

THE ART AND VISION OF ARUN JOSHI

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Literary renaissance began with India's contact with England, which stimulated the impulse of the already fertile minds of the literate Indians. Literary atmosphere did exist before but with the advent of the British on Indian soil, many inhibitions were done with, allowing its free and natural growth. "It also corresponds with one of the most dynamic periods in the history of India, characterized by a subtle commingling of and later a sharp conflict between the values of two great cultures—one ancient and the other modern. It saw the emergence on the Indian scene of science with its spirit of inquiry and politics with a growing concern of freedom."¹

With the introduction and spread of English education and language in the beginning of the nineteenth century, a favourable climate was created for the growth of modern education in India. The new system of education, in the words of Nehru, "opened the doors and windows of the mind to new ideas and dynamic thoughts."² It brought the Indian mind into a happy contact with the West. C. Rajagopalachari called English language as the "gift of the goddess Saraswati to India."³ A cultural regeneration of India, marked the birth of a long lasting, enduring relationship with the language. It helped to activate the creative impulses lying dormant for long. It was used constructively by Indians to vent their feelings and opine on social, political and religious issues through their writings.

The earliest attempts at fiction, a strain which has surpassed all forms of literature today, were that of Kylash Chunder Dutt and Shoshee Chunder Dutt who wrote tales rather than novel proper. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1834-94) wrote *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), his only novel in English, in its proper form. An English translation of *Jaljungal* by Manoj Basu followed in the form of *The Forest Goddess*. The literary Renaissance took Bengal by storm and we find the emergence of many writers from Bengal, on the literary scene.

We shall delve a little into the history of writing in English by Indian authors. Indo-English literary relations produced two types of literature. The first may be termed Anglo-Indian by which we imply "literature bearing on Indian topics or inspired by Indian motifs and spirit, and written by Englishmen or other Westerners."⁴ The second type has been popularly known as Indo-Anglian and used by Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar and others to signify "English literature by Indian authors."⁵ According to Prof. Iyengar, the term Indo-Anglian was first used in 1883 to describe a volume printed in Calcutta (now Kolkata) containing 'Specimen Compositions from Native Students.'⁶ Chalapathi Rao, however disputes the claim and gives James H. Cousins the credit for using it even earlier than 1883 to denote Indian writing in English.⁷

A systematic approach to give Indian writers an independent identity was made only in the nineteen thirties and forties, though the literary sensibility was at work for more than a century. B.R. Agrawal writes, "Even as late as 1934, we find Bhupal Singh using the term 'Anglo-Indian' to denote all writing in English about India without making any distinction between Indians writing in English and Englishmen writing in English."⁸ The credit for establishing Indian English writing as an independent identity goes to K.R.S Iyengar. His works *Indo-Anglian Literature (1943)* and *The Indian Contribution to English Literature (1945)*, serve as pioneers. This was followed by a detailed survey *Indian Writing in English (1962)* by the same author. The

“terminological shift is however part of a larger effort to provide a more imaginative space for the Indian part of the writing than what was provided earlier...This new term is part of a major attempt by the ex-colonized nation to recontextulize itself..”⁹

K.R.S. Iyengar begins his survey of the Indian novel in English by asserting that “The ‘novel’ as a literary phenomenon is new to India.”¹⁰ Further, Prof. Iyengar writes, “Before 1947 (the year of the withdrawal of Britain’s political connection), the English models were the major outside influence on the Indian novel. After the advent of independence...the serious novelist in a sense found his occupation gone, for the traditional villain of the piece, foreign rule, was no more in the picture...Communal, linguistic, casteist passions were seen to come into the open with accelerated frequency.”¹¹

The freedom struggle and Gandhi brought out patriotic and nationalist feelings, portrayed vividly in novels like *The Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932) and many others. Writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao who were on the Indian literary scene much before the dawn of Independence, emerged as a powerful trident, depicting faithfully and poignantly, the socio-politico-economic state of India. Indian writings in English can never be complete without their mention. “It is these who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established their suppositions, the manner, the idiom, the concept of character, and the nature of the themes which were to give the Indian novel, its particular distinctiveness.”¹² A spate of writings after Independence made the Indian literary output increase by leaps and bounds. The disillusionment in the state of affairs after Independence, also find poignant mention in the writings that followed.

Writers Workshop, Kolkata, through their journal *Writers Workshop Miscellany* (1960), also contributed in providing strong support to Indian writings in English. They made these writings available to a large clientele in India and abroad. The Sahitya Akademi, by recognizing and awarding the literary potential of Indian English writers, provide the required boost to their morale, thereby encouraging more writings.

The twentieth century saw rapid industrialization and technological progress. There was a mad rush to achieve materialistic amenities. Science gained an edge over spiritual pursuits. The proof being the easy accessibility to physical comforts. There was an exodus to ‘greener pastures.’ The competitive spirit gained momentum, reducing the individual to a mechanized state, bereft of emotions and abounding in selfishness. Ideals and values lost their significance. Religion, faith, and prayers took a back seat. The new God worshipped was Money.

Add to these were the two World Wars which caused a great upset in the destinies of families and nations. The destruction caused, spread world-wide, a retching for science and technology. The ill-effects of progress left man aghast and shocked. Man saw his own inventions as a threat to his entire race. He realized his own impermanence and insignificance. This brought about a feeling of insecurity, alienation and rootlessness.

This horrid change in the modern scenario, made the writers of the world to change their track and write about the problem of Existentialism besotting modern man, as the greatest perils of the world. Murchland has rightly called the twentieth century, especially the post-war period, “The Age of Alienation.”¹³ Albert Camus diagnoses the predicament of modern man as follows:

“A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity.”¹⁴ Walter

Kaufmann rightly opines, “Whether we choose to speak of alienation or not, the experiences widely associated with that term are often held to be distinctive characteristics of our time.”¹⁵

Modern fiction has delved quite deep into the inner problems of man caused by existential states of isolation, disappointment and the resultant meaninglessness of life. “Whatever the fiction may be said to deal with, it is surely safe to say that it deals, either manifestly or covertly, with our emotional problems.”¹⁶ By highlighting the inner self, by studying the restlessness of the modern mind and soul, tormented, in spite of development and technology, these writers have clearly illustrated that rapid industrialization with its consequential pressures has led to a materially rich but spiritually bankrupt society and this has contributed tremendously to the flowering of existentialism in modern society.

The problems of alienation, rootlessness and crisis of identity, find mention in the works of many Indo-English writers. This is because of growing cultural interaction between the East and the West. The cultural conflict, which arises, has made these authors write vividly about the inner turbulence experienced by those affected by these conflicts. Therefore, we have B. Rajan base his subject-matter in *The Dark Dancer* and *Too Long* on these lines, as also Raja Rao in *The Serpent and the Rope*, Santha Rama Rau in *Remember the House*, Kamala Markandaya in *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession* and *A Silence of Desire*, Manohar Malgonkar in *Combat of Shadows*, Attia Hosain in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Ruth P. Jhabwala in *Esmond in India* and *A Backward Place* and Anita Desai in *Bye-Bye Blackbird*.

In the same context B. Rajan observes, “India today is facing radical challenges...even in that immemorial landscape of the heart. The question to be answered is whether the Indian tradition...can come to terms with the new...without deep erosions in its fundamental character. In creating an image of this challenge there is perhaps a part to be played by the man of mixed sensibility, caught between crossfire, whose own mind is a microcosm of what he seeks to convey.”¹⁷

In this band-wagon, Arun Joshi finds special mention. His literary output consists only of five novels and a collection of short stories but his literary genius comes out in full with the varied aspects he handles so beautifully with the expertise of a seasoned writer of novels. A brief history of Arun Joshi shows the various influences on him, marking him as a true Indian with global experience.

Arun Joshi was born on 7 July, 1939 in Varanasi, the youngest child, to Prof. A.C. Joshi who later became Vice-Chancellor of Benaras Hindu University. He was educated in Varanasi, Lahore and Jalandhar. He went to the U.S for higher studies. He earned a degree in Engineering from the University of Kansas in 1959 and Master’s degree in Industrial Management from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T), U.S.A. in 1960. This gave him access to the system of education and knowledge of materialistic society. It helped him to get a closer look into the modern, devalued and depressed state of affairs in the industrialized, technology-bound, fast-paced life there.

For a brief period, Arun Joshi worked in a mental hospital in America, where his uncle was a psychiatrist. This experience with the patients of schizophrenia, gave him an insight into the workings of the human mind and resultantly of the theories propounded by Carl Jung and Freud. This therefore, can be inferred, to be the reason of the probing into the inner recesses of the mind, by Arun Joshi in all his novels.

Also, the solutions provided by Arun Joshi to give reprieve to the tortured souls in his novels, who become victims of self-inflicted ignominy and social pressures, are sure pointers to the influence of the Indian scriptures and sages—The Vedas, The Bhagavadgita and The Upanishads, as also that of Buddha, Tukaram and Mahatma Gandhi. Other influences include Pascal, Kierkegaard, Darwin, Descartes, discussed time and again.

Henry James also finds mention. His writings show the influence of Christianity and Islam also. All these show Arun Joshi to be a well-read, intelligent and knowledgeable person.

Arun Joshi joined the Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co., Delhi, in 1962 as chief of its Recruitment and Training department. Later, he worked in various capacities as Head of the D.C.M. Corporate Performance Assessment Cell, Secretary D.C.M. Board of Management and Executive Director of Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. He married Rukmani Lal, daughter of a D.C.M. shareholder in 1964. His three children comprise of two daughters and a son. Though he resigned from D.C.M. in 1965 and set up his own establishment to manufacture diesel engines, he continued as Executive Director of the Shri Ram Centre. The influence of the exposure in the corporate world is seen clearly in his writings.

The result of the varied influences which nurtured the fertile, creative and literary sensibilities of the thoroughly Indian heart of Arun Joshi found fruition in his novels and short stories. His writings comprises of :

The Foreigner (1968), *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) and *The City and the River* (1990), A collection of short stories titled *The Survivor* (1975) and two separate ones, *The Only American from Our Village* included in *Contemporary Indian-English Stories*, ed. Madhusudan Prasad (New Delhi: Sterling, 1983) and *Kanyakumari* included in *Another India: An Anthology of Contemporary Indian Fiction and Poetry*, selected and ed. Nissim Ezekiel and Meenakshi Mukherjee (New Delhi: Penguin India 1990).

Arun Joshi has also to his credit a work of biography, *Lala Sri Ram: A Study in Entrepreneurship in Industrial Management* (1975). These are outputs of his varied artistic capabilities. Arun Joshi has also contributed a very short piece to *The Fictional World of Arun Joshi* edited by R.K. Dhawan (1986). His novel *The Last Labyrinth* won for him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1982.

In reply to M.R. Dua's query, "Are you not attracted by so-called 'foreign craze' of getting your novels published abroad," Joshi gives a perfect reply as a true nationalist:

"I can't imagine a foreign publishing firm being interested in my type of writing. Even if they were, I am not sure I would want to give it to them. I guess it would hurt my national pride."¹⁸

Still, it was not possible for a prolific writer of high calibre to be bereft of the international limelight. His death in 1993 at the age of fifty-four, was early and unfortunate.

We gather a lot of information about Arun Joshi from his interviews, reply to questionnaires and importantly, his novels. On the basis of these, we form our deductions about Arun Joshi as a writer, a human being, a professional and an avid reader with interest in psychology and philosophy. The various influences that helped him to write find mention in the novels.

The *Foreigner* mentions about the counsel general who "kept his gaze fixed on a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi on the desk."¹⁹ The *Apprentice*, having the freedom struggle as the back-drop, mentions Gandhi as a "man of suffering."²⁰ Romi, in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* says, "I dipped into this well of wisdom and learning...the works of Henry James...urbane, dispassionate tales..."²¹ In *The Last Labyrinth* Som mentions, "He took out a book from a shelf and read out something. It had touched me, moved me briefly to another plane. The book was by Carl Jung...A scatter of Jung's words passed through my head..."²² In *The City and the River*, among many references to God, the influence of The Bhagavadgita is clearly seen in the Astrologer relating, "the Lord turned to me and said, 'When evil becomes unendurable I take human form...'"²³ These are just a few among the many, mentioned in his novels.

Showing the influence of the Existential writers of the West, Joshi in an interview to Purabi Banerjee says, "I did read Camus and Satre. I liked *The Plague* and read *The Outsider*. I might have been influenced by them. Sartre I did not understand clearly or like. As for existential philosophers like Kierkgaard I never understood anything except odd statements."²⁴

Arun Joshi found a solution in the Indian scriptures, to Existentialism, a problem besotting the modern man world-wide. The feelings of absurdity, rootlessness, alienation and materialism thus encountered makes man depressed. These make Arun Joshi probe into the inner recesses of an individual to find what anguish, torture and torment he faces, in wake of circumstances beyond his control. About Arun Joshi's writings, R.K.Dhawan writes:

"Reading Joshi's novels is not always a smooth experience; there are moments when one is assailed by doubts and questions. There is 'something' that attracts one's attention and then grips. Joshi delves into the inner recesses of human psyche where he finds instincts and impulses at work; he seeks a process of the apprehension of reality, which may lead him to the world of the core of the truth of man's life. He realizes man's uniqueness and loneliness in an indifferent and inscrutable universe."²⁵ Madhusudan Prasad observes: "They (Joshi's novels) are singularized by certain existential problems and the resultant anger, agony, psychic quest and the like."²⁶

This understanding of the modern man's dilemma in the materialistic, selfish world, along with duty towards the soul and society as well as deep psychological analysis of helplessness of man "in the fundamental sense that he cannot control what he is able to forsee,"²⁷ elaborated in Arun Joshi's novels mark him as a 'cut above the rest' among the Indian writers milieu writing in English. This existential stance dealt with so beautifully by Arun Joshi in the Indian context, makes him stand apart and be noticed as an Indian novelist of international standards. H.M. Prasad says,

"Joshi is a novelist in the tradition of Kafka and Camus, Sarte and Saul Bellow, Ellison and Malamud. His characters are in search of their lost self, their identity like Blanche Dubois of Tennessee Williams or Willy Loman of Arthur Miller. They embody the theme of anxiety of which the existential writers of the west like Kierkegaard, Marcel, Jaspers, Paul Tillich have given concepts."²⁸ A peep into the Existential theory will give a clear understanding of this problem confronting the modern world.

Existential Theory: "The impersonal and mechanistic atmosphere in which modern man finds himself trapped, resulting in his feeling isolated and alienated, has been a growing concern among social theorists. Two important social theorists Erich Fromm and Davis Riesman...see these effects not only in severe disorders but in the behaviour and personality of 'normal' men."²⁹

Existential theorists are more concerned with man's enstrangement from himself and a feeling of futility and despair. Abraham Maslow, Ludwig Binswanger, Rollo May and Medard Boss, all proponents of this view agree that man's capacity for continuous awareness enables him to make choices and to control his existence though he cannot transform events or create another world for himself.

Relating to the Self is most important according to the existential thesis. When this does not happen, the person "cannot satisfy his instinctive drives and cannot establish satisfying relationships with others...he experiences ontological anxiety, that is a frightening estrangement from rest."³⁰ This anxiety further isolates him from others and makes him incapable of acting in ways, which could alter his existence. S. Radhakrishnan writes:

**“Existentialism is a new name for an ancient method.
The Upanishads and Buddhism insist on knowledge
of the self: atmanam viddhi. They tell us that man
is a victim of ignorance, avidya, which breeds selfishness.
So long as we live our un-regenerate lives in the world of
time governed by Karman or necessity, we are at the mercy
of time. The feeling of distress is universal.”³¹**

“My novels” says Joshi, “are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and myself.”³² In an interview to Sujatha Mathai, Joshi mentions that the “exploration of that mysterious underworld, which is the human soul, and its lonely journey where it is necessarily a stranger, a foreigner”³³ gave him the impulse to write. In short, he explores the mysterious human soul. Sujatha Mathai remarks, “He sees lives as labyrinths...hopeless mazes where you may get irretrievably lost or discover the shining secret at the core of life.”³⁴

“Joshi feels that his ethos is essentially Hindu.”³⁵ Joshi says, “Hinduism is highly existentialist-oriented philosophy since it attaches so much importance to the right way to live (to exist).”³⁶ Arun Joshi admits to the influence of *The Bhagavadgita* on him: “*The Bhagavadgita* which is existential...expresses the absurdity of things...you are dead anyway.”³⁷

About his first two novels *The Foreigner* and *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, Arun Joshi states, “Both these novels are primarily concerned with religious issues--the problems of an essentially Hindu mind.”³⁸ While delivering a lecture at Dhvanyaloka Joshi remarks: The first three (novels), to me, seem concerned generally about questions of identity and, probably, ethics. The protagonists feel truncated, unfulfilled in some way. There is a withdrawal from the world, then a return to it, the process making them somewhat more whole.”³⁹ About Joshi’s novels, Trilling is of the opinion that meaninglessness leads to a search for identity, “a perpetual quest for reality.”⁴⁰

A detailed interview with Pier Paolo Piciuco gives us a clear idea of Arun Joshi’s beliefs:

“I certainly have some affinities with this country [India]; I have found it lately. One is the affinity of the spiritual kind, then there is the affinity of the sensual kind and there are others, too. Each county in India is very unique, and all India still remains unique. You know, historically, India has always been very inner-directed and never outer-directed like many other countries...There is no other country like this for the religious size, for the spiritual, the Bhakti Movement...India then has dealings with God which are peculiar.”⁴¹ He further states:

“I guess freedom...the inner-liberation and the outer-liberation...are quite important to me. So inner liberation without detachment is not possible and selfishness is always stopping you from getting liberated. That is the loneliness stage in man’s life.”⁴² Arun Joshi is deeply pained at the materialistic attitude of the modern man. As regards ways to achieve affirmation in life, Arun Joshi is of the view:

“A stage comes in your evolution when you can do without rules. But that person is an instrument of God...there is a long journey before you can reach that stage so that only a few people are inclined to do that. There will be a time again when people will turn towards the divine and want to become instrument of God, rather than live for themselves. They will have problems because it is difficult to judge whether you are instrument of God or not.”⁴³ This gives a clear idea of his philosophical leanings and interest in the occult.

Tapan Kumar Ghosh makes an apt assessment of Arun Joshi when he remarks:

“It is this balanced combination of contemporary experience and aspiration for transcendence that gives Joshi’s novel a place of distinction in post-Independence Indian fiction in English and accounts for its difference from Camus’ novel that ends in an abyss of nihilism.”⁴⁴ His novels travel from selfishness and selflessness to spirituality and submission to the Ultimate Truth as life-savers of human beings.

Arun Joshi’s stay in the U.S as a young adult has surely given him first-hand knowledge and experience of the problems of alienation, identity crisis, and cross-culture maladjustment he deals with so aptly, through his protagonists. He illustrates them and the situation in which they find themselves, with considerable details, showing his close proximity with them.

Joshi’s novels attain a distinct and high platitude because of his attempt to search and try to understand what goes on in the inner recesses, in the psyche of a troubled person and this projection--introspection, self-evaluation, true confession to self and revival of self for duty towards society, with total honesty--gives Arun Joshi the distinction of being an intelligent writer with rare psychological insight.

Arun Joshi’s protagonists are “the lost lonely questers”⁴⁵ opines Thakur Guru Prasad while Ramesh K. Srivastava terms them as “alienated beings.”⁴⁶ Arun Joshi shows his protagonists as searching for meaningful existence, all their life. This shows that Arun Joshi believes that man can never be complete and total. He has to continue his search for perfection, which may not be possible in one’s life-time. In the meantime, he should work for the betterment of society and the world in which he lives. This will lead man towards serenity.

In Joshi’s novels, though there are trying moments, the protagonists remain optimistic. Their hope raises them ‘from the ashes’ they tend to be in and the search for God through interaction with fellow-beings, helping, doing good, sacrificing etc., help them to take stock of themselves and contribute to society, repay to society the debt as responsible members and escape from their doom. This is the keynote of Arun Joshi’s existential vision.

The protagonists of Arun Joshi’s novels learn ultimately, through bitter lessons that tranquility comes from self-less service. Life is meant to be lived positively and optimistically. The magnanimity of sacrifice as a consequence of involvement, leads to a serenity, which can be cherished at the end of a fulfilled life. This thought-process has spiritual overtures as the individual quests for a meaningful life, devoid of pretensions earlier resorted to. Their despair transgresses into an optimistic and positive outlook. It is a therapeutic process for the heroes. R.S. Pathak says, “Joshi’s protagonist though not religious or saintly is humble enough to learn lessons from the problems of life.”⁴⁷

“Arun Joshi has hardly missed anything of the material reality, the complicated world of human behaviour, the flight of soaring imagination, the revelation of social and political corruption at high places, the humanitarian outlook, the fundamentals of human psychology while propounding the universal validity of ‘karma’ and the spiritual vision of human life.”⁴⁸

Joshi values responsibility, commitment, freedom, etc., which are essential factors for right living. Therefore, the doctrine of ‘what you sow you reap’ preached in *The Bhagavadgita*, find echo in Arun Joshi writings. Arun Joshi believes “that individual actions have effects on others and oneself. So, one cannot afford to continue with an irresponsible existence but has to commit oneself at some point.”⁴⁹

Joshi uses the technique of self-introspection. We find his protagonists, Sindi Oberoi in *The Foreigner*, Billy Biswas in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, Ratan Rathor in *The Apprentice* and Som Bhaskar in *The*

Last Labyrinth, all given in to prolonged introspections in an attempt to define their purpose, evaluate their actions and find their correct direction in this world.

Arun Joshi does not preach or propogate any doctrine, but the message of responsible existence contained therein is cleverly and forcefully brought out. He takes upon himself the duty of making the society an enlightened one with better understanding among individuals. He states, “If I did not write, I imagine I would use some other medium to carry on my exploration.”⁵⁰

Being a true realist, he adheres to no set formula and makes each individual responsible towards constructive contribution towards society as one’s prime duty. He gives importance to the individual as an important organ in society and his predicament takes a different dimension in Arun Joshi’s hands. Joshi makes the individual feel responsible for the condition of society.

In *The Foreigner*, the depiction of “a bronze figure of dancing Shiva”⁵¹ is mentioned. According to the Indian mythology, “Shiva, the Lord of the lingam, the consort of Shakta Devi, is also Nataraja, King of Dancers. The dance is an act of creation. It brings about a new situation and summons into the dancer a new and higher personality. It has a cosmogonic function, in that it arouses dormant energies which then may shape the world.”⁵² It acts as a forerunner to Sindi’s higher self, which he was to attain, in the future.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas shows Billy drawn towards Bilasia as having “suddenly discovered that bit of himself that he has searched for all his life...”⁵³ She proves to be his split-self. Tribal dance forms an important part of tribal culture. The influence of the Samkhya system on Arun Joshi is seen. The Sankhya system explained “the interaction between the male and female parts...dance was instumental to draw Purusha’s attention towards Prakriti.”⁵⁴

“The definition of feminity nowadays, as far as Indian culture is concerned, is a moot point. Various past and Western influences do mingle and combine resulting in a very complicated and controversial scenario... Much of the traditional conception regarding this point, in fact, may be indicatively traced around the Sankhya concept that does not support a belief in a Supreme Being or God. It teaches the existence of numerous Purushas or male entities which are pure and quiescent in themselves and of Prakriti (the female principle) the vast mainstay of the universe. The Purushas, independent of Prakriti, are passive, but they come into constant contact with Prakriti, and give rise to the phenomenal world. Prakriti, the female is essentially active and since all activity is conditioned by Time, Space and Causation, the Purusha that gets caught by Prakriti necessarily becomes bond.”⁵⁵

The Last Labyrinth has an old psychiatrist analyzes Som’s turbulence as not having met the “right soul,”⁵⁶ a union which could lead towards “a higher goal.”⁵⁷ Jung’s theory of the union of ‘animus’ and ‘anima’ is seen. It correlates with the Samkhya system propounded in *The Upanishads*.

Carl Jung’s analytic theory says, “The path of personality development is directed towards an ultimate outcome...called ‘individuation’. In yet another vein, Jung described the individuation process as directed towards the achieving of selfhood. He identified the essential steps in the achieving of selfhood. These include relinquishing an absolute identification with the ego, accepting the power of the collective unconscious aspects of the psyche, making all the functions and the non-dominant attitudes conscious and thus, available for use and similiarly integrating the archetypes of the collective unconscious into conscious experience.”⁵⁸

Arun Joshi has used archetypes in *The Last Labyrinth* and *The City and the River*. Joy

Abraham remarks, “The novelist’s vision of life, his compassion and sensibility are manifested in the archetypal patterns of conflict between good and evil which is typically Indian.”⁵⁹ About Arun Joshi’s novels, Hari Mohan Prasad says, “His novel is both a chronicle of chaos and a mode of quest.”⁶⁰ O.P.Mathur says, “Much of the criticism on Arun Joshi, however, tends to be somewhat obsessed with the ‘external’ aspects of his work, without sufficiently noticing its obverse side, the religious issues--‘the problem of an essentially Hindu mind’--converting the challenge of reality into a vision and a prophecy.”⁶¹ Optimism and Hope is depicted in all novels of Arun Joshi. Therefore they prove to be moral guidelines in one’s journey through life.

“Krsna the teacher of the Gita shows us a way out of this transitoriness of things, the curse of age and death, jaramaranamoksaya. He asks us to take refuge in the divine:

manmana bhava madbhakto

madyaji mam namaskuru

mam evai ‘syasi yuktvai ‘vam

atmanam matparayanah

It means : On Me fix thy mind; to Me be devoted; worship Me; revere Me; thus having disciplined thyself, with Me as thy goal, to Me shalt thou come...”⁶²

“The way to rise out of our ego-centred consciousness to the divine plane is through the focussing of all our energies, intellectual, emotional and volitional on God. Then our whole being is transformed and lifted up into the unity and universality of spirit. Knowledge, love and power get fused in a supreme unification. Joy and peace are the result of self-oblivion, of utter abandonment, of absolute acceptance.”⁶³

This is not realized by Som Bhaskar, the protagonist of *The Last Labyrinth* who, Arun Joshi has portrayed as the modern, doubting intellectual. He represents the youth of today who question everything and show disbelief towards tradition. Som talks about Tukaram: “Your body is God’s chariot, says Tuka Ram”⁶⁴ but lacks the humility to accept God as Tukaram does.

Says Tukaram: “do Thou raise me by Thy power. I have neither purity of heart nor a faith firmly set at thy feet...” Again, “I am void of understanding, needy and worse than needy. I cannot steady my mind; I cannot steady my wayward senses. I have exhausted effort; peace and rest are far from me. I can only look to thee. O God, I trust in Thee, I cling firmly to Thy feet...It is for Thee to deal with my efforts.”⁶⁵

The explanation of various concepts is a deliberate attempt in clearing any doubt in the mind of the reader regarding Arun Joshi as a well-read, modern novelist with roots and a strong belief in ancient Indian wisdom. It gives a clear picture of Arun Joshi’s influences and inclinations, which provide the basis of his novels.

A sincere effort is made, to bring out the best of Arun Joshi, an Indian writer in English with Western education, who crusades the modern dilemmas of man with ancient, traditional Indian wisdom, making one feel responsible towards society and work towards its betterment, as a purpose in life.

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