparative element which enters here between the Indian mind during its struggle for freedom and the perceivable alterations in the mental make-up of the present Indian mind. He not only moans the death of decent human impulses, that have hardened into stone, his anger is mainly directed against man in the mass and not man as an individual.

"I remember the elation that freedom brings to nations
and men-before they make hash of it."(Pg.80)

Rathan Rathor diminishes himself in stature, docile in his submission to the happenings around. He assigns to himself the role of an observer, a bystander who is neither directly responsible for the mainstream activities nor as one who would take the initiative to rouse a movement to bring about change.

I lived in a little world, a frog in the well, but
even frogs in the well gather an idea of what is abroad, an idea of sun and cloud, night and day. (Pg.84)

and again,

The wide world and me, me and the wide world. But how
can one separate the two. The wide world took me in its
wake, overwhelmed me, smothered me. As simple as that.
I am no giant. A pigmy if anything. One of these dwarfs
that follow the procession. At best a bystander. (Pg.85)
The overwhelming pressures of the world are felt by Som Bhaskar, Billy Biswas and
now, Rathor. Even Som Bhaskar staggers under this consciousness. The development
which is noticeable in Billy and Som, is that they attempt to break away from this
weight. Som Bhaskar does not succeed because of his scepticism and blind desire for
Anuradha,and Billy brings the whole weight crashing down upon him in trying to make
a clean break from it.

To be a slave and not know it, is tolerable. To know
one's bondage and yet seek freedom that is what gets you
down, knocks the wind out of you. As I sat in my well
and watched I felt choked oppressed; rebellious but tied
up totally in knots. (Pg.86)
The trinity of. self, nation, and the Universe and the interconnected turbulences, raises
the conflict to a higher plain when he describes the nature of oppression. The tone
adopted in this admission gives way to the suspicion that the novel is an autobiografi-
cal work of a budding artist. The title adds strength to this suspicion.

What oppressed me? A sense of failure.... Not so
much a personal failure, the failure of a continent,
of a race. (Pg.86)
This overwhelming despondency in The Apprentice is segmented between the later
two novels. While Rathor wants to 'throw in the sponge', a localised idiom in place of
the English throwing in the towel, Billy Biswas refuses to swim with the current (Pg.87)
and instead he confronts it by rejecting it. As Rathor gives expression to it.
Some pick up cudgels and tear down what disturbs them. (Pg.87)

Having thrown 'in the sponge', the restlessness that does not lose its grip on a dissentient like Billy Biswas; it dissembles itself under the apathy with Rathor, and here again we hear the doctors diagnosis.

When you felt used up, you were used-up

and

that is the way it is in God's world. When you are

used up you are used-up. And I was used up. (Pg.88)

All along, with the congealing and hardening of the softer side of his nature, Rathan Rathor develops suffocating layers of facades. The following is an example of the proxy that he releases into the world concealing the duality within.

I for one grew eloquent about it, having my arguments

with odd bits of maxims and other revolutionary jargon

that I had picked up here and there. And all the time,

inside, there was no revolution at all. Only boredom

and discontent, discontent that periodically burst into

panic. (Pg.90)

Arun Joshi touches the depths of hopelessness and bitterness through the old clerk. But this is an interesting instance which decides the fate of the City in *The City and the River*. The old clerk expands his belief, that, in the struggle between truths and lies, its lies that always win when he says,

Every ship has a compass,......It is men who navigate

that run them aground....there are navigators whose
business, it is to run their ships aground' (Pg.91)

In the first three novels it is the civilized societies that are held responsible for running ships aground. The ships here represent individuals and their convictions. It is only in The City and the River, these navigators are given specific identities in the shape of the Grand Master and his followers.

The narrative is reduced to an repetitive babble; a sign which hints at the disintegration within.

Are we running aground?

Moreover, one does not know what is running aground and what is floating. (Pg.91)

Rathan Rathor quickly picks up a lesson from the old man's views about lies outwitting truths. The facade of docility is replaced by 'flattery and cunning' (Pg.91). The flattery and cunning is spun around the progress of his colleagues. The game of deception is visualised as a vicious circle. The positions are reversed, his victims mouth the same despondent words once uttered by him and the sample is,

Yes, I am unhappy, Mr. Rathor. But it is not because of what your people have done to me. If I am unhappy, I am unhappy for this country. (Pg.93)

Continuing the diatribe against the nation, Rathor with increased confidence makes the following observations,

'A nation of dreamers, awaiting their doom.' (Pg.97)

and

'The country was full of spineless flunkies' (Pg.189)

From the nation the focus shifts to nations. Arun Joshi presents the cringing status of
the commonwealth nations and the citizens; the concept of an island, is the only assured status for citizens of this segment of the earth.

....when the cards were down, I was a nobody......
what significance was there is steering a boat that
had no destination or watering a tree that could
never bear fruit. (Pg.97)
The quality, of this hoplessness is reflected in Obi Okonkwo's bewilderment; there is an indefinite halt in the mid-stream of life not knowing where and whether to proceed or not. In the process, the introverted vision consumes his soul. The vacuum, and the voids settle on his mindscape. The narrative voice of Rathn Rathor shifts its focus from enumerating the social influences that energise the vicious circles to the inability of the soul to withstand the turbulence.

'.....How all these years, I have been alone, so
horribly alone in my anger, in my failures, carrying
them in secret, like a thief, close to my heart, until
their blazes have turned upon me and turned me to ashes.
Believe me, I have seen it happen. I have seen my soul
turn to ashes.' (Pg.99)
The narrative takes the form of a dirge, a wailing unheard by the outside world and Joshi elevates the narrators vision and views a landscape from a great height, this repeats itself in *The Last Labyrinth* in Som Bhaskar's nightmare cited earlier and again in *The City and the River*, in the night helicopter tours of the Grand Master. Such a view, literally elevates the character from his isolation, to give an all encompassing picture of the life that he has shut himself out of. In the case of Som Bhaskar and Rathan
Rathor it is symbolic of the society detaching itself from the body of existence, the human society. Rathor experiences this while flying over Rajasthan. The picture below gives the impression of both illusion and concreteness, of strength and vulnerability, of permanence and transience. The Grand Master's vision is lopsided and he explores the possibility of absolute power over what lies under his feet from such heights.

Those hamlets and clusters of villages, I knew had survived as nothing in the world had survived. Yet from that distance they looked vulnerable, fragile. Made as though, of straw. What I wondered if they were not durable after all, if they were what they seemed from fifteen thousand feet: play things that could be easily crushed within a conqueror's fist. (Pg.104)

While ruminating over the limitations of man-made constructs, his thoughts plummet down to earthly identities, when his father's words come to his mind. Earthly identities hold back, the protagonists created by Joshi, from completely merging with an inner form. Their hesitation to sever ties with earthly questions and expectations, never brings the curtain down on this drama of pain and anguish.

Whatever else you may forget, my son, do not ever forget that you are a Rathor......A Rathor (Pg.104)

The narrative acquires a buoyancy, and shifts from space to the ground and back into space. The ancestors in *The Strange case of Billy Biswas* and *The Last Labyrinth* and the pyramids in *The City and the River* which are symbolic of the ancestral influences, find their beginning here in *The Apprentice*.

'I had a feeling then that all of them were awaiting for me down there, my ancestors, watching me go by
their sunburnt, bearded faces trailing the silvery
viscount. Above the din of the turbines I thought'
I could hear the voices of the spirits. (Pg.105)

After the initial tone of retrospection, the narrative fumbles between balance and im-
balance. At another instance, a repetition noticed in The Last Labyrinth, the prote-
nist views from above, the bustling world at the feet of a five storey building.

Five storey's below, the crowds, white as always,
milled about, like ants.....It seemed to me then, that
there was a City reclaimed for purpose no other than
that of commerce for bargains. Bargains with me.
Bargains with truth. For the purpose above all of
striking bargains with life. And what was doing there?
where did I come in? How as I to get out? (Pg.106)
The detachment that is necessary to disengage from the competitive commercial tactics
of the world is striking in the question,"And what was I doing there?" The futility of
existence in such a set up is further strengthened by the Sheikh's disturbing laments.

' We were rubbish. We were rubbish just as those items
were rubbish.' (Pg.107)
The symbols chosen to stress on the insignificance and depravity of earthly misdealings
are 'the ants' and 'rubbish'.

Arun Joshi places 'The Apprentice' at the peak of degenerateness shared by each one
of his protagonists, before they decide to leap off this supposedly elevated platform,
seeking answers in other spheres. But Rathna Rathor's tale is not one of escape from a
souless existence but it is the very description of ones progress towards a souless state of being.

'I was infact, at the peak of the dung heap that I had been climbing all my life' (Pg.115)

The climb had been made possible by the overall pessimism that he encounters at every turn he makes, in hope of finding some optimism. Like, for instance, Himmat Singh's words quoted below.

'Not many are given to find their function on this earth,

Rathan Rathor' (Pg.110)

Interpretation of the title 'The Apprentice' is found in one of situations portrayed in the text itself. Rathan Rathor is the novice studying the quality of life, before, his inward eye is cleared to view the truth behind existence. Som Bhaskar and Rathon Rathor are incapable of living in the presence of threatened lives, of fellow-beings in the grip of death. It reminds them of the inevitable fracture from reality. This is ejected out into the open during Rathon Rathor's encounter with the old man suffering from a heart attack at the party.

'There was vomit on the front of his dress. Also on his shoes. His mouth dripped with it. I am dying the old man gasped I am having a heart attack', (Pg.117)

Rathor's reaction to this cry for help is repugnance. He is angered by the sight and views it as another one of those cruel qualities of life, which was a dung-heap, ruining his hopes, as he confesses.

'Here I had so much money and before I had even touched it, all had seen spoilt. The old man had spoilt it all. And I said
to myself, I will not allow it to be spoilt. I shall enjoy life.

Before it is too late. Before I grow old. (Pg.118)

His repugnance is reflected in Som Bhaskar when he kicks out at the beggar who clasps his ankle, on his way up the hill, towards the temple. This situation in *The Last Labyrinth* shares similarities with Rathan Rathor's experience at the hospital.

.....as I was walking down a corridor lined with cots
a soldier reached out and caught me by the leg...I should have stayed on, put my hand on the soldier's head; at least called a nurse but I only disengaged myself and hurried away. (Pg.133)

The deliberate distancing away from suffering as an inevitable reality of human life drains out of these protagonists the compassion that would, perhaps, have revealed the meaning of existence. The desire to break away from the teeming human life, expressed in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is pictured in this novel. Rathan Rathor's description of and reaction towards, a room full of disabled youngmen is as follows.

'The evening light filtering through the glass bathed
the young men in a bilious light and once again inspite of the laughter and music, I had the impression of a world at standstill, silent, stifling, a world condemned.

Again I hurried away.' (Pg.133)

The sensation and the description is the experience of being locked in a vault or rather buried under the debris of civilized progress. There is neither a sense of familiarity, a sense of belonging or a sense of identification with the place where time had sped past him for twenty years. The stagnation that he noticed in the room is reflected in this.

For twenty years I had lived in this city and for
twenty years it seemed to me there had been nothing
but night, nothing but darkness. I had stampeded about,
lured on by carrots, regulated by sticks running here
and there without knowing what I sought. Below me lost
in the darkness lay the defeated city." (Pg.165)
Within this darkness, the abandoned temple and the deity of Krishna make their en-
trance, not to leave the works of Arun Joshi till the end of his literary creations. This
Krishna is like the figure who stood by the bed-side of Som Bhaskar's mother, a deity
with whom he struggles to come to terms with.

'I crouched behind a huddle of old ladies, sleepless
and afraid stared at Krishna. He stood there, life-
size, flute in hand, smiling wonderously through painted
lips. That was my god, the god of my father and of
his father, before him the god who took form age after
age when truth was threatened and evil prospered. That
of course was also the god of the hide merchant and
the owners of the imported cars. (Pg.168)
The doubt that nuzzles Rathor's brain, is on whose side is this god and is he party to
canstant battle for supremacy between good and evil and is he the perpetrator of Maya
in this world? Several of his puzzles fall into place when he first lays his eyes on the
dead Brigadier. All along he had handled the transactions of this world through 'nego-
tiations', he admits as,"my approach to life". (Pg.161)
The image of the frog at the bottom of the well reoccurs in this sequence.

What I had seen that morning at the morgue was not so
much a shattered skull, as the vision of the vast pit at the bottom of which my life crawled. Like a worm. And now the vision trailed me wherever I went. (Pg. 178)

So far his negotiations had been accomplished through his vanity and stupidity, indulging in various deeds of debauchery, now the enormity of his miscalculations and manipulations strike a fatal blow. His initial interpretation of the maxim, "there, as a well-executed deal of bartering favours". He recognises this malady in himself, in his nation, in his generation, mounting the enormity of the debased existence.

There were others beside, a multitude crawling amidst the faith, lolling about in the stink of their creation, conscious of neither the need for succor nor of how it was to be obtained. At times I saw whole cities writhing in it, the whole country.

At other times it was not so much one city or another, but a whole generation, a generation of cowards. (Pg. 178)

The emotions fluctuate between isolation and cohabitation and the narrative sways under this tirade. Isolation is self-inflicted by these characters and they need company to share the oppressing feeling of terror which is part of such an isolation.

'My fear, my fears! My life an endless torment of fear.' (Pg. 178)

The Brigadier's final days have an effect on his evaluations made earlier. He is unable to reach out to the Brigadier as he stomped about like "a caged demented animal". (Pg. 179). That the deeds of men are monitored by a power uncomprehended, is the
God is not mocked. That someone is no oldman walking
about twisting his stick....He has got a stick alright and
he is mocked, and sooner or later, some place or another
he will rap your knuckles. No doubt about that take it
from me. (Pg.179)

He takes shelter behind this new-found truth, in his book of apprenticeship, once again
driven by his fear of being cut adrift, from familiarity, into madness. The madman's
world is a lonely world. Unlike Billy Biswas, whose interpretation of a demented
statement of mind, that is granted the status of a civilization alien to the known one,
Rather views it as, again, a locked-in state, where the individual is locked out of this
world well-known to him'.

'....those who descend into madness, descend alone.

Immobilised, fuddled, tongueless, ununderstood,

laughed at..... '(Pg.179)

The next reassessment, is the faith he held in youthfulness as a stage in man's develop-
ment, that held the key to all successes. The inadequacies of youth is reflected in his
observation and the supremacy of experience over bodily strength is fully developed in
the theme of *The City and the River*.

"....youth can conquer all but not the mischief of oldermen,
men infact like me." (Pg.182)
Arun Joshi often introduces a refrain of disillusionment into the narrative. The shift is from sobriety to uncertainty, a close revaluation, to a pained looking-back at his wasted life. The idea of life as a wasteland is the Eliotcan influence which rises to a crescendo in *The City and the River*.

'I had come full of hope, ambitions, goodwill and all that was left was a pile of dung. (Pg.192).

'A pile of dung. Twenty years and nothing gained. An empty lifetime.' (Pg.192).

'That is a terrible sensation..... the realisation 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.... My life had been a great waste. (Pg.194 & 195).

He arrives at the crossroads; is it 'revolution or God' that can purge this world of its crookedness. Ironically, he chooses the temple that had created a Himmat Singh, an inhabitant of God's darkness. The narrative hinges on a note of indecision. It is parabolic in its delineation of man's predicament in this man-made world. There is an attempt made towards repentance. Rathan Rathor is incapable of even a tinge of hope that laces Himmat Singh's admission,

What was the cure of a crooked world. None perhaps, revolution perhaps or perhaps..... perhaps..... perhaps God himself. God alone perhaps could remove his darkness. (Pg.202).

Darkness, the overwhelming strength of ignorance is featured as the weapon of god in
the revelation of his strength. The narrative draws to a halt between two symbols of civilization: one, the bourgeois filth, the slum, and the other a temple. The temple adds itself to the disillusionment and the doubt if God existed and if He did, where? It is divinity darkened that is evident in this description that douses the hope.

‘How desecrated the temples look. Frozen petrified, like our civilization itself’. (Pg. )

By placing himself at the doorstep of the temple. Rathan Rathor has reached the edge that separates the two spheres. The human dung-heap, as he has constantly referred to it, his contract with human reality are his ‘hands smelling of leather’. The final understanding of his predicament is the reversal of his views on youthful strength to the youthful potential for growth.

There is hope as long as there are young men willing to learn from the follies of their elders. Willing to learn and ready to sacrifice. Willing to pay the price. (Pg.208)

Hope is perceived symbolically as ‘a cold dawn’.

.... it is a cold dawn. But no matter. A dawn after all is a dawn”. (Pg.208)

Arun Joshi develops this hope in The City and The River where the cold dawn represents winter and he begins the novel with the passage of winter into spring and the much hoped for awakening in youth, and the required sacrifice is finally realised in this novel. While Rathan Rathor shared several similarities with Som Bhaskar in The For- 

...signer. Sindi Oberoi offers many a characteristic to the shaping of Billy Biswas’s char-
acter. The background is an obvious choice. The triangular pattern of the conflict involves Sindi Oberoi, Babu Khemkha and June Blyth. June Blyth is the eye of the
Again the leanings are towards a detached state of existence, with the known reluctance to lose contact with the familiar world. It is a tale of violation and violence. The violation is in the form of excessive criticism directed towards the world, achieving enough detachment for critical appraisal, and the violence is committed against June Blyth. The revolt is low-key in this work, and between Sindi and Babu Khemkha, June Blyth’s position is like Anuradha’s between Som Bhaskar and Aftab. The foreignness in Sindi Oberoi is later identified as a strange seriousness in Billy Biswas. This strangeness is visible to June just as it is to Romi who notices the other worldliness in Billy Biswas. The distancing transcends natural boundaries and the alienation is from anything structured by human beings.

There is something strange about you....something distant.....when people are with you they don’t feel like they are with a human being. May be it is an Indian characteristic but I have a feeling you’d be a foreigner anywhere. (Pg.33).

In this novel the action is bound between two regions. There is no noticeable landmark to signify an alien atmosphere as it is embodied in Bilasia’s primitive world. The definite geographic identities are India and America. It is in America the initial contact with the purgatorial fires, that Sindi Oberoi experiences. A suave youngman Sindi is caught between the debonair societies of the two countries and a raw animalism within, that is purely instinctive and independent. His life, ‘like an asthmatics sleep. is full of bad dreams’ (Pg.37). He faces a similar predicament, as Rathan Rathor, in his search of the appropriate masks, to mingle and merge with the masquerade, which is the social life in human societies. There is a frequent reference made to masks through-
out the narrative.

'And what mask was I to put on if they knew?' (Pg.9)

and

'We all have our masks, you know'.

They are all, fringe dwellers, the protagonists of Arun Joshi. Sindi certainly does not make a dash for the barbed fence to reach the zone of mysteries, neither does he sit at the bottom of the pit like a frog and narrate his tale of woe as Rathan Rathor. A little like Som Bhaskar in his approach, he differs from Som in his stone-cold composure. He is content to participate in the worldly proceedings only as 'an ex-officio host' (Pg.23) and if the image of confinement in The Apprentice is the well, in The Foreigner it is the tomb.

'It is remarkable how you can be in a crowded room like that and still feel lonely, like you were sitting in your own tomb.' (Pg.23).

He not only views the active world from a dissociated angle but the entire world appears to be a collection of 'blobs', (Pg.23) individual entrapments that moved within this atmosphere, floating in isolation in their glass bubbles. The image is expanded in this observation.

'One of the blobs dissociated from the mob and started getting bigger until I recognised it as the girl whose back I had been watching'. (Pg.23).

The continued presence of the flotsam, of fragments, is the precondition of an age where the formulation of a metaphysics around which peoples belief systems cannot
be constructed. Of the two geographical regions, America concretises his sense of alienation and he is not really a foreigner in this land because of his foreignness in the human world. He is part of the Asian and European crowd that collectively suffers alienation. Sindhi’s identity is established within this alienated circle by Joshi, to isolate him not as a foreign student in a foreign land. Reality in Sindhi’s eyes is Death, the only true meaning of life, a definite end. His description of oldmen in the Y.M.C.A. lounge stands testimony to this.

‘Oldmen in the Y.M.C.A. lounge smiled at us warmly as we went up. This is where they spent their evening waiting for death. (Pg.19)

AND

I stood waiting in the graveyard of cars waiting for an angle. (Pg.30).

A similar wish is expressed by him in India,

‘The room dissolved in heat and I was sitting in the middle of a desert waiting for a prophet.’ (Pg.203).

The battle of attachment and detachment, of contractions that fail to culminate in birth, is witnessed. Arun Joshi, gradually raises the level of understanding from the regional to the universal.

The regional locations are initially evaluated by Sindhi, from, as he describes, the ‘foggy chambers of my being’ (Page 8). The foreign students existence is seen as busy, but towards what purpose is the nagging question which follows. It is an indictment of ambitious earthly pursuits.

His reaction to global get-togethers at the ‘weekend cooking-sessions’ of the ‘international crowd’ (Page 28) is reflected in the deep-loneliness heard in Karl’s words.

‘I am just fed up......fed up with many things. Fed up with the way we pretend to have
forgotten the past and yet all the time we are looking forward to revive it.


The timelessness suffered by these young people is literally the lack of time for the construction of a culture and the importance of the past in this endeavors. This syndrome is the result of an overdose of individuality and enterprise injected by the progressive nations. The past embodied a community of thoughts that curtailed the desire to display individuality. Beneath the mask of brotherhood lies the frenzy that can destroy. Deception is the quality that has crept in with the transformation of the world into a global village. As Karl observes,

‘Out of this bunch you will get your atomic wizards, your missile boys and yet there they sit, pretending to be innocent of their menace, caressing women whose kids they will blow up someday.’ (Pg.28)

The loneliness caused by the crowding together of cultures hitherto matured and nursed by individual civilization is the overburdening influence on the young modern mind. Having failed to absorb these cultural influences, the mind has developed its own defence mechanisms and one of which is to destroy the oppressive influences by blowing up their geographical homes. The conflict within cultures that refuse to merge, too determined to retain their distinction and their specific qualities, leads to destructive urges within the mind.

‘It is aloneness in suffering that makes men selfish.’ (Pg.29)

The distinctions are tangible and overtly exhibited to the sensitive observations of Sindhi, as is evident in this description.

“As I moved, the language changed until each layer seemed to have its own
tongue. It was like switching a radio from one alien wavelength to another.” (Pg.29).

Each individual grown selfish by his loneliness chooses his own solution for survival. Sindhi’s choice is a stubborn detachment, from falling in line with the organised nightmare of civilised behaviour, which was a fiasco, as he observes.

“Strangers parted on the doorstep promising to meet again knowing full well they didn’t. It was the American way.’ (Page 25).

Later in the novel, while still in America, Sindhi narrates an incident, in which the remark of a couple of strangers, who had offered him a lift, provokes this response out of him

“We’ll see you then’, she called. They waved and drove off. So they would see me, would they? That is the loneliness of our Time, ...... Strangers promise to see you without even knowing your name. You are a king in a deck of kings, shuffled and reshuffled, meeting fifty one similar kings but never saying, anything sensible, never exchanging names. (Pg.186)

The detachment deepens into a craving for the snapping of consciousness, seeking for something ......

‘that could make me forget myself.’ ....(Page 14)

‘May be I didn’t care much what I did so long as I got away from myself: (Page 14)

Any extension of friendliness from the outside world is seen as a burden. He wishes for strength from God “for enduring the burdens of friendship.” (Page 19). Reference to God here is the accustomed, habit of speech, like the “We’ll see you” in the earlier incident. June threatens this self-imposed isolation. ’It was this one moment when he
grew afraid of getting involved.' (Pg.59). The relationship between June Blyth and Sindhi Oberoi is the elaboration of Billy Biswas's interlude with Rima Kaul. The idea of masks, deception and a self-centered withdrawal of one part of his being continues.

'...I was not the kind of man one could love; I had learnt that long ago. For June it was almost a year to find out. (Page 38).

He allows attraction to develop into attachment and his concealed reaction to this is a desire to stay detached. His earlier experience of such a relationship had left him scarred.

'...in the labyrinth of my consciousness the wound still bled.' (Pg. 68)

Involvement, in his book of experiences, meant the involvement of souls. It is the shutting out of options which destroys Sindhi. He is not the trapped imprisoned sufferer, instead his enclosure is a protection against the binding temptations from the external world.

'I told myself that I didn’t want to get involved' (Pg.69)

'.....then the worst will come, our souls will get involved.' (Pg.70).

June Blyth is the giver like Geetha in The Last Labyrinth. As part of the community of givers, she extends her helping hand to all who need its warmth. Against this purity of selflessness Sindhi's wavering determination breaks down. The relationship adds to the fears than dispel the existing ones. Unable to communicate from the depths of his being, he torments himself with the fear of hurting June. The shadow of fear in Joshi's works pursue every character in the centre stage; it follows even Bhumiputra, in The City and the River. It lurks in the dark in the form of Tarakki in The Last Labyrinth.

As Sindhi admits, and bemoans,

'...if I only had the strength to act on what I knew was right' (Pg.70).
lack of strength and conviction, kindles the hope that some other power would intervene and halt this process. Sindhi looks forward to the intervention of chance. The chance of, either, feeling kept within the embankments of life, or, the chance of disappearing from the scene.

‘Chance might intervene at the last moment and provide us a pretext to breakup what we were about to start; in the last resort one had to depend upon chance.’ (Pg.72).

His choice is a neutral stand in a relationship which grows out of his fear of involvement. Sindhi suffers from the scientific temper inbred into him by a culture that had to analyse, rationalise and draw logical conclusions. As chance would have it he loosens his grip on himself and allows June into his shell, dangerously playing with her confidence in him and he presumptuously assumes that love can be temporary. Once again, the pattern of looking for causes outside themselves occurs.

‘There was a temporary bond of love between us... but the short while I was on that beach, I forgot my strangeness, my loneliness, even my search for detachment. A bomber formation flew into the empty spaces of the sky pointing towards the eternal. The papers said trouble was brewing in Berlin. One couldn’t remain proud for long in those surroundings.’ (Pg.75)

He escapes condemnation of being selfish and a coward, by the constant intrusion of objective reality that aborts any resolution in its embryo. The objective world presents itself in the Americaness and Indianess experienced by Sindhi, while his birth occupies an interim position of belonging nowhere. He is neither an Indian nor a Hindu.
Anyway I can’t really be called a Hindu. My mother was English and my father I am told a sceptic. That doesn’t seem like a good beginning for Hindu, does it?

His background and the larger cultural influences, leave him in a state of disintegration as he says, ‘... the state of my mind had not yet congealed. It had to go one step further.’ (Pg.174)

Occupying such a position, where identity itself is an illusion and the possibility of identification remote, Sindhi refuses to sink roots in America, a country which in his eyes, kept itself on the progressive path on the strength provided by ‘No-doze tablets.’ (Pg. 94)

Inoculation of nations reoccurs here.

The man swallowed his pills and put on his gloves. Hands of America were ready to steer Christmas over pathless roads.... Then he walked up to the truck, erect and confident, ready to deliver his goods. This was the America the statue of Liberty had forlornly presided over for decades .... The search was on again, the search for wrong things in wrong places. The truck blinded its light and rolled on the highway. There was no turning back now, no end to the fruitless search. (Pg.95).

Sindhi’s search for the meaning of existence is symbolised in the truck drivers journey. The pessimism, prevalent in The Apprentice raises its head in the last two lines of the above quoted paragraph. It is further elaborated in these lines.

My fifth Christmas on these alien shores. And yet all shores are alien when you belong nowhere. (Pg.92)
Cruising along life, powered by a couple of ‘No-doze’ tablets, a cold calculated march through life, which reflected the indefatigable spirit of America, fail to suit the pessimistic rumblings within Sindhi. Therefore his response to June’s query.

What do you mean you are not made for America?” (Pg.89) is “It is much too sterilized for me. Much too clear and optimistic and empty. (Pg.89).

Just as Billy is taken back by the circle of Meena’s friends, westernized and awkward, Sindhi is faced by Mr. Khemkha, Sheila Khemkha and ‘their silly ice-cream gobbling crowd.’ (Pg.56). It is amidst this money-spinning crowd of Indian Businessmen that he makes his first reference to the different worlds spinning around him. What he sought did not lie in the world of the Khemkha’s.

It was all a bit of hoax. Everybody knew it .... Old men grown fat with success came with their plump wives... They left the impression that they could buy up anybody they wanted......it all sounded meaningless to me...I had no morals to apply one way or the other but the fat man left me with a distinct feeling of being out of place. We were looking for two different worlds.’(Pg.16).

The sense of other worldliness deepens in this atmosphere where the rituals of partying are observed. His attraction towards a female form in the ‘crowd of obesity’ (Pg.16) marks the location of his existence.

"Between her and me the chasm of a living world prevailed. I had a feeling that I was watching her from the edge of the world where Death’s Kingdom began.” (Pg.16).

Babu Khemkha, is alive to the reader only in the retrospective speculations of Sindhi, as part of the swaying narrative pattern. He is seen as a victim of this bloated social circle. Ironically, he is a victim of Sindhi’s detachment.
It was his innocence that killed him........innocence concocted by you and your father.

He lived in a world of dreams in a world with sculptures in drawing rooms.

In the end, the hard facts of life proved stronger than his flimsy world of dreams. His death could have been heroic. But at the pit of it was the dreams that were not even his own they were products of the turbid flotsam of a rotting social class he was supposed to perpetrate.” (Pg.56).

The noticeable aspect, in this pattern is the one-way process of either, blame the nation, the west or civilizations. Orderliness, externally manifested, is proven as the cause for the disorderliness, within. An organised external reality makes demands that immobilize natural tendencies; so much so, what is pure and real is fragmented within the human mind. Even in his first impression of the Khemkha’s household Sindhi registers the signs of Babu Khemkha’s destruction.

“.....The rich Persian Carpets, those sculpture ridden walls must have concocted the innocence that destroyed him and very nearly buried him.” (Pg.11).

Stubbornly, Sindhi sticks to his point of view when he comes to know that June is with baby and immediately, his accusing finger points at Babu Khemkha, his ancestry and the civilization that nurtured this ignorance and innocence,

Behind Babu Khemkha lay the stupidity of his father and his sister and his entire civilization. I hated everything that was Indian, as if the whole nation conspired to debauch June. (Pg.182).

Impelled by negativity, he visualises everything as reduced to ‘a big zero’ (Pg.107)

Rathn Rathore’s docility arose from his lack of courage, while Sindhi Oberoi’s detachment grows out of a cold self-denial. His system suffers from the inability to hold the
warmth generated by a relationship. Because his ability to love someone is measured by the kind of self-love, he is capable of, which is almost non-existent. For a man disenchanted with himself, shortlived enchantments in the external world is the only possible communication, by way of relationships.

....Atleast I have loved people as much as I love myself. It isn’t much but that is not my fault. And when to be in love in your sense requires one to take things seriously, assume that there is a permanence about things. Nothing seems right to me, leave alone permanent. Nothing seems to be very important: (Pg.107)

His ‘foreignness’ destroys not only him but all those who come into contact with his innermost thoughts. Again, this happens, only, because the two individuals who are consumed by this cold fire, belong to a world of optimism, where every thing is concrete, definite and easily purchasable. Here in this world, self-help groupism is possible. June belongs to such a world, while Babu Khemkha is the eager applicant to receive this help. Like Meena Chatterjee ‘she was one of those rare persons who have a capacity to forget themselves in somebody’s trouble’(Pg.112). The unlikeness of the two worlds, of Sindhi and June is that, June’s world is full, complete with shared joys and sorrows, whereas Sindhi’s world is full of painful inevitabilities.

The statue of Liberty promises you this optimism. But in my world there are no statues of liberty. In my world many things are inevitable and what more, most of them are sad and painful. I can’t come to your world. I have no escape. June. I just have no escape (Pg.126)

The confidence cultivated by June’s world where ‘nothing is inevitable’ (Pg.126) draws June to Babu Khemkha, who is also a seeker of sorts. His eagerness for experience in America is because of the oppressive cultural restrictions of his ancestry.
"...you don't develop fully if you stick around only with your own countrymen. (Pg.91) And also because 'the dashing Americans are not as under developed as Indians who are just not progressive' (Pg.93).

Sindhi Oberoi, Babu Khemkha and June Blyth inhabit individual, worlds of excesses, each viewing the other's world as either suffering from the same fears as he, in his own, or lacking in some desperate need which only they could fulfill. In the middle of these excesses, both in the form of expectations and rejections, revolves the physical world on which they rest their human feet. The emptiness within is reflected in the world their eyes study.

'Everybody had a garland; every body suited, only the eyes betrayed the emptiness' (Pg.68)

After the consummation of their affections, his analytical mind immediately re-evaluates his inner chambers. This is shared by Som Bhaskar who analyses his every reaction, and response.

I stayed awake, counting the broken pieces of my detachment. I counted the gains and losses and the losses mocked me like an abominable joker (Pg.81)

The habit of stock-taking continues to the end of this elongated narrative. The process itself is not progressive but a dizzying experience, vicious and never ending.

Before I went to sleep that night I took a general stock of myself. In many ways the past had been a waste, but it had not been without lessons. I had started life as a confused adolescent and solely engrossed with myself, searching for wisdom and the peace that comes with it. The journey had been long and tedious and still was not over. (Pg.221).

The guilt that over burdens him, that guilt that he had driven Babu to his death, is once
again a result of this self-assessment better explained through one of the images as, 'exploring his inverted universe' (Pg.105) The women in his life had taught him a lesson about the role of pleasure in life and its quick death in a relationship, superficial, and the resultant pain and loneliness in such a truncated phase. The dissociation creeps in when the warmth drains out of one them and his bitter experiences with Anne and Kathy had permanently shelved his feelings into a deep-freeze. Anna and Kathy are the two characters who are merely introduced as particles of Sindhi's past that had sealed his faith in detachment. It serves as a cloak to protect himself against,

'... the hurt of memories . . . . And whenever I used to rest, memories came roaring back in a maddening procession.' (Pg.144).

Babu Khemkha's death leaves Sindhi Oberoi empty and hollow, just as Anuradha's death leaves Som Bhaskar demented and lost. Unlike Billy, both these men do not make a clean break from this world of 'straw men' and continue to have confidence in it.

Babu's death had drained something out of me. It was my confidence in the world. (Pg.175).

The image of voids and vacant spaces that figure in all the other works repeats itself in the form of the endless stretches of sand. It is an awareness that remains an unrealised awareness till the end of the action.

How can anybody take away your freedom when you never had it in the first place? All freedom is illusion. You had no choice in your birth nor do you even choose your death. And in between is a vast expanse of lawless sands that pipe up where the winds blow. (Pg.76)
Earlier this sense of uselessness, is expressed as,

I had finished high school but I was very different from other high school boys. I had what passes for maturity..... then one evening after dinner while we went for a walk, I told my uncle that I was contemplating suicide since I was tired of living. (Pg.165)

The relationships that he forms, later, with Anna, Kathy and Junc, are merely to ‘fill in the silences’ in his life (Pg.156). Among the three June has a stronger effect on this ageing young man. But her retreat from his detachment drives him to the edge of insanity, which is a state of mind deeply explored in Arun Joshi’s novels.

‘... I had permitted myself to become a battlefield where the child and the adult warred increasingly. The child usually came on top. (Pg.129-130)

As a child Sindhi had collected one ‘set of wrong memories’ while Mr.Khemkha had branded another set of bad memories in Babu that didn’t work in the rest of the world.

‘Your morality was well for India. It didn’t work in America. That’s why I, say you gave him a set of wrong memories.’ (Pg.137)

Dictated by memories, unsuitable in the wide world of varied climates is a state of apathy described by Mr.Khemkha as ‘living but as bad as dead’. (Pg.138) Yet another individual who recognises his foreignness is Sheila who says ‘you are still a foreigner. You don’t belong here.’ The repetition of an elevated view of the world roaring below figures in the following description.
'I felt depressed what with the illness and many drugs.

..... Lying there in the bed, I wondered in what way, if any, did I belong to the world that roared beneath my apartment window. Somebody had begotten me without a purpose, unless you could call the search for peace a purpose.'

'Perhaps I felt like that because I was a foreigner in America. But then what difference would it have made if I had lived in Kenya or India or any other place for that matter! It seemed to me that I would still be a foreigner. My foreignness lay within me and I could not leave myself behind wherever I went.'(Pg.61)

Hence he wanders through life 'like a sleep walker' and images appear to him like in a 'somnabolist's dream (Pg.176). But his experiences in India bring him half the way down in realising the meaning of existence. He refuses to keep the two books carried by the rest of the world - 'one for their neighbours and the other for God' and takes pride in the 'uniqueness of having just one book' for himself. All along he had strived to achieve this uniqueness, by withdrawing into himself but the death of June and his face to face encounter with Muthu and his world, reverts his inverted view, of the universe and his exalted isolation. June's death destroys these views and the realisation that dawns on him runs thus,

Detachment at that time had meant inaction. Now I had begun to see the fallacy in it. Detachment consisted of right action and not escape from it. The gods had set a heavy price to teach me just that. (Pg.193)

Amidst the children and the trash, which appeared to Sindhi as soggy humanity', Muthu further opens his eyes to the folly of his existence.

'But it is not involvement, Sir,' he said sometimes detachment lies in actually
getting involved.‘ He spoke quietly but his voice was firm with conviction. (Pg.225)

Influenced by Muthu’s conviction, Sindhi accepts the inevitable .... ‘ for me detachment consisted in getting involved with the world.’ Sheila is the stronger influence in his return to the earthly plane. The character of Sheila is defined very early in the work as the stabilising force, a concrete assurance that the identity of the self is not fiction.

‘Sheila was an exception to this. She belonged to many worlds at the same time and I admired her for that’. (Pg.46)

The Foreigner does not elevate itself to the conflict witnessed in The Strange case of Billy Biswas or The Last Labyrinth. It merely prepares the ground for the growth of themes later developed in these novels. The theme elaborated in here is the exclusive concern for particularities created by a secular world which concealed within it, haphazard divisions. The conviction expressed here is the dependability of roots which are not binding and restricting in a world come too close. They are visualised as anchors providing the individual a ground to voice his views. The novel has its familiar landmarks that give all the novels of Arun Joshi a distinct identity and metaphysically vision-centered structure. The image of cosmic space, of valleys and hills noticed in the other works is pictured as,

I had never seen Mussoorie but I imagined it would be like many other unending mountain landscapes. Valley after valley, submerged first in gold and then in darkness. (Pg.12)

The labyrinth too, uniformly, finds a place in all the works. Sindhi’s oscillation be-
tween doubt and despair images his wanderings as a being trapped in a labyrinth.

‘...they had disappeared in the labyrinth of the city’ (Pg.186)

and

‘...in the labyrinth of my consciousness the wound still bled.’ (Pg.68)

and again

‘...I spent a whole year wandering through the maze of my existence looking for an answer’. (Pg.169)

The four novels studied, hinge on the quest for enlightenment, the nagging desire to know the mystery behind existence and identify the mastermind which had conceived such a design. The medium through which they seek this comprehension is through the relationships shared by men and women. The sensations generated by the intimacies of souls. With concrete evidence eluding their grasp the narratives gain substance and continuity, by the continuous flow of perceptions which replace one another in rapid succession. The common grouse shared by the protagonists is a quarrel against emphatic denial of the ‘myself’ as David Hume declared, an identity that was limited to a span of time. To transcend this emphatic denial, to make real the fading images of an alternative, to the overpowering assurance of the concrete present reality is the prime concern voiced in these novels.

Such a quest views the noisy activities of the progressive world as an intrusive nuisance to the changing of metaphoric links, a certain patterning of life which would perhaps lead them through to an area where the ‘world’ and the ‘view’ would figure together. Birth and death have established the effectiveness of that order, whereas all else in the man-made arrangements are like the maze, a clear case of the model subor-
The apprehension of the other is merely hinted at as the narrative concentrates mainly on the variables, the model contextualised, operating as reality, drumming its presence as an ideal in the world view. Like Dharmavira's father in The City and the River, the mirror is used to reflect and record the impact of the impact of this reality on the inner workings and Sindhi's mind.

'I looked at myself in the mirror. Where had all that I had just related gone? Somewhere in the black head it had been registered and corrected and stored. From some inaccessible storage bin it governed my life and I had no alternative expect to buy its commands.' (Pg.171)

The mirror is used to reflect inner turmoils rather than the stark external reality. In The Last Labyrinth, as noticed earlier, Som Bhaskar is unable to relate to his own reflection in a mirror in the Lal Haveli.

The four novels scrutinised thus far are records of a suspension, which is from the brink of reality. The appropriate image to describe, the course taken by the narrative is found in the ancient sports, now popularised under the name of bungee jumping. The protagonists plunge into the voids, as they identify them, while the rest of the world
passes along the brink, tamely, continuing with the act of living. The important point is that they remain attached to the platform from which they take the plunge.

The last novel *The City and the River* shifts its focus from protagonists, from individuals, to Time and the elements. Individuals have roles to play in this game of construction, destruction and recreation. The conflict is between the supremacy of the human mind and a power sensed, felt and prophesied. The novel begins with an old prophecy. The last line of the prophecy.

‘To his kingdom at last the King returns,’

Strikes the key note of the novel, reminiscent of Billy’s return to the forest. The prologue begins with the line ‘Winter passed into spring’. Joshi chooses the last line of the prophecy to set his story of good and evil rolling. The nine chapters which follow, delineate the mid-section of the prophecy which runs thus,

....... A King I see upon a throne,

In astronomers grove the boatmen mourn,

A thing of darkness growing dark,

On city walls the shadow’s mark,

The river, I see, from a teacher rise.

The hermit, the parrot, the teacher die,

Under a rain the waters burn ......

The Epilogue of the novel discusses the question expressed in the first
two lines of the Old prophecy.

'Who knows, who can read the signs,
The workings of immortal time?'

Unlike, in his previous novels where the protagonists wandered through the concrete jungles, plagued by twentieth century views, values and theories, he strives for a definite statement, a present perfect state of mind, the closing in on the particular content, to that explanation sought within the models. The fabric chosen for this design is allegorical, and in a manner, it is an "extended parable". It is this choice that gives the impression of departure from his previous works. The same pattern continues otherwise. If there was a protagonist in the earlier works who carried within him the existential fears, the rebellion against a world of bigots, a certain faith and adherence towards an elusive power, now, each one of these characteristics is transformed into individual characters who play symbolic roles. The novel, when visualised, moves in a studied fashion, like an animated classic. This shift raises many a question about the role of an artist in the twentieth century. From a realistic portrayal of life and its many questions, the artist has shifted to a consciously sketched story line. Both Arun Joshi and Chinua Achebe published their last and latest novels after a wide gap in time. And both novelists have strongly grounded themselves in the political scenario of the world which breeds within it the centres of human disillusionment and destruction. They go back to reaffirmation of faith through this hell-fire of politics.

Many a question asked in this novel are questions that Eliot has raised in The Four Quartets. The prophecy has an important role to play, in not only determining the
body of argument, but in unifying the concretely stratified class levels in the novel. The seven hills, and the river bank, hum with the prophecy and uniformly grapple with its meaning, which sets in motion the action.

"In order to arrive at what you do not know, You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance".

It is the studied progress made through interlocked relations between the sacred subjective meaning, its externalised explanation and human practise.

Ignorance, lies in the City. The narration falls into an identifiable geometric pattern with the Great Yogeshwara as the starting point. The prophecy is imparted to both, the Hermit of the mountains and the Astrologer of the Grandmaster’s Court. The tale of destruction weaves itself around the ambiguity perceived by the Astrologer and the Hermit in the line ‘The river, I see, from a teacher rise’. While, the Hermit maintained the mystical meaning, ‘The river, I see, from a teacher rise’, the Astrologer improvised the line to ‘A teacher, I see, from the river rise’, (Pg.201) Joshi draws his story from this dispute and Bhumiputra, the young teacher is drawn into its vortex by stating what he believed to be the truth. With Bhumiputra at the centre as the ‘Teacher turned Traitor’ (Pg.20) and ‘... the Kingpin of a conspiracy,’ the narration assumes a definite structure contributing itself to the political discussions. The political framework is the first stepping stone to the psychological composition of the city, civilized and scientifically advanced, as incomplete when it believes in its own strength, disqualifying an unknown strength as the operative power.

4 Eliot, T.S. 1944 The Four Quartets Faber and Faber London Pg.25
The Grand Master's universe is one of structures, displaying an outward sense of order, environmentally constitutive. This is the City. The first line of the chapter titled 'The Grand Master's Dream' begins with the sentence, 'The City over the years has grown.' Arun Joshi has adapted the geographical distinctions used in the ancient literatures of India, where people are identified by the soil they lived on. With a touch of satire he begins with the mud huts and the green mangroves bordering the river. On a higher elevation lie 'the rosy pink brick colonies'. Higher above are the seven hills and Joshi describes them as 'ranged in their picturesque formation'. Unlike in his previous novels Joshi has paid close attention to structures in this novel. Six of the seven hills carry atop their peaks the glass and structures of glass and steel. An elevated position, which displayed strength and stability and the colour scheme in the novel allows them to be an 'immaculate White.' (Pg.12) These structures qualify the immaculateness by staying,

'Wonderfully unstained during the rains.
When the mud huts turn black and even the
rose of the brick mansions is blotched.'(Pg.12)

Beyond the three tiered formation lie the pyramids and above them looms the mountains. This stratified layout is symbolic of human existence from poverty to power within its domain, and beyond this, the intermediary presence of the pyramids, is a reminder of both earthly existence and a passage to another world, symbolised by the mountain with its snow-covered peaks. Joshi's inclination towards the secrets that lie
beyond the objective the world, 'the Loka Loka, or the voids and the valleys' that occurred throughout his previous writings have at last found a shape in this work. It is evident from his choice of words, in introducing the mountain,

'...high up in the blue sky looms the mountains, its snow-covered peaks forever brooding over this panorama of brown and pink and white.'

He attributes a certain attitude to the mountain by making use of the word 'brooding'. He stresses on his basic theme, the supremacy of the other, through the mountain and the comprehensibility of this power. The mountain performs the middle voice function in linking the concrete question to the answer.

'No one has yet climbed the mountain even though, for hundred years, men have launched expeditions against it, and two hundred men have died in the attempt.'

(Pg. 13)

The ambivalence noticed in the statistics mentioned in the last part of the sentence is evident throughout the work. It swings between eternal time and the immediate.

The time described is one where the ancient frame work of life style and the futuristic trends of political dealings merged. The Grand Master and his council have run out of new formulas to win back the allegiance of the unruly populace. The Grand Master is more isolated and physically elevated from the common crowd, in other words, the mud-people, known as the nameless-ones never knew their Grand Master as an individual. According to the Grand Master 'Everyone has his price ... ' (Pg. 14). As a representative of the City the influence of orderliness and purity, rouse in him repulsion and disgust at the sight of the boatmen and therefore his reaction to their vulgarity
is.

'The city is poor, but even in poverty there can be dignity. Must they live in such appalling conditions, go about half-naked? When I look at them I am filled with shame. 'They are a disgrace.' (Pg.16).

He views their lives 'as pointless episodes'. (Pg.16). Assuming that there is a purpose in life and in his responsibilities as Grand Master, the initial, purposeful, step taken in the initiation of 'The Triple Way or the Way of the Three Beatitudes'. Ironically, the choice of the word 'beatitudes' proves to be the curse that brings down the wrath of the Gods upon the city. 'The three beatitudes parody fascist determinations by declaring the Grand Master as the father and mother of the city.' (Pg.17) promising an equality amongst the citizens and in the process demands the allegiance of the citizens. The second part of the Triple Way balances itself on an ambiguity by suggesting that 'there shall be one and only one, child to a mother and two to a home' as the wealth of the city remains to be fairly shared by its inhabitants. The third part of the decree warns against any subversive activities or any violation of the Triple way. Arun Joshi allegorically conceptualises the Third World political situation.

One of the techniques steadily maintained by the novelist is the interpolation of metaphysical discussions between inhabitants of the physical plane and the creatures of the elements. In response to the Triple Way the Headman retorts as such, 'you think an ant is born on this earth without God's will? If it is His will there should be only one child to a mother then surely it shall come to pass. There is no need for the Grand Master or you to pass a law'. The conflict witnessed is between faith and reasoning. The battle is between objective reality, practicality, logical determinism and subjective
understanding of an instinct for survival, continuation and an abidance by predetermined course of action. While the river is ‘the symbol of the divine mother, of God Himself,’ (Pg.22) to the boatmen; to the Grand Master it is ‘a stream ... the Scion of a family that gave its all to this city.’ (Pg.22).

The action picks momentum when the Grand Master decides to ‘declare a new era’. The Era of ultimate Greatness. The tension achieves its final strength when a dictators' humanism completely rejects its subjective mystery and with human patience and tolerance stretched to its limits, the city prepares for the final breakup. The action moves quickly and as the narrator comments,

‘The new era was inaugurated with the arrest of a boatman and a clown. The boatman’s wife had borne an illegal child’ (Pg.23).

This piece of information is not only a comment about the immediate but also a passing reference to the birth of an illegal child which later gains significance in the action and as part of his technique Joshi conceals the mystery behind this birth by making it a casual reference at this early stage.

With the declaration of the Era of ultimate Greatness the team of Bhumiputra, Dharma Vira, Shailaja’s brother, the Professor, Grandfather and little star are introduced. While introducing some of the characters Joshi refers, to the structure of their dwelling in the society and not the geographical region. Dharma Vira is from a brick house and Bhumiputra or Master Bhma as he his ‘popularly’ known live in the mud-huts. The Education Adviser belongs to a class referred to as the ‘high of the high’ who ‘wear the sacred thread’. (Pg.34) The Master of Rallies was the son of a boatman, one who was ignored by his people and scorned at by the higher ups as an upstart. Through these
observations Joshi confers a new dimension, that of a sociological novel, to this elaborately conceptualised drama of life as a wheel. The loopholes are within a secular set-up that is secular only in its outward demeanour while the classes, classifications, divisions and despotic tendencies form the ponderous patterns of isolation as the actual life force of society.

Coming back to the immediate and the Era of ultimate Greatness, one notices the military outfit and the Fascist-style of operations. The time chosen for such expeditions is night, ‘known as night work’. (Pg.24) there is an underlying tone of ridicule in the narration of the plans. For example the Commissioner informs,

‘...since everyone knows boatmen are a dangerous lot, each of you will be given a jeep, six men, six hand cuffs and twelve guns...’ (Pg.24)

and

‘We want people, Dharma, who are crazy and tough. Blood Thirsty.’ (Pg.25)

Again, when the professor approaches the Commissioner regarding Master Bhoma’s whereabouts he notices ‘six pairs of hands sticking out of the wall, palms together, in the manner of supplication prescribed in the police manual’ (Pg.80). These hands says the Commissioner ‘are the genuine material....to decide on a standard interchangeable design that might fit all hands’. The account of the City reshaped in the Grand Master’s scheme of the new order is, what, the prophecy relates as:
...drawn in fact by a hand that only believed in the great law of Karma under which men and cities, by their own hand survived or died.’ (Pg.65)

and again, as the Hermit interprets it to the Minister of Trade,

....There is nothing inevitable about the prophecy. The hand that made it believes, above all, in man’s capacity to change his fate. So even if it speaks of the coming of a king, men can so conduct themselves, so choose, that the king does not come. Or the king that comes is of the right kind.

(Pg.68)

The concern expressed here is the pure and complete faith in the human being who is not fixed in any particular social context but who figures in the grand details of the divine design. The Grand Master certainly chooses to lay stress on the strength to change, as he chose to. The description of the town stands testimony to this.

The landscape is scrutinised by the Professor, who until then had sought his freedom in observing stars. The professor undergoes a tremendous transformation through his search for Master Bhoma. It is one of the few transformations that Joshi introduces into the storyline and the Professor, symbolises the class of intellectuals. He shifts his state of detachment from the mainstream of the activities in the city.

‘....His time has mostly been spent in a cluster of brick buildings at one end of the city, where he had taught astronomy to anyone who wishes to learn it.

(Pg.28).

The shift is from cosmic heights to the plain of human activity.

‘His balance had been upset because the event did not reconcile with laws that
according to his beliefs underlay the working of the universe. No doubt until now he had not paid enough attention to his fellowmen; but man after all was a child of the same cosmic scheme that he had studied all his life.

This grounding of the Professor into earthly turmoils is similar to the Hermits decision. After years of wandering, agonised by the fearful question ... if his beloved city was destined to be nothing better than the footstool of one asuric ruler after another' (Pg.65) the Hermit had decided to come back and wait for the prophecy to unfold itself.

The Professor's account of the City and details observed by him are narrated in a tone of grim humour. What strikes the eye is the angularity of the layout and the complete absence of vegetation.

'The road was wide and well-paved but it was treeless and without flowers'. (Pg.31) The colours are restricted to black and white, with a touch of red permitted in the parallelogram etched in the other wise black palace gates. The Professor's comment 'A city of wonders' is an ironical observation, as the place lawns are described thus.

"All brown and yellow. No trees. No flowers. Not a patch of green." (Pg.31)

During this tour the Professor comes across a twenty foot sculpture of a 'young student shaking hands with an equally young teacher.' (Pg.31) What strikes the eye of the reader is the 'immense strength of their muscular bodies that flowed into the steel clasp of their hands.' On the one hand this is Joshi's point of departure into an existential exploration where his protagonists desperately cling to the remanants of youthfulness, as in the case of Som Bhaskar, and on the other hand it is emblamatic of the faith that a power-crazy regime places on the tangible form. It is a situation where the physique
overwhelms and overpowers wisdom. This is further stressed by the kind of arts practised in this Education complex. The arts vary from calisthenics to wrestling, from practicing bamboo staves to Karate. The Education Advisers' citadel rested on his belief that 'if students became one with their teachers they would not have to study.' (Pg.35)

As part of the Grand Master's demolition of faith in the great river, is the giant fountain which never came to a stop. The water spouted to a height of twenty mud huts but, as the Professor observes 'so much water and yet no grass or flowers' (Pg.36) it slowly builds to clear contrasts. The building of the Avenue Great River is another example of the demolition pattern witnessed in the novel. Arun Joshi, statistically, sketches the patterns of destruction, symbolised in this Avenue. It is the twentieth century penchant for outwitting established canons, to bulldoze 'ancient pathways' and rename them.

'....overnight, bulldozers straightened out the ancient pathways and named it Boulevard Seven Hills.'

The apathetic situation that arises soon after is an occasion which exhibits the grim humour, referred to earlier. The Astrologer's order to those affected by the construction of the Boulevard, authorising the homeless to carry on living on the spots where they had their homes as if their homes were still there' is called 'the Asthough attitude'. It is this attitude which contributes largely to the destruction of the city. An attitude sensed in the Professor, and Dharma Vira.

'The Asthough Attitude....was fundamental to spiritual civilisations like ours,
where even kings had preferred the purity of the forest to the suffocation of palaces.' (Pg.37) This pattern of keeping up the facade continues with snide references made by Vasu, the Journalist, who improvises and classifies people who sport this attitude as the 'Astough-People'.

'The action totters on the brink of doubt and disbelief plagued by the question expressed by Eliot ...

Had they deceived us or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders; Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit? (Pg.23 Four Quartets)

'Burdened by the influx of historical struggles Arun Joshi weaves many strands of the 'Voiceless Wailing' of multitudes that had risen against dictators or, as he prefers to call it, 'the asuric rulers', who function (Pg.33 & 34 Eliot).

'Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution, which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past.' (The Four Quartets)

The political thandava of these asuric powers share resemblances with the Indian Freedom struggle, identified in the Professor's fast which results in his death in the Goldmines. The past events and the present merge in the diabolic machinations of the Grandmaster. From the boatmens' arrows, which represent the ancient, to the high-tech laser weapons of the Grand Master Arun Joshi covers, from end to end, the history of cannibalism within the human race. Military power and the game of arrests and unspeakable violence of human dignity are based on assumptions, like,

'anything could be anything .......' representing the political methods of today,
From the immediate, the focus now shifts to eternal time and the subjective learnings in the novel. Apart from the determinable pattern of such discussions by the Great Yogeshwara, the Hermit of the Mountain, the Headman and the little star, within the City, Bhumiputra, serves as the still centre around whom these discussions percolate. Joshi weaves these ideas through fantasy, folk-tales, symbolic names, and bizarre incidents and dreams. 'The river is visualised as a being, a force, flowing as a silent strength observing the city, teeming with human endeavours.'

The Great Yogeswara's sphere offers peace and tranquility, as it does to the Nameless-one, who becomes 'lost to the world and to the fetters of space and time' (Pg.9) through his learning of the forgotten tongue. The music which reverberates throughout the work belongs to this state of complete freedom from the shackles of space and time. It is 'melody played on a one-string' (Pg.11) The melody is heard only by those who have attained the ability to guide their spirit to control the body. The much talked about kind, in the mid-section of the action, is the Nameless-one who possessed knowledge of the two kinds of thoughts, as tutored to him by the Great Yogeshwara.

'.....he had taught him the secrets of the body and the secrets of the spirit. And then he had shown him how the spirit gained control of the body.' (Pg.10)

The Professor's fast, the boatmen's blockade and the Grand Father's garden of magical roses are all exercises in the spirit gaining control over the body, while the Grand Master's world, where 'nothing is certain', is one of structural strength.

God's and the boatmen are in close communion. It is the boatmen who recognise the true power' and in the Grand Masters dream the river glitters in the colour of Lapis-
I, mli and the god's are heard 'playing music on a boatman's one-string'. (Pg.14). In this portentuous dream the grand Master foresees his destruction. He sees destruction rise out of the river; a naked man and his follower's rising out of the river and ascending his mountain and encircling his throne with their mysterious forms like a noose. What is interesting is the strength these humans seem to acquire by their association and allegiance to Nature. Their breath is described as 'the breath of a volcano from out of the depths of the surrounding sea.' (Pg.15) Here human strength is considered incomplete and unrealized without the supreme power and the Natural elements which embody this power. Arun Joshi's introduction of the melody on one-string certainly has echoes of Eliot in 'East Coker' where mention is made of a music of the weak pipe. . . .

'If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,
On a summer midnight you can hear the music
Of the weak pipe and the little drum
And see them dancing around the bonfire....(Pg.21)

The 'little drum' finds a place when the Professor sitting beside the river listening to her murmurings hears another rhythm,

Gradually the darkness became complete. The music of the river changed a note or two....And now to the rivers song another note was added. Deep under the waters it seemed to the Professor, a drum was sounded.

Its muffled regular pulse floated up to the surface like an enormous bubble and disappeared towards the sky.' (Pg.41)

The Nameless- One experiences this after he downs the elixir, which is the colour of
And when he had drained the cup the Nameless-One felt as vast as the sky and as tall as the mountain and there came into his ears, as though from beyond the stars, the sound of a nobody played on a one-string. The music rose and fell and grew in volume and was joined by the sound of dancing feet. (Pg.11)

The elixir, offered by the Great Yogeshwara limits the Nameless-one to the Eliotean 'aspect of time', where the human spirit is 'caught in the mire of limitations, Between unbeing and being' (Pg.18) (Burnt Norton)

The Nameless-One is expected to relinquish his austeries to experience the tale of the City before he descends to re-establish and strengthen the spirit in the body of the City, or into the recurring pattern of life and death.

The Astrologers interpretation of the King's dream is the repetition of a pattern present in the previous works. Like Billy Biswas the Astrologer is conscious of depths within the human consciousness.

'...such dreams come out of the depth of great truths and carry in them the truth of the times' (Pg.15) -

This also draws a clear distinction between the city dwellers and the river worshippers. The Grand Master is only conscious of surface reality and categorically dismisses dreams. But the Headman, who represents the river people, who played on the one-string, is conscious of the cosmic process of human life itself as a part of this process and not the whole of it.
The Professor in his mangrove is able to hear the messages murmured by the river just as the boatmen. The mangrove and the granite pillar are reminders of a civilization which had run its course. The pillar is a reminder of both destruction and preservation, the end result of a holocaust, a continuation within an end. The nature of the river is realised through the many characters who come in contact with it. The river is attributed with gender qualifications. It is the river which,

......flowed by quietly murmuring, saying things to

those who understood her, and in a self-analytical mood

the river discloses her characteristics to the professor

'Isn't it this that you want? Something like me, peaceful, infinite and free?' (Pg.29) the quest, all the protagonists created by Joshi have been striving for. While the Professor ruminates over Master Bhoma's disappearance, the colour of the river is grey, reflecting the overhanging gloom in the Professor's mind and the City. At this point the novelist introduces the Little Star who is part of the fantasy motif in the work. The Little Star is around the age of ten or eleven and is the continuation of the Krishna image from the previous works. His description of the young lad strengthens this view.

The voice was soothing and melodious. The Professor

turned to look. A brown boy of ten or eleven was looking

at him out of dark solemn eyes. He was naked except for

a loin cloth. His head was shaven, a perfect sphere. His

face was round but not chubby. (Pg.30)

The shaven head, 'a perfect sphere', qualifies the next observation, when the Professor looking at the boy, is reminded of 'the new star he had seen through his telescope some nights ago.' (Pg.30)
The Headman's recognition of the Little Star denotes two things; one, the Headman and boat people are part of the natural scheme of things and are conscious of their roles, two, they, the Headman, the Little Star and the boat people are players of the eternal drama of death and rebirth. The familiarity of the Headman's greeting is suggestive of what the Great Yogeshwara elaborates in the Epilogue.

The Head Boatman clad in black as always hair piled high, made her way towards them, through the crowd and put her arm around the little boy, "So you are back, eh? Lonely up there, eh?" Her voice was deep and strong. (Pg.39)

Further, she marks the progress of this play-acting by indicating the exact time and design, and defines her role in it.

'A now the wheel begins to turn. And someday it must come full circle.' (Pg.39)

The role played by the Boat people is to set this wheel in motion, moving it towards the beginning.

'In my beginning is my end' says Eliot, and realisation of this truth takes the shape of a 'display of souls', in the Boatmen's protest.

The wheel image recurs when the little star says,

'I am thousands of years old, Professor . . . .

Everyone is thousands and thousands of years old, tied as we are to the wheel of Karma.

Unfortunately, we forget this. Kings and Grand
masters forget this most. That is the world's misfortune. (Pg.42)

Here Joshi links his political theme to the metaphysical exploration in the novel. And again mention is made of the 'wheel' by the Great Hermit while the Minister refers to the conspiracy.

to the minister's query,

'What do you see in it, Great Hermit?

he answers,

'I don't know. Perhaps the wheel turns.

......

Perhaps the hour of our trial also approaches.' (Pg.67)

10 dark dark dark.' (Pg.24 Four Quartets East Coker) The City is engulfed in darkness which thickens as the Grand Master plans to declare himself King. There is a vivid description of his 'walled-in 'Universe.' The Astrologer observes the Grand Master in his chamber,

'The Astrologer found the Grand Master sitting

in the high bricked chair that eased the

pain in the back . . . The study was always kept in a state of maximum tolerable darkness . . . As a matter of fact the Grand Master set to work only after sunset and worked till dawn.

He never saw the coming of the dawn because wherever he was, the first rays of the sun were never allowed to reach. He however, could always tell it was dawn by a discomfort at the back of his neck and quickly retired to a darkened bedroom to sleep.' (Pg. 55)

Joshi introduces a strange contrast, an ambiguity that later establishes the Grand Master as a confused being. The Grand Master's answer to the astrologer's question is that 'His greatest task at the moment was to save the city and that task by the grace of God was some-how getting done' (Pg. 56) Soon after in the next paragraph, Joshi describes the Grand Master's method of meditation.

'Like Shailaja's brother the Grand Master was also given to nightly meditation but his method was different. In a room adjacent to the study, were housed various aspects of the sacred and the mysterious; the ones the Grand Master currently favoured as well as those that he might have sought assistance from earlier but which he had not found sufficiently helpful. . . . A lamp burned before the particular aspect of the sacred and the mysterious that the Grand Master currently favoured..... The Grand Master had not always held the sacred and the
mysterious in such awe. In fact, his awe
had grown in step with his realisation that
he was a man of destiny.' (Pg.56)

Herein we see the predicament of Som Bhaskar caught between Aftab’s world and the
Krishna of Gargi, his mother and Anuradha. The realisation that he the Grand Master
is a man of destiny gives him absolute power to chose and select deities who currently
favoured him. This demonic worship-pattern performed purely for favours is reflected
in the dissident activities of the councillors. The Grand master’s judgement is based on
seemingness, as is his decision on Master Broma’s fate.

Perhaps he is an assassin, perhaps he is not,
your conscience should in any case be at
peace. This man at best is not a friend and
should therefore be used for the very purpose
that he has come to destroy. (Pg.60)

Similarly, clouded by ambiguities the Master of Rallies confides in the Journalist.

.....Peace has fled my heart and only God
can restore it. In truth, Journalist, when
I believed in God I had peace. And in
truth, I felt his presence on the river
when I was a child. But where is God now?
I do not see Him on the river and I do not
see Him on the Seven-Hills. Has he veiled his
face? Is He hidden in the city and in all that
happens here? Is He hidden in you and me?...(Pg.76)
These questions find no answers and Joshi builds this theme of surrealistic and existential turmoil further in Dharma's father and his war with mirrors.

...It started one morning when, shaving before a mirror, he though he saw a hole in the reflection.

As the days passed the patch grew. Every time he faithfully executed a directive of the Grand Master or of the Council a new patch appeared.

My insides are rotting. I too, am just vanishing,

'thought father in panic.

He is finally reduced to an outline in the mirror and again we see a doctor diagnosing one of Joshi’s characters and the doctor’s advise to the Father is

...These pills may do good or they may not

you should also exercise. Exercise your soul.

Take it for walks. Let it speak when it wants to speak. Let it rip. (Pg.134)

This part of the narrative is both contrastive and fantastic in its function. The Father had recognised the symptoms in a colleague whose movements grew more spastic as he agreed with the proposals of the Advisory Council. He realises that their beings were now reduced to robotic movements by their association with the Grand Master and his walled-in-Universe. The contrastive function is part of the transformation pattern, and we witness this in Shani. ‘Dharma’s sister’s son’ (Pg.151) as Joshi prefers to identify him,

'Shani used to be an angry young boy until,

one day, he came across a group of boatmen
sitting in a boat making music. The music was being made with two-strings, a drum, and a flute. . . . As he listened to it, Shani felt a mysterious flower open inside him and he was filled with joy. (Pg.151)

The Father and Dharma Vira are two characters who are trapped in the 'dungeons of unending night', which is otherwise a physical reality in the shape of the Goldmines, by participating in his diabolic designs. Unlike the Professor who seeks forgiveness from the imprisoned boatmen, confessing,

Forgive me, I have spent my life in sleep.

My life has been a joke even as the lives of brick-people are a joke. God gave me life that I might serve this earth. I have squandered it on baubles. (Pg.163)

Dharma Vira looses his mental balance after the 'violent clean up' of the protesting, unsuspecting boatmen at the docks. The realisation that he was slave to the 'demesne of a dark King' severs his links with this world. As part of the fantastic, the Father's disappearing-insides in the mirror, is the bizarre spectre of a naked boatman pursuing the Minister on his way to the Hermit's dwelling.

.....As always, the naked boatman came out of the shadows at the back of the vehicle. He came running as though in a marathon, the usual cot on his head? He came level with the amphibian and for a spell stayed there looking at the
Minister through the tinted windows. Then he
put on speed and overtook the vehicle and
dissolved into the night....(Pg.66)

The Grand Father's garden of roses, like Gen. Starch's parrot, belongs to the pattern of
the fantastic. The first sight of the rose-garden viewed by the Grand Master, on one of
his nightly tours over the City collates the demolition and the developmental aspects
of the same. Before he sights the garden the Grand Master is seen working on his map.

....the Grand Master returned to the map of the city
that lay spread before him. He drew lines straightening
out the streets and crossing behind him the town planner
said, "yes, Sir and "Yes, Sir". The Police Commissioner
also at the Grand Master's back, took note of the new lines
and spoke into a telephone. The telephone sent his voice
booming into space where it ricocheted against a satellite
and was received clear and crisp in the office of the
demolition-squad which ofcourse knew that they had only
twenty-four hours to generate the vistas outlined by the
Grand Master's pen and demolish such dwellings as came
in their way.(Pg.47)

The Grand Master's world is, noticeably, full of straight lines, and the mega-facilities in
communications are directed towards one goal, which is demolition. The pattern of
straight lines is used to cut out music from his life.
It is well known that the Grand Master disliked music. He is never to be seen at concerts, nor is there a single piece of music in the vast halls of the palace.

Even the national anthem, that he has to sit through during ceremonies, has been cut to the bare bones. (Pg.48)

And the Grand Master's reaction to Grand Father's roses testifies the statement that "he was a master of ambiguity" (Pg.197). His reactions are cleverly placed against the background of a laser attack on the boatmen and their musical instruments. The rose-garden and the roses 'seemed live and dancing little children holding hands,......little children in dresses of yellow and orange, red and pink.' (Pg.50)

The Grand Father tending the roses, fits into the required qualities of a King, who 'must first learn to be the slave of the city.' (Pg.113) The Grand Master encounters, music in the garden. The Grand Father is seen putting the roses to sleep with music. The Grand Master's world lacks this particular movement and in the words of Shailaja's brother.

'A naada, you might say, that is at the heart of all things.

Or perhaps, it could be a musical note, even a melody.

Of course, not everyone will hear it - as and when it can be heard that is. In the meantime, one must perfect oneself.' (Pg.52)

During this visit the Grandmaster finds a rose bush withered at his feet. His reaction is one of dismay, not exhibited when his lasers shrivelled the boatmen's musical instruments. It is like the rotting insides of the Father. The death of the bush is both ironical and symbolic of the plague spread by the Grand Master's demolitions. A condition
better described by Eliot,

"And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen,

Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about...

(Pg.24) (The Four Quartets)

The Festival of the Great River once again draws to one's mind Eliot,

Unhonoured, unpropitiated,

By worshippers of the machine, but waiting,

watching, and waiting. (Pg.31)

The River flows watching and waiting. "Time's consort and Time itself." (Pg.61)

While the Hermit 'believed in the supremacy of Time and considered only proper that mortal man should pay homage to it once a year (Pg.96) the Astrologer relates immortal time to the Grand Master and elaborately illustrates that the Grand Master is the human form chosen by the Lord to tackle the unendurable evil perpetuated by Master Bhome.

The Astrologer attempts to put life back into the carcass of the city while the Hermit's prayer reflects the truth.

'The great river, consort of Time immortal,

our mother who feeds us and in whom our dead bones rest, when men desecrate her...

and sing instead hymns in praise of Kings,

the epoch must come an end....(Pg.115)

In the Astrologer's world, inspite of his training under the Great Yogeshwara, 'all celebrations had their context, the city being the context' (Pg.231) and therefore the music of the ancients does not reach the ear. The Astrologers mental vacuum is better de-
scribed in the details of the boatmen's experiences in the Gold Mines. It is not only the Gold Mines which produce this effect, but the Grand Master's world itself which creates this effect.

'Very soon one way or another the darkness comes to fill the newcomer's mind. His brain ceases to function. Thoughts ricochete against his skull but fail to enter... Finally as the days pass, the night enters the man's soul blotting out the light behind his eyes... (Pg.162)

While chaos piles upon chaos, Master Bhoma's parable about the naked king is introduced into this elaborate purana which, speeds on the short breath of Time, running itself out. The choice is a children's story. The intention is to touch the boatmen and expose to them 'the beast' that they now face, which is deaf and dumb and blind and is set on a single purpose.' (Pg.208); to get beyond the air of the city that is 'privately owned.' (Pg.122)

The children's tale narrated by Master Bhoma is the popular fairytale 'The Emperor and his new clothes'. Shailaja's brother narrates the story to the boatmen, 'as though it were a ballad out of the city's hoary past and he an ancient bard who had emerged from out of the depths of the Great River to remind the city of a long-forgotten truth.' (Pg.129)

The story becomes material of imagination essential to the synthesizing of the formative function, of dissipated human values; an integration of every actual being to participate in a value; the formation of a norm for its existential expression.

It kindles in the hearts of many, the fever of sacrifice, especially in the boatmen who were part of the river.
Boatmen are children of the river. They have learnt more from her than meets the eye. Each moment the river dies and each moment she is reborn. Death is certain for all and here is a reason to die. (Pg.208)

'Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future.

And time future contained in time past.' (The Four Quartets Pg.13)

Arun Joshi's technique reflects this truth in his bringing together the ancient and the modern together. From the helicopters, the steel and glass constructions, the laser weapons, to the boatmen, their one-string instrument and a boat without oars, he attempts to establish this fact that instruments change but the eternal conflict between good and evil remains unchanged. Interestingly he merges the two even in the sacrificial pyre lit by Shailaja's brother before he climbs into it,

'Shailaja's brother turned away and completed his pyre.

It was in the shape of a hollow cube. He filled the hollow with dry grass, then lit the grass with his lighter. (Pg.228)

Again while the grandfather goes walking along the river to witness the carnage, his eyes observe the play of laser-lights over the palace and this sight appears like a passage to paradise.

'It seemed as though a golden ladder could be fixed somewhere in the palace and men could climb out of the mud of the planet and enter the farthest reaches of immortal paradise.' (Pg.231)

The further linking of the past with the present and the support of ancient wisdom is
reflected in the pyramids.

The light here was not golden but a soothing
Bluish-white that might have settled gradually
from the star.....Presiding over the city from the
highest point, the pyramids offered their demesne
an immortality far and above the immortality of

Time. (Pg.232)

There are several sacrifices made in this tale. The Professors fast and his death, Shailaja's brother's death by fire, the boatmen offering their fearless bodies to the Grandmaster's wrath and finally the Grandfather and his rose garden. Bhumiputra, the Hermit and Dharma Vira was killed in the destruction unleashed on Grandfather's farm. There is a difference in these deaths. The Professor and Shailaja's brother die of shock and shame having evaluated their past. It is the moment of realisation. Broma's conversation with the old man in the raft puts forth this truth.

....Knowledge and realisation are different things.

A moment comes when knowledge must realise
itself in action or else become sterile. (Pg.156)

Professor and Shailaja's brother arrive at a juncture of realisation too late for action.

They had been part of the conspiracies of the city, unconsciously; they bear the guilt of inaction which had given room for the Grand Master's growth. In other words they had been a party to the choice made by the City. Bhumiputra on the other hand, is still confused about his role in the scheme of the Almighty. To which the Old man's answer is,

But the almighty can manifest through men
only what men allow Him to manifest. That is why men and cities must choose. There is the upward path that leads to freedom and there is the downward path that for the moment at least must lead to perdition.

The city is free to choose either. (Pg.156)

Bhumiputra, waits too long at the cross roads knowing what each road held and in the process is pursued by a shadow. This shadow pursues him during his wanderings. It is the fear which gripped his heart and the hearts of other men. Arun Joshi introduces Fate at this point when Bhumiputra admits,

'I felt a force, as palpable and concrete as a living presence and this force seemed to turn my face towards this city once again and indeed seemed to say that it was the city and not the hermitage that would be the stage for the play of my life and that needed to be the goal of any of my travels. (Pg.143)

But now he was 'lost' and felt the 'icy breath' of the shadow. The city pays for the wrong choice. The floods which finally submerge the city shares resemblances with floods, that have figured in the scriptures. It could be the "pralaya" of the Hindu epics or the Biblical pronouncement of the Great floods, and it certainly has the characteristics of Eliot's idea of death by water because this is the death of hope and despair.

This is the death of air.' (Pg.43 Four Quartets)

Air privately owned. The City comes under the deluge of heavy rains which rained for 'seven days and seven nights'. Arun Joshi's choice of Master Bhma, the mathematician as his innocent eye of the storm, has resulted in numbers playing a role in this
novel. For example, "Shailaja's brother preached seven times a day for seven days. Every time he spoke seventy men listened to him." (Pg.131)

"Water and fire succeed.
The town the pasture and the weed.
Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied.
Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.
This is the death of water and fire
Under a rain the waters burn.....(Pg.43)
The burning mangrove carried by the river in spate, links the image of men, in the
Grand Master's dream, whose breath was hot, as if rising out of volcanoes under the
sea. The Hermit performs the yagna of immortal Time to erase the blasphemy pro-
nounced by the Astrologer. The next saviour of the future city, who would rise out of
this dead city, is announced during the ceremony. The parrot, which remains a mys-
tery, though it adds to the mythic dimensions of the tale could be the Great Yogeshwara
himself, as there is a hint to this effect in the Epilogue. Going back to the Professor and
Shailaja's brother, they are consumed by the river within, overwhelmed by a certain
knowledge.
The main body of the novel ends in silence with 'a vast sea of water,' reminding once
again of Eliot.
'The river is within us, the sea is all about us

The Epilogue picks up from where the above quoted line pauses, when the Great Yogeshwara brings the Nameless-one to the ridge to introduce him to the river 'shrouded in mist eternal'.

'The river is within us, the sea is all about us

The sea is lands' edge also, the granite

Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses,

It hints of earlier and other creations...(Pg.262)

The replay of past events in which the Nameless-one has a role to play, is not merely a charade or a joke but, as the Great Yogeshwara explains, it is the Lord's humorous handling of a dispute constantly engaged in by the humans, "a matter of allegiance to God or to man" (Pg.262), the expansion of humanism into metaphysics; which is stressed in the definition of the role to be played by the Nameless-one.

'The main thing is to prevent this endless repetition, this periodic disintegration.

But to achieve that we need purity

...The city must purify itself not to dissolve again.....

"Of egoism, selfishness, stupidity. (Pg.262)

What began with incomprehension, symptoms of an unrest, not easily diagnosed by earthly physicians, is given an exact body and statement in this last novel. It is a humbling experience of both, his persistent theme and his technique as a novelist. To
arrive at this precise definition, he has gathered all the influences inherited by him from the hoary past of human history, and the contemporary human situation to mould his story into this final shape. He ends with the acknowledgment.

In any case we are only instruments - both you and I - of the great God in the highest heaven who is the Master of the Universe.

How perfect we are as instruments is all that matters. His is the will. His is the force.

The lives of Arun Joshi’s protagonists and the players involved in this drama, has been to decipher a certain truth. Their passage through life and their quest is aptly described in this thought expressed by Eliot in 'Little Gidding.' (Pg.45)

"There are three conditions which often look alike,
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgegrow;
Attachment to self and to things and to persons detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and growing
between them, indifference.
Which resembles the others as death resembles life.
Being between two lives - unflowering, between
The live and the dead nettle.

The state of being between 'the live and the dead nettle' alters the operative function of God, immortality and freedom. Therefore the realisation of Truth, becomes a possibility, a mirage of thoughts. The metaphysical flight towards an absolute is restricted and restrained in the first four novels because the transcendence would reduce the action to nothing. Therefore the possibility of transcendence and comprehension is given a
objective framework in *The City and the River*. Truth is given a time slot, a duration, and within this space of time the drama is enacted and the flame carried in a chosen being to perform the drama of civilizations in another time capsule. Hence Arun Joshi’s theme’s confine themselves within the frame work of a quest with the focus on a mind which is traumatised by this need. Therefore, he gives form to the inconceivable and in his case it is the unthinkable of despair. While defining the nature of the unthinkable he draws in the various strands of objective influences, historical, social and cultural that build this desperation to an extent where the unthinkable retains its mystery. The materialist motif forces metaphysics to regress to materialism hence the action inescapably secures itself in desperation. Here the transcending impulse means a different state of the world itself where the beyond is visualised as part of the historical world but ignored and buried under the debris of materialism.

Arun Joshi uses the allegorical mode in this last novel, first of all to give a form to the transcending moods, secondly this choice is also a materialistic reconciliation of the transcending impulses. Such a mode orders or organises the many truths or realities that lie in the path of the absolute knowledge. The pluralistic nature of truth creates a kind of transcendental illusion, that the allegorical form cuts through this illusion effectively.

As part of this process of dispelling transcendental illusion both thematically and technically, he has introduced thought patterns with little language variations. The gap between the tangible and intangible is reduced by patterning the thought process and thus reaching the essence of metaphysics. As part of this patterning he incorporates the fable of the naked king to expose the false mentalist stand. The story of the king
emphasises on the transcendental theme through this materialist representation. The tale is a form of recognition, the time tested contribution of the oral tradition. The fictional art finds concrete expression in this, Arun Joshi's, last novel through such systems of interpretation. It is in a sense the liberation of truth from the abstractions of metaphysics. The sculptor Kings story in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* introduces into Arun Joshi's technique the tale within the tale, as an ideal structure of communication within the main frame work of the novel which is at the pupal stage of metamorphosis. *The City and the River* is a reconstruction of a universal theme through a diligent combination of past meaning and form into a fable in the present. The allegorical approach balances both the subjective and objective spirit of the text.

The expansion of empirical questions into metaphysical quests is achieved in the interim phase of action. Since the focus is on action, the beginning and end are not extended narratives. The case-work pattern of studying the mal-adjusted individual begins abruptly in the centre stage. The study of the environment and history is the second layer of the concentric circles.

At the periphery, the other worlds revolve as abandoned satellites. The abandonment is the loss of interest in them as part of the subjective world and the impersonal inquiry conducted to study their objective function in the space.

Joshi's attempts to re-fuse the two strands of consciousness, bifurcated as part of the sistolic and diastolic, pulsation of the universal being, is an act of self-preservation on the part of the creative artist to escape analytical and rational evaluation of the act of creation itself. The creative artist's lack of privacy and loss of a tranquility enjoyed by
Wordsworth in the recollection of powerful emotions has forced him to draw attention to the plurality within man. The objectification of pluralistic tendencies has plugged-in the creative impulses from taking their course. The rebellion against regulated thoughts, insistence of methods and standardised approaches is represented in the theme and the assertion of this right to self-expression and modes of expression is asserted through the narrative structure. The empirical knowledge seeks an expansion into the metaphysical dimension. It is the fracture of reality into the known and unknown that results in obsessions and the final tragedy.