

INTRODUCTION
ARUN JOSHI: AN ARTIST IN THE
MAKING

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

ARUN JOSHI: AN ARTIST IN THE MAKING

The Novel and the Short Story down the Years

Among the various literary expressions, the latest and the most dominant form in the twentieth century is the novel. Elastic and irregular, the novel is concerned directly with life, with men and women, their joys and sorrows. As a novel deals with life, one naturally expects from the novelist, the impression life made upon him. Thus, the emergence of the novel as a major literary form is mainly responsible for the increased importance given to realism in all forms of literary art. The novel clearly envisages the snappy human lives and meets the needs of the modern man more boldly than poetry or drama. It reflects both the constructive and the disintegrating phases of contemporary society.

It is commonly agreed that the novel is the most acceptable way of embodying experiences and ideas in the context of our time. It is not only the single literary form to compete for popularity with the television and the radio, but also the only one in which, a great deal of distinguished work is being done the world over.

The history of the novel is difficult to trace, because of the innumerable novelists on the way. But there does exist a cogent string of continuity between the oldest and the latest forms of the novel. The growth of the form reveals a kind of dissatisfaction with the story, merely as a story. It is even difficult to fix up the types of stories. The easiest to distinguish are the realistic and the historical novels. There are comic novels too, like the *Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens (1812-70), sociological novels like *It Is Never Too Late To Mend* by Charles Reade (1814-84) and philosophical novels like *Diana of the Crossways* by George Meredith (1828-1909).

The novel form has undergone a transformation in quality, quantity and complexity over the years. Anthony Trollope (1815-82) tells the story in a straightforward manner giving importance to the plot but for Loureance Sterne (1713-68) the form is more important than the plot. Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) uses the novel as a vehicle for ideas and conversations. George Orwell (1903-50) makes the novel form the satirical study of a particular political system. There are also out-of-the-ordinary novels like James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Since the days of Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86) and John Lyly (1554-1606), the novel has trod on a long path and undergone a

great change. Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) designed his novel *Pamela* as a bunch of letters, while Henry Fielding's (1707-54) novels wove together a string of episodes. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1823) nurtured the cult of historical romances in English. Jane Austen's (1775-1817) novels give a picturesque and affectionate account of English middle-class life. Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) and Horace Walpole (1717-97) introduced the novel of terror in the Gothic tradition.

William Thackeray (1811-63), with his pictures of English life, is a contrast to Charles Dickens whose novels contain humour and sentiment along with a teeming variety of living characters. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94) deals with stories of adventure; Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) gives a tragic vision of life in his Wessex novels; H. G. Wells (1866-1946) excels in scientific romances. James Joyce (1882-1941) revels in the stream-of-consciousness form; Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) adds the beauty of the sea to his novels; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) makes the detective novel the craze of the day and the name of Sherlock Holmes, a household word in England. Thus, the novel came of age and gained acceptance as an established form of art. *The History of English Novel* records:

Its medium is prose, not verse; as to content, it is a portrayal of life, in the shape of a story, wholly or in the main fictitious; as to its way of portraying life, though the pretence of exact reporting of indiscriminate detail is generally regarded as a mistaken kind of realism, and much latitude is allowed to plot and surprise, everything recounted is required to be credible, or at least to have a definite and consistent relation to the facts of existence.

(Baker 1: 11)

Even today new experiments are being added to the potentialities of the novel form, because it is the widest read in the world. It is an accepted truth regarding novel-reading and novel-writing that the well-made novel is the one in which the subject and the form coincide and are indistinguishable. In a good novel the matter is all used up in the form, and the form expresses the whole matter. This integral association between the matter and the form is hard to achieve in a novel, but if achieved, it makes the novel great. The masterpieces among novels have achieved this harmony in a marvellous manner.

Needless to mention, India with its uniquely glorious and glamorous, literary and literacy heritage, is the home of stories

where storytelling has been an art from time immemorial. The Indian-English fiction is a successfully established art by now, and it is still developing with justifiable confidence and pride. Novelists continue to dominate the literary scene in India. The Indo-English novelists until the thirties wrote for a readership largely Indian. The image of India as projected by four generations of Anglo-Indian novelists is far from realistic. They displayed India as a land of darkness, steeped in ignorance and superstition. The Indo-Anglian writers took it as a challenge to correct the stigma and they did succeed in a way. The triad or the 'Trimurti' of the Indo-English fiction - Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao - wished to give an insider's view of India to the outside world.

The abundant contributions of Nirad C. Chaudhuri, V.S. Naipaul, Manohar Malgaonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, C. L. Nahal and Arun Joshi are commendable. Women novelists also abound in India - Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, and Nayantara Sahgal, Arundhati Roy and so on. They use the medium of English according to their individual genius and temperament, and add lustre and freshness to the novel form.

The more recent Indo-English fiction has been trying to give expression to the Indian experience of the modern

predicament, of which the fiction of Arun Joshi is the most representative. He is, beyond doubt, one of the most significant novelists today. His reputation has won serious critical attention since the publication of his first novel in 1968. His novels are singularized by existentialist problems and their resultant anger, agony and psychic quest. He has very dexterously, handled some thought-provoking themes like rootlessness, detachment and the need for better alternatives in an ostentatious world. He focuses on self-realization, highlighting the glorious cultural heritage of India and its imperishable moral values. Arun Joshi has also made some valuable contribution to the short-story form.

The short story in comparison with the novel, has acquired an important place in modern times. It has a claim to the oldest simple narrations, because man's story-telling instinct might have given rise to some crude form of the short story in every country. Though the short story has many features similar to the novel it is different from the novel in the handling of its material. It is also different from the simple and unadorned narration of an incident. The short story is remarkable for its brevity, in general, though there are stories that exceed the limit of the short story. The spread of the magazines is the chief cause for its growth. In a fast developing culture, people find

little time to devote to aesthetic enjoyment and the present-day reader finds hardly any time for novel-reading. So, the short story satisfies him. There are stories of varying lengths, ranging from stories of half a page to stories as long as a novelette.

Edgar Allan Poe may be regarded as the maker of the modern short story. He is followed by a number of writers in America and England. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, Sir Walter Scott, H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde, Anton Chekhov, Ernest Hemingway and William Saroyam are a few among the most eminent of modern story writers.

In *A History of Indian English Literature*, M. K. Naik describes the short stories written in Indian English as “mostly a by-product of the novel workshop” (247). It is sure that most of the Indian novelists from Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan to Khushwant Singh, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar, Chaman Nehal, Anita Desai and Ruth Pravar Jhabvala have tried writing short stories. These authors have not taken to the short story merely to take time off from a more serious preoccupation of writing a novel but because they found the form relevant to the modern man. Arun Joshi is also well-aware of the importance and the function of the short story as an

effective literary form. In *The Sunday Statesman* on 27 February 1983, Joshi expresses his view:

Each has its own place. In my case it is the theme which determines whether it would be a short story or a novel. For example, I wrote a short story called “Gherao” which was about some students gheroaing a principal. Thematically I would not like to handle a novel about the academic world which I don’t know about; so a short story. (“A Winner’s Secret” 71)

Joshi’s short stories are used as powerful weapons against social malpractices. The strength of the stories is the deep insight they give regarding human reality and character. They are also remarkable for their beautiful way of presentation, description and expression. The stories are rooted in Indian soil and in order to keep it natural, Joshi uses unhesitatingly Hindi and Urdu words, without bothering to translate them into English. The stories capture the reader’s attention because they dovetail form with substance. The seriousness of content, the uniqueness of precision and the freshness of his language, make Joshi a leading short-story writer in contemporary Indian English Literature.

II

Arun Joshi: Life and Works

It was unthinkable for an Indian writer to hope to become a novelist in the pre-Rushdie era, when Indian fiction in English had not consolidated a reputation in the West. The chances of success at home were also indigent. A withdrawn individual, who did little to promote his books, and who refrained from entering literary circles, Arun Joshi found even more obstacles on his way to becoming a writer. He was essentially an industrialist who cultivated his love for literature, only in his spare time. Thus, it is easy to understand why he cynically rejoiced over the fact that not even his neighbours knew that he wrote books. In spite of his neighbours' ignorance, he gradually became a novelist of outstanding repute in the restricted circle of Indian scholars and critics. He was acclaimed for the depth in his novels in which French existentialism coexisted and fused with meditations reminiscent of the Bhagavad Gita. A bridge between two contrasting worlds and cultures, his life influenced his writing which stepped up an ascending line that eventually led him to receive the Sahitya Akademy Award, India's most prestigious literary recognition.

Son of a famous botanist and eminent academician, Joshi was born in 1939 in Varanasi where he lived until he was seven. He spent the rest of his childhood in Lahore, and then moved back to the Indian Punjab during the traumatic period of the partition in 1947. A brilliant student, he was awarded a scholarship to the U. S. where he obtained a degree in Engineering and Industrial Management from the University of Kansas. This was soon followed by a Master's degree from M. I. T., Massachussets. Joshi's interest and passions like that of Billy Biswas, his most famous fictional character, were aroused not by the field his University studies had prepared him for, but rather by a totally unrelated one: psychiatry. Thanks in part to the help of a psychiatrist uncle, he began a job in a mental hospital where he worked with chronic schizophrenics, an experience which left a deep impression on him, and which he also used in creating Biswas in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*.

After completing his education, Joshi came back to India and got a job on the management staff of an Indian company, before trying the adventure of establishing small companies of his own, producing diesel engines, machine tools, foundry products and automotive parts. Incidentally, it may be noted that Sindi Oberoi, the protagonist of his debut novel, *The Foreigner*,

brings back to life many of the experiences encountered in his youth. Alongside his role as an industrial manager, Joshi, however, became the administrator of a philanthropic institution, coordinating research and training, regarding the human side of industry, from workers to upper-echelon staff. This dynamic, career-minded industrialist was, at the same time, an outstanding novelist who turned to creative writing as a hobby. And this ability, to switch from one world to another diametrically-opposed one, is a peculiar trait that Joshi shared with many of his protagonists, reaching the status of leitmotif in Som Bhaskar's predicament in *The Last Labyrinth*. In the 1993 dry season before the arrival of the monsoons, Joshi passed away unexpectedly, owing to complications following an attack of asthma, an affliction he had suffered throughout his life. Curiously enough two of his main characters, Sindi Oberoi in *The Foreigner* and Ratan Rathor in *The Apprentice* also suffer from asthma. Joshi is survived by his wife, Rukmani, whom he married in 1964, and three children - two daughters and a son.

Joshi's literary career began only after his return to India with the publication of *The Foreigner* in 1968, the most noticeably autobiographical novel. At that time young Indian writers had not dreamt of fame, but the assistance of Khushwant Singh, the

renowned journalist and novelist, was decisive in promoting the fortunes of this new name. Despite the open ending, the pessimistic tale in *The Foreigner* offers its characters no chance of redemption. But the author's affable skills and his acute sensitivity in focussing on imaginary crossroads between existential motifs and ethical choices became noteworthy and popular.

Joshi's second novel *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971) established his position in the literary scene. Critical reviews gave him a benevolent reception and scholars in India started making him the focus of new areas of research. His fascinating style, no doubt, was reminiscent of Joseph Conrad.

The Apprentice (1974), the third and the favourite novel of Joshi, exposes his highly introspective nature. This confessional tale displays a single male point of view. The father-son relationship, reverberating intensely throughout Joshi's literary productions, occupies a central position here. Nevertheless, the author makes a considerable effort to mask it behind two men who appear to be quite accidental acquaintances. Despite the exclusively male point of view, the work was not only welcomed by the male readers but also appreciated by feminist critics.

After a brief interval, Joshi wrote *The Last Labyrinth* (1980), which is considered by some scholars to be his major

achievement. The novel, which earned the prestigious Sahitya Akademy Award, develops as a painstaking search probing into the deep recesses of the human soul. The young industrial manager constantly wavering on the verge between the rational and the irrational, love and hate, living and dying, sacrifice and fancy, the wealth of Bombay and the holiness of Benaras was a live example of the human predicament. In 1975, a collection of his short stories was published under the title *The Survivor: A Collection of Short Stories*. Joshi's last work *The City and the River* (1990) published a decade after *The Last Labyrinth*, is proof of the author's search for a new literary path, perhaps enlightened by the highly successful Indian author, Salman Rushdie.

A significant anthology of the works of Arun Joshi is *The Fictional World of Arun Joshi* edited by R. K. Dhawan. The papers published on the novels and short stories are the following: "The Art and Vision of Arun Joshi" by O. P. Bhatnagar; "Double Vision of Fantasy and Reality in Arun Joshi's Novels" by Harish Raizada; "Human predicament and Meaninglessness in Arun Joshi's Novels" by R. S. Pathak; "Arun Joshi and *The Labyrinth of Life*" by O. P. Mathur and G. Rai; "The Lost Lonely Questers of Arun Joshi's Fiction" by Thakur Guruprasad; "*The Foreigner*. A Study in

Innocence and Experience” by Mohan Jha; “From Detachment to Involvement: The Case of Sindi Oberoi” by Dr. K. Radha; “*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*: A Serious Response to a Big Challenge” by D. Prempati; “The Image of Fire in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*” by Devinder Mohan; “Vision and Technique in *The Apprentice* by Joy Abraham; *The Apprentice*: An Existential Study” by V. Gopal Reddy; “The Crisis of Consciousness: *The Last Labyrinth* by Hari Mohan Prasad; “The Two Worlds in *The Last Labyrinth*” by Sham Sunder Sharma; “The Language of the Splintered Mirror: The Fiction of Arun Joshi” by Devinder Mohan. “Foreigners and Strangers: Arun Joshi’s Heroes” by Jasbir Jain; “A Study of Arun Joshi’s Fiction” by Shyam M. Ansari, “Review of *The Last Labyrinth*” by Keke Daruwalla and so on.

Joshi has been influenced by many, especially the existentialist writers. To quote *The Sunday Statesman* on 27 February 1983 again: “I did read Camus and Sartre admits Joshi: . . . I liked *The Outsider*. I might have been influenced by them. Sartre, I did not understand clearly or like. As for existential philosophers like Kierkegaard I have never understood anything except odd statements” (“A Winner’s Secret” 71). Influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and the Bhagavad Gita, he

believes that individual actions have an effect on oneself and on others as well. He learns from life that one has to commit oneself at some point and entrust great value to the right way of living.

III

Arun Joshi's Works and the Readers' Response

The present work, "The Routes of the Rootless: A Study of the Novels and Short Stories of Arun Joshi" is based on the Reader-Response Theory.

The term 'reader-response criticism' refers not to a single theory or method but to a range of approaches in which the form of critical attention is on how readers respond to a text. Its development was a reaction against New Criticism and other varieties of Formalism, in which there is an emphasis on the text. It was also a reaction against various biographical approaches in which the author is seen as the ultimate source of meaning. In their analysis of how a reader responds to a text, the reader-response critics have drawn upon a number of theories and interpretive models, notably psychoanalysis, structuralism, and phenomenology.

Reader-response criticism may be traced back to Aristotle and Plato, both of whom based their critical arguments partly on the response of the reader. The immediate sources of the theory can be found in the writings of the French structuralists and the American critics such as Kenneth Burke, Louise Rosenblatt, Walker Gibson and Wayne Booth. Reader-response criticism became recognized as a distinct critical movement only in the 1970s. But much ahead of this movement, the ideas behind a work of art being recreated each time it is read, had held sway. For example, in *Art as Experience* (1959), John Dewey certified that a work of art is “recreated every time it is aesthetically experienced. . . . It is absurd to ask what an artist ‘really’ meant by his product: he himself would find different meanings in it at different days and hours and in different stages of his own development.” <<http://writprog.web.arizona.edu/materials/3-6.htm>>

In 1938 Louise Rosenblatt published a classic work entitled *Literature as Exploitation* which served as a model for the teaching of literary texts for more than fifty years. An individual reader engaging himself in reading a text is no doubt a private affair. His interpretation of the text has meanings internally experienced in his own consciousness and it need not be necessarily shared. Even if that text is read aloud to others, the reader’s meaning-

making remains unchanged. But if an informed adult reads aloud to a group, the quality of his reading, his tone, his emphasis, and above all, his enthusiasm and rhythmic variations while reading, may influence those listening to him. When such a group of readers indulge in reading and interpreting a text in a classroom, the group becomes an interpretive community. What happens in this context is the readers' response to a text.

To put it without scholarly jargon, it may be said that when the reading is systematized, the result is a reader-response theory, and when the interpretation is organized it becomes reader-response criticism. The theorist uses all available literary, educational, sociological and communicative knowledge to study the meaning-making situation. The task of the reader-response critic is to develop and maintain the interpretive community. The reader-response theorist will also provide ample time for experiencing the personally felt meanings, and he encourages all individuals to enter into discussion with confidence. But the critic is expected to respect both his own critical meanings and those of others. Thus the process of meaning-making, moves from the private to the public domain. Theorists and their methods vary from person to person:

Though the reader-response theorists differ on particular points there are three general principles that distinguish this methodology:

1. Reading is believed to be dynamic and interactive;
2. Meaning emerges from a transaction between readers and texts;
3. Response to texts does not equal interpretation of texts. <<http://writprog.web.arizona.edu/materials/3-6.htm>>

In the reader-response critical approach, the primary focus falls on the reader and the process of reading, rather than on the author or the text. The theoretical assumptions regarding the reader-response criticism are:

1. "Literature is a performative art and each reading is a performance, like enacting a drama. Literature exists only when it is read. Therefore meaning is an event. This is in contrast to the New Critical concept of the "affective fallacy."
2. The literary texts do not possess any fixed or final meaning or value. That is, there is no single "correct" meaning. Literary meaning is created by the interaction of the reader and the text."

<<http://www.cnr.edu/home/bmcmanus/readercrit.html>>

There are a number of interpretations to the interpretations of the reader-response theory because even subjectivity is based on the way a text is read. As stated in the *Encyclopaedia of Literary Critics and Criticism*:

. . . however subjective a response may be, we all share one indisputable element - a common language. Words, quite simply, mean - and, as a result, we have intersubjective “communities” of readers who may argue about the *interpretations* of a text, but at least they are objectifying their subjectivity by “naming” their experience of the work under discussion. This idea of language on a lynchpin of objectivity, while allowing individual readers to let their imagination wander, however subjectively, erratically, or idiosyncratically, has found favour with a new generation of reader-response critics and seems to provide a sound basis for the way that we (readers) actually read the text. (922)

There is no doubt that the reader-response theory and criticism have produced new waves in literature and criticism but the fact remains that when the jargons are removed, the essence is the same. That is, when a reader reads a text he understands only what he is able to understand, and what he wants to understand. The way in which he understands or how far he understands is different from another reader's understanding. To quote the *Encyclopaedia of Literary Critics and Criticism* once again: "Since no one can ever tell exactly what goes on in someone else's mind during the reading process, let alone his or her own, it is clear that the problematic raised by reader-response theory will be with us for some time to come" (922).

This study also aims at viewing the possible responses of the readers. For this purpose, the readers are divided into three categories: (1) the interested reader, that is, one who is immersed in the novel, and enjoys reading it and is therefore keen on finding out the details of the characters with excitement, (2) the disinterested reader, a reader who is impartial in judgement, that is, one who is neither keenly interested nor uninterested in the novel. (3) the uninterested reader, that is, a casual reader who has no special interest in the novel.

IV

The Proposed Research Work

The main objective of this research, “The Routes of the Rootless: A Study of the Novels and Short Stories of Arun Joshi” is to probe into the routes taken by the rootless characters in the novels and short stories of Joshi. The critical stages of development in the lives of the heroes appear painful and problematic, and hence they find out their routes through the path of life. They realize that they have to give up their old ways and ill-formed notions. But they are neither willing nor able to sacrifice what is outgrown. Consequently they cling to their old patterns of thinking and behaving, thus failing to negotiate the crisis. As a result, they fail to grow up and experience the joyful sense of rebirth. Thereby they are prevented from attaining a successful transition into greater maturity.

Joshi’s heroes are representatives of modern men who refuse to come to terms with their midlife crisis in the course of their lives. Being rootless they adopt varied routes for living. Thus they portray the trauma undergone by many an Indian in his struggle to live. The heroes merely exist; they cannot live. The growth spirit does not occur in them because they do not understand that in order to permit growth to take place, the old

self must be relinquished. Moreover the heroes are not ready to accept the fact that their old self and their way of life miss the mark. As their unconscious is one step ahead of the conscious they become depressed and the depression gives the signal that a major alteration is required for successful adaptation. Such an adaptation becomes impossible for them because, their desires and attitudes take different shapes. These conditions are dealt with by Joshi. This study takes into focus some of the major routes, taken by the characters, in the hope of rendering a joyful living instead of a mere existence.

The present study comprises eight chapters. Chapter One, Introduction, "Arun Joshi: An Artist in the Making" is divided into four sections. The first section, "The Novel and Short Story down the Years" traces the growth of the novel and the short story up to Arun Joshi. The second section, "Arun Joshi: Life and Works" focuses on Joshi's life and works. The third section, "Arun Joshi's Works and the Readers' Response" introduces the theory on which this study is based, and the fourth section, "The Proposed Research Work" gives the layout of the thesis.

Chapter Two, "The Route from Indifference to Involvement," is a study of the theme of indifference and involvement in the five novels. But the major focus is on *The*

Foreigner (1968), in which Sindi Oberoi, a rootless Kenyan-Indian traces his route through London, Boston and New Delhi. The rootless Sindi, like the other main characters, learns that indifference is a kind of detachment, and the real detachment is detachment from the self and attachment to persons other than the self.

Chapter Three, "The Route from Sophistication to Simplicity," is a study of all Joshi's novels with regard to the shift from sophistication to primitivism. But the major focus is on the second novel, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1974). The mystical urge in Billy Biswas leads him to the jungle to seek communion with nature, a route he takes up from sophistication to simplicity, but his life is terminated by the society in the usual way in which it disposes of all its rebels.

The fourth chapter, "The Route from Crime to Confession," is a study of all the novels with regard to the change of attitude from crime to confession giving focus on *The Apprentice*, the third novel (1974). This novel is different in tone from the earlier ones. Ratan Rathor, its hero, as well as its antihero, is everyman, endowed fortunately or unfortunately, with a lower intellectual calibre. He does not feel at home in the society. Nevertheless, he does not abandon it like Billy Biswas. Neither a rebel nor a

dissident, he is the victim. Yet the powerful instinct in him makes him overcome the feeling of alienation from the society. He adapts himself to the ways of the society by succumbing to worldly pleasures. But in the end he realizes the hollowness of his whole life and thereby seeks the routes from crime to confession. Tired of body and spirit, he ends up in the temple wiping the shoes of the entrants.

Chapter Five, “The Route from the Labyrinth to the Light,” throws light on all the novels, especially the fourth one *The Last Labyrinth* (1981), which won Joshi, the prestigious Sahitya Akadami Award. Basically a love-story, the novel traces the steps of Som in his quest for the joy of life. Unfortunately, he is suffocated by the void within and the void without. He fails to sublimate his animalistic desires to the spiritual. He is not able to surrender himself to conquer an unwavering faith. But he learns that the labyrinth of life can be neatly woven through intuition and the light of faith rather than through science and reason.

Chapter Six “*The Route from Fantasy to Fact,*” is a study pervading Joshi’s novels but the main focus is on the fifth and last novel *The City and the River* (1990). The novel uncovers a story set in a city by the river and governed by a Grand Master. It strikes an entirely different tone from the earlier novels. At

one level it is a parable of the times; at another, it deals with how men, entirely free to choose, create by their choice, the circumstances in which they must live.

Chapter Seven: “The Route from the Struggle to the Survival” is a study of the collection of ten short stories entitled *The Survivor: A Collection of Short Stories* (1975). There are two other stories too, “The Only American from our Village” and “Kanyakumari” which are published separately. The stories present a variety of characters, portraying a cross-section of the Indian Society after independence. They range from a college principal to an Indian physicist; from a soldier to a young prostitute; from an unemployed middle-class youth and eve-teaser to a sex-obsessed rustic servant; and from an old man searching for his lost youth to a middle-aged travelling salesman, attached to his crippled daughter. They face a crisis during which they struggle for survival.

Chapter Eight, Conclusion: “The Routes” sums up the discovery of the varied routes of the rootless characters - from indifference to involvement, from sophistication to simplicity, from crime to confession, from the labyrinth to the light, from fantasy to fact and from the struggle to the survival.

“For some years I have been wondering how I can know God. I have had the feeling that God, the Divine Ground, take its home in different degrees in different people, and it is spiritually the more advanced who serve as agents, knowingly or unknowingly, of God and bring Him to other people.”

Arun Joshi