CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The study aims to understand the intricacies of identity conflicts and the resultant crisis in Arun Joshi and S. L. Bhyrappa’s select fiction against the nuances of the ambience of cultural diversity. A heterogeneous society were multiple cultures co-exist always affect both the individual and community identity while imparting lots of socio-cultural changes. Along with renewal and restructuring of native cultural resources through acculturation it induces lots of identity conflicts in individuals for varied reasons. The long drawn history of cultural invasions in India; British colonization in the past and the western cultural invasions of the present due to globalisation have made identity conflicts a very common experience in the Indian sub-continent. Lack of common ideational traits, differences in the ‘world views’ and shared faiths between the essential Indian and the Western are some reasons that encouraged identity conflicts. Market and utility driven ideologies of West conflicted mainly with the mystical and ethical notions of the Indian subcontinent to induce identity conflicts. Science and technology induced rational and liberal thinking though helped a lot to resist the social evils in the Indian society yet conflicted with the traditional thought patterns and belief systems. The Indian idea of progress encoded in spiritual well-being and the Western idea of progress ingrained in technological revolution and gaining of more material wealth contradicted each other. The conflicts generated due to these differences ultimately get expressed as tangible experiences of identity conflicts in individuals.

The importance of studying the intricacies related to identity is more pronounced today than at any time due to the present day problematic generated by
colonialism and its cultural imperialism, transculturalism, transnationalism and multiculturalism. Thus identity and its intricacies has occupied the center stage in academic and public debates and discussions. It has become the subject of acute controversy in relation to the privileged cultural-political identity Western culture has been enjoying as the advanced head of the world over all the underdeveloped or developing societies through its acts of disrupting, transforming or erasing the customs and traditional identities of the lesser countries. Modernisation phenomenon and the resultant East - West hegemonic relation, globalization and the hierarchical relation between the globalizer and the globalized have generated intense identity politics and politicization of identities. Further modernization process of recent past and the globalization of the present have created new identities and affiliations and also conflicts and collaborations of varied kinds between different identities.

In an ambience of cultural ambiguities every individual do express a congregation of multiple identities. Along with the identities the ‘self’ claims by personal preferences there are multiple other identities slapped on to each individual by social ascription by the society in which he/she lives. Caught in the galore of contradicting identities an individual is always said to be striving at identity formation/formulation by personal choice. Identity itself is a discursive site where in different styles of living and thinking is contested and also liberation from particular identities is enacted. Desire for emancipation is felt especially when the inherited identity becomes a suffocating burden or when culture turns into a prison house precipitating crisis. That is when one does desire for standing outside social fold and in total freedom. But at the same time it is hard to operate in total freedom, freed of one’s cultural identity, for it is the latter which draws the parameters and delimits one’s space for action. Losing one’s identity and reclaiming it through renegotiation
is not easy in the light of the fact that identity is socio-culturally ascribed. But inspite of the impediments desire for liberation has always been expressed especially with identities which have been considered as stifling or oppressive for some people or groups (desire for freedom from one’s low-caste identity is one example of the kind). To outgrow the oppressive identities some, fall on to the recourse of identity politics (in relation to that specific identity) or politicisation of identities believing that political emancipation will liberate from humiliating suppressions. Some neither do have faith in critically defining identity attributes or identity differences, but augment identity in idealistic terms. Such arguments describe desire for liberation from defining identity attributes both as a desire for universalism or metaphysical emancipation. But in all such situations unthinking and indiscriminate acceptance of either imported or the domestic identity elements needs to be avoided. Enforced identity ascription by the society or attempts at self-identification or personal identification all affect identity formation activities.

Identity formation or individuation of identity claims continue to happen for varied reasons. Identity formation/individuation is the development of the distinct personality of an individual based on set of accepted identities. Identity formation moments thus signify the resolution of identity conflicts and attaining of what psychologists’ regard as stable identity – ‘where inner personality traits and outer personality traits are one and the same’ or in other words public image and private image co-ordinate too well. Sudhir Kakar has recognized acquisition of identity stability as an important step towards attaining “psychological maturity” (119) or “Healthy adulthood” (119) best expressed in “the ability to tolerate anxiety without being crippled” (119). Kakar mentions Freud’s meaning of ‘psychological maturity’ thus: “where id was, there shall ego be” or “to make the unconscious, conscious”
Identity stability thus formed at times may be against the expectations of the societal norms but essentially coincides well with the individual’s earnest desire to live life as per his/her personal choice. Independent evolving of an identity of personal choice should always be guided by one’s voice of reason or enlightened consciousness. Not all are capable of enlightened awareness to resolve identity conflicts raging within and attain easy resolution of the same. Unresolved identity confusions in fact have become a grave sociological problem in modern globalised world characterised by transnational cultural confrontations and the related ambience of dualities/multiplicities. Loss of identity, experiences of rootlessness and alienation signifying of crisis are perceived everywhere in modern society. Psychologists always stress the importance of individuals with unified self or stable identity for the society. Unified self is said to be of great service to the society for it symbolises a positive self with feelings of his/her own personal value or worth. Axel Honneth as sourced in the essay by Renault describes the value of stable identity as something that establishes “the positive relation with the self” (109). He has described stable identity as the very basis of any ethical and moral normalcy. An individual without a positive image of himself, will neither be able to give his life a good form nor imbue moral values in his action towards others. Honneth (109) further claims that it is only through successful socialization that an individual can manage to construct a positive self-image (or stable identity) and overcome the sense of importance of his own existence. It is against the background of the varied nuances related to identity and the conflict and crisis it precipitates the identity formulation or individuation of identity as it is expressed by the personas in the fiction of S.L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi is studied. Therefore, the first chapter discusses the intricacies of cross-cultural conflicts characteristic of India and the
primacy of identity debates in the present society. This chapter also introduces both S. L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi and their novels selected for study. The second chapter makes a detailed analysis of the concept of identity and its varied intricacies and the discussion in this chapter indeed has promoted the understanding of the identity conflicts and the resultant crisis in the select fiction under scrutiny.

Both S. L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi’s personas are affected by dualities of varied kinds that characterises the pluricultural context of India and also by fundamental dichotomies of nature/culture, ideal/real, impulse/reason, individual/community so on and so forth. In some novels of Joshi, the social ambience extends to the American society as well. Or in other words their writings express dialogue of highly complex kind carried on between the different identities the individuals partake from the multi-cultural society in which they live and the identity preferences of the ‘self’. Further the characters of both the writers are vulnerable for experiences of identity conflict mainly because they are all highly sensible and sensitive beings with an ever alert conscience and inquiring mind. Along with personal liability for identity conflicts, difference between personal faith and societal ways; between natural impulses and cultural norms generate clashes. All the four translated novels of S. L. Bhyrappa picked up for study are set exclusively in India. It is the immediate post independent Indian society which is also a transitional society which serves as the background and also the causative of identity conflict in Bhyrappa’s characters. In the novels of Arun Joshi it is the modern multicultural context of post-independent India and the cosmopolitan pluricultural society of America that serve as background and also are the inducers of identity conflicts. The novels of both the writers are set against the modern society with labyrinths of life modes mainly privileging attainment of honour,
power, riches, fame than any virtues traditional wisdom favoured. Joshi’s men being more contemporaneous belong to the metropolitan ambience of India and America and therefore are beguiled by all modern day problems related to industrialisation, urbanization, intergenerational tensions, economic pressures, rising market economy and cross cultural dilemmas. Majority of them belong to the Indian diaspora in America except for Ratan Rathor of *The Apprentice*, all others move between India and America. Loss of identities and experiences of rootlessness resulting in alienation and isolation are to be perceived everywhere in such a context and the same is expressed by Joshi’s men.

Interestingly it is the most successful; education wise, career/profession wise and wealth wise, wisdom wise who are affected the most by identity conflicts in both Joshi and Bhyrappa’s fiction. Particularly in Joshi it’s the affluent, the luxurious, the most successful and the overfed who feel the identity angst, a clear indication that the real happiness of man lies not in material success but elsewhere. A fine proof of the acute sensitivity of Joshi’s men is noticed in the fact that amidst all worldly successes his men are vulnerable to existential angst. Having reached the extreme of accomplishments which men have often craved for they suffer from purposelessness and meaningfulness. Thus the alienation causatives in Joshi’s men are not just the modern sociological and psychological conditions but also the existential haunting man since time immemorial. Or in other words feelings of social alienation and the related condition of isolation are followed up with self-alienation that generates feeling of nihilism in Joshi’s men. Even Bhyrappa’s men suffer from existential angst and the situation is reciprocal. That is identity dilemmas cause existential angst and the tendency for existential feeling makes the social identities meaningless. It means that there is always a mutual give and take relationship
between social and existential meanings. For the same reason the identity dilemmas represented in their novels impress as too grave and serious as if questioning the very meaning of human existence all the while contesting social identities. Thus identity conflicts in both Joshi and Bhyrappa’s fiction have sources both in social issues and in existential meanings of life. Human loneliness which has various manifestations in the form of powerlessness, meaninglessness, formlessness, cultural estrangement, social isolation and self-estrangement etc. are analysed by both the writers with great alacrity. Bhyrappa always believes in the solitary nature of all humans. In one of his novels *Nirakarana* he describes his faith thus: “Man is a creature of solitude rather than community, that his authentic existence is secured in relation to himself and not in essential with others”.

Bhyrappa and Joshi’s men are all highly sensitive beings with an ever alert conscience and hence we always find them struggling to escape from one or the other of the identity; of both personal and social, which they carry more or less like an “an endeared burden” (270) to use the words of TRS Sharma. None of the characters live social identities obliviously as majority of the people often do as they all are highly sensitive and become acutely conscious of any dualities and ambiguities if any. Their alert conscience keeps interfering and makes them the prey to the intricacies of Identity conflict. Hence both Joshi and Bhyrappa’s personas do express a highly convoluted consciousness disturbed by lack of tranquility and peace of mind. Especially Joshi’s men impress us as suffering more for existential reasons and less for socio-cultural reasons. The study proves that the existential angst in Joshi’s is very much rooted in the social anomalies generated by the modern materialistic technocratic society. Bhyrappa’s men do suffer from acute existential angst by the irregularities of the modern society. Three of the novels of Joshi namely
The Apprentice, The City and The River and The Last Labyrinth are set in India and two novels The Strange Case of Billy Biswas and The Foreigner are set both in America and India. In the former three novels the identity intricacies particular to India serve the background for action, in the latter two the identity niceties of both India and America influence the characters. On briefing the varied reasons why Joshi and Bhyrappa’s men suffer identity conflicts, the causatives of identity conflict become clear. Interestingly the conflict ridden men proceed to resolve the conflicts equipped with sensitive conscience and enlightened stance.

The hero of the novel The Foreigner is Sindi Oberoi and he inherits mixed cultural identity. He is a child born of mixed parentage; to an English woman and a Kenyan Indian Father. Though he had the opportunity for dwelling in multicultural ambience he neither is able to attain cosmopolitan identity nor develop capacity for universal principles of morality. Instead he is restless and unhappy all the time tormented by feelings of absurdity and meaninglessness. Both his orphaned state on the one hand and his cosmopolitan identity significant of cultural un-rootedness on the other are indeed the source of his anguish. He often relates his feeling of anguish to his uprooted state and to his sense of non-belongingness embroiled in the nature of his birth and upbringing. He is as well humiliated by the racist practices of the American society due to his Kenyan Indian identity. Thus Billy’s acute feeling of meaninglessness about his very existence is traced mainly to his social identity of being an orphan and a man of inferior racial identity; a Kenyan Indian. His hybrid identity doesn’t help him to escape his inferior social identity nor protects him from the related social shame. His British lineage is overlooked and his Kenyan and Indian self are foregrounded as his identities. Then there is the ingrained feeling of alienation from which Sindi suffers again due to his hybrid identity and the related
sense of cultural unrootedness. His apathy towards excess material and commercial impulses of the modern world adds to his anguish. His inner turmoil is increased on witnessing the rampant exploitation, corruption and denial of rights in the independent India. The demoralizing ambience of Khemka’s Factory torments his soul. He observes lot exploitation of the workers and the relation between Khemka and his workers is nothing better to that of a master–slave relation. While Khemka earned thirty thousand per day the workers are paid only three rupees per day. The employees looked upon Khemka with “the mortal dread” (54). Thus both America and India only intensifies Billy’s angst and his sense of being a foreigner everywhere is expressive of his identity crisis. But when the Khemka’s factory suffers lockout, Sindhi’s attention shifts from his preoccupation with his own suffering to the suffering of others. He realizes the joy of thinking of the wellbeing of the others than pathetically being obsessed with the needs of the self alone. It is the pleading of a worker by name Muthu that awakens Sindi to a meaningful existence. His words “detachment lies in actually getting involved” (239), clicks and Sindi decides to channelise his energy and experience to revive Khemka’s factory for the sake of the poverty ridden miserable workers. His soul and spirit is energised by the virtue of unselfish service, a message which he derives from realizing the true meaning of ‘renunciation’ propounded in the philosophy of the Bagawad Gita.

The novel *The Last Labyrinth* concentrates on the identity conflicts suffered by the character Som Bhaskar. The entire novel spreads between two cities; Bombay and Benares, which is in itself symbolic. Som Bhaskar commutes between the two cities though for the purpose of business, yet it symbolises his ever shifting consciousness between two realities of life. Bombay and Benares represent two extreme dualities Som Bhaskar is preoccupied with, pathetically failing to confine to
any one of the reality or strike an amalgamation between the two. Benares by virtue of its identity as the spiritual capital of India sensitises Som to the experiences of spirituality and Bombay represents the material greed and mundane pursuits of Som. Caught in between two entirely different meanings of life, inept to strike a balance between the two he vacillates confused. He wallows in duality; he can think cynically of money as “dirt and whore” but at the same time is haunted by an insatiable desire for more and more wealth. Bi-cultural identity; that of India and America, cause the angst of cultural unrootedness in Som. He owes to America his capacity for doubt and cynicism and his cravings for material rewards and equipped thus he no longer can carry the baggage of his Indian culture with all its traditional and mystical leanings with a sense of blind faith. Though Leila attributes his feeling of alienation to his Brahmin roots, the social setup and mystical nuances particular to India, Som rejects the explanation. He suffers from lack of faith in god and the same is expressed thus in his call for help from Anuradha thus: “Anuradha, listen. Listen to me wherever you are. Is there a God where you are? Have you met Him? Does He have a face? Does He speak? Does He hear? Does He understand the language that we speak?” (222-223) His boredom is something born of his affluence and material greed and his purposelessness in life give him the feeling of being worn out and weary. He suffers from lack of spiritual faith and he acutely feels this void while in Benares than in Bombay or in America. Thus Benares that epitomises spiritual ethos of India sensitises him to the spiritual lacuna within him. He confides to Anuradha “There is something in front of me and I cannot see it” (107). Som’s plight is the plight of the man of contemporary times in whom faith in reason and science vie with traditional mystical modes of thinking that denies tangible experience. Like Sindi he is unable to resolve his identity conflict for until the end
he is unable to choose one at the cost of other and is pushed to the brink of suicide only to be saved in the nick of time by his virtuous wife Geetha.

The novel *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* has Billy Biswas as the central character. The identity conflict Billy suffers is judgmental not of the social evils of any particular nation but of the very civilization itself. Throughout the novel Billy is strongly ordained to hate the civilized world for its sham and smugness. Through the character of Billy, the novel parodies the nature of progress and development humanity has attained represented by America. He notices how racism was still a part of USA in spite of its high claims of individual freedom and human rights. Billy also protests the counterfeit world of the upper class and their propensity for hypocrisy and smugness. Like all other Joshi’s heroes Billy too perceives modern society to nothing more than “the making and spending of the money” (96) and as something completely lacking in vibrancy or spontaneity. A life of the kind inspires boredom in Billy and causes existential angst and he means it in his confession to Tuula thus: “We are swiftly losing what is known as one’s grip on life” (78). He protests the modern civilized world and its achievements through certain decisions he takes. He retreats away from the hullabaloo of the modern material society into the anonymity of a tribal community in the remote wilderness of India and there he even marries a tribal girl, Bilasia. Billy’s retreat signifies both his revulsion at the achievements of civilization and his respect for the life of intuition and natural impulses. The return to the tribe to Billy is a return to forthrightness, honesty and integrity something disregarded in the modern civilised world given to pursuit of false values and mammon worship. Interestingly Billy finds the primitive man with basic virtues still intact more alluring than the civilized people of modern society. Personally he identifies with the past and its virtues but has to live in the present
accepting its ways and this dichotomy bothers him a lot. Billy’s love of past again is authenticated in his attraction for the sculptures of Konark and the Banjo drums. Billy’s union with the tribes typifying nature is induced by his desire to save his soul and spirit from complete moral degradation. Hence he says “I had greater responsibilities towards my soul in uniting it with nature” (189).

The novel *The Apprentice* is an attack upon the post-independence decadence seen in India. Ratan is the central character of this novel who has succumbed to the false values of the time. Indian independence though aimed to transform India into a ‘Ramarajya’, a literal utopia but nothing of the kind was achieved after independence. Instead utter poverty and rampant corruption prevailed everywhere in the free India. It is against this ambience that the identity torments of Ratan take its meaning and impression. Ratan’s childhood was caught between two different viewpoints; that of his father and mother. Whilst his father cared little for money and material comforts, mother advised that money was the heart and soul of happiness in life. As he grew up he had noticed very little of his father’s idealism prevailed in independent India and what his mother said of money and power was very much true. He had realised that all forms of idealisms were thwarted by the exploitative forces of the society. His experience had proved that the majority of the humanity is selfish and power greedy. So Ratan stifles the voice of his father and lives life as per the dictates of his mother and he is blessed with successes. He has every comfort in life; money, status, security, denied to his parents. All these comforts he earns less by virtue and more by corrupt practices. But amidst all his material comforts Ratan is unhappy. His ever alert nagging conscience denies him respite in spite of all his material progress. The dualities of his life haunt him. On the one hand he strives at material gains and on the other he suffers from pangs of
regret. Joshi describes the post-independence Indian context as “a display of greed before which the plundering of Ghaznavi paled” (59). Ratan echoes Joshi’s angst and disappointment in his monologue thus: “Freedom. Freedom. What is freedom but a word, my friend? Freedom of men, of nation. No more than a word. We thought we were free. What we had, in fact, was new slavery. Yes, a New Slavery with new masters....” (63). Ratan seriously regrets his vices when his close friend and childhood saviour is victimized by his misdeed. As an expiation for his sin he chooses to sit outside the temple on its stairs and wipe the shoes of devotees either in the morning or evening while going to or coming from office, even as his expensive car is parked outside. His decision to wipe the shoes of people who went in and out of the temple is significant of Ratan’s humility; a sign of his subdued ego; a suppression of self-aggrandisement.

The action in novel The City and the River happens in an unknown unnamed city but the ambience of the city is typical of any or all modern cosmopolitan cities the world over. The happenings in the city are described as significant of the very history of mankind or the destiny of man world over. Joshi’s last novel The City and the River is judgmental and makes a culminative observation of human destiny as repeated cycle of regeneration and degeneration. In all other earlier novels, the plight of individuals had been enacted against the background of corrupt, cosmopolitan society. But in The City and the River the humanity itself is focused for judgment and this is suggested in the technique of attributing anonymity to both the locale of action and the characters within. The novel The City and the River discusses through a fantastic story the human vulnerability for power and the privileges that go with it. The most heinous of the crimes are committed by the power and position greedy men. Varied modes of oppressions and suppressions are
perpetrated by the powerful on the weak. The novel explicates the same signifying the difficulty of realising the egalitarian ideals. As a political novel though it seems to reflect upon the political reality of India of post-colonial times it mainly aims to capture a historical reality of all times and all nations. The distinct experiences of exploitative politics are presented as a perennial reality of human society of all times. Hence one of the characters in *The City* describes human history as a “cyclic repetition of periodic power gain and disintegration, an endless repetition”. The story of the novel is the history of “the psychic march of humanity” (24), which is in cyclic motion; “a new city is reborn like the phoenix on the ruins of the old” (24) Hence Usha Bande says, “the story ends where it begins and begins where it ends” (259). A message of the kind ultimately prophesies of the incapacity of the humanity for sustained nobility of whatsoever kind. The Brick community representing the upper class is infested with passivity in the face of evil propensities of the Grandmaster. The Mud people representing the poorer class are attributed with greater virtues and are active in resisting the Grandmaster. They live in close proximity with nature and follow simple living and are free from greed and thus are capable of stable identity. They have immense faith in Nature and so lead a life of self-sufficiency. Neither do they identify with power nor with material comforts, with disposition for simple living they fear nobody and hence are capable of forthrightness. *The city and the River* purport an interesting authorial ideology expressed by the Great Yogeshwar who typifies God or a savior. The Great Yogeshwar believes that human history is an endless cycle of periodic disintegration and regeneration. He knows the means to break the cycle and change the nemesis of the city. The disintegration can be arrested if humanity is capable of suppressing “egoism, selfishness, stupidity” (263) says Yogeshwar. Capacity for Purity can be
attained only through sacrifice which in turn can stop the cycle of disintegration but inability to sacrifice by humans precipitates all other failures. Hence human destiny is thought of as a cycle thus: “On the ruins of the city, as always happens, a new city has arisen. In the city of the future as well, the character types remain unchanged. The men have other names but the forces they embody remain unchanged” (262).

Bhyrappa’s novels exemplifies in various ways Taine’s view “Man, Milieu and the Moment” (Shanthakumari 9). Varied socio-cultural issues and the impact of the same on individuals’ personal beliefs is often his favorite forte of analysis. As a writer with a philosopher’s sensibility Bhyrappa he is too well aware of the essentials of human nature, its impulsive desires. Hence he approaches human identity problems against the background of both the socio-cultural intricacies and the fundamentals of human nature. This gives his writings a cosmopolitan breadth and appeals beyond transnational limits. All of Bhyrappa’s men belong to the modern post-independent Indian society, where binaries of opposing nature; east-west, oriental-occidental, tradition-modernity, regional-national, marga-desi, multi-linguistic and north-south discrepancies etc. galore causing identity confusions of varied kinds in individuals. Ever caught amidst the binaries the personas of Bhyrappa’s fiction do express a highly intricate consciousness suffering from lack of quietude and peace of mind. The inherited traditional roots always conflict with the changing socio-cultural practices causing lot of stress and strain in day to day experiences. Though capacity of Indian culture to amalgamate exotic cultural elements is much appreciated at larger societal level, at the level of individuals’ lot of psychic upheavals due to dichotomous ambience is experienced. Loss of identity, experiences of rootlessness resulting in alienation and isolation are perceived everywhere in modern society.


_Tantu_ is magnum opus novel of S. L. Bhyrappa which makes a sweeping analysis of the intricacies of the post-Independence Indian society; with neo-colonial vulnerabilities, devaluation, corruption, bribery, selfish politics that materialized the context of emergency in a democratic nation. B. K. Ravindra, is the Resident Editor of the Bangalore edition of _The Tribune_. He is a staunch idealist journalist with a strong faith in traditional virtues of his country in all walks of life. He has strong faith in journalism ethics and tries to uphold the editorial values of truth, accuracy, impartiality, accountability, public interest and independence in his editorials. Talwar, chief editor of Delhi edition of _The Tribune_ is also an idealist editor with intense faith in media ethics. But the corrupt ambience of the post-independent India is not conducive to the smooth functioning of idealists like Talwar and Ravindra. Both have abundance of conviction and stamina to retain intact their faith in the rout of changing values and transformations. But they have to maintain the same by suffering serious personal and professional mishaps. The immorality rampant in the society subjects them to acute moments of identity conflicts precipitating crisis in them. Ravindra, Talwar, Honnatti and Anaiah are all men of high sensitivity and integrity and are subjected to identity conflicts of very serious kind with imminence of crisis at hand all the time. Forces of ill-virtues rampant everywhere, in all walks of life undermine their strong faith in ideals and attempt to destabilize and demoralize them. Kanti’s mammon worship and love of material luxuries conflicts with Ravindra’s faith in the ideal of simple living. The difference in their world views opens up a wide chasm between them. Ravindra suffers lot of setbacks to his principles in spite of his capacity for identity stability. He had tremendous faith in the value education and had seen no virtue in the modern modes of education that neglected value inculcation in students. Ravindra in principle had always opposed
capitation practices in education and described it as “acquisition of knowledge that had no human value” and students who paid heavily for education could not be persuaded to “use the knowledge they had gained to benefit society” (528). But Ravindra had to compromise his faith to help his son study Engineering. Ravindra is left depressed in the face of his principles dwindling in his very personal life. Such failures cause intense feelings of anguish and alienation in Ravindra, acute signs of identity crisis. Talwar and Ravindra had always been idealist journalists believing in value journalism. But the demoralizing ambience of utter chaos and dishonesty of post Independent India resist their faith to follow ethics in journalism. Both Talwar, an idealist journalist and Ravindra’s protest the corruption and loss of editorial freedom in free India by starting a newspaper called Fact dedicated to features on subjects such as the fundamental rights of citizens, democracy, social justice and so on. But Talwar’s attempt is thwarted by his very wife and when his very wife opposes his attempt he is deterred. The doctor had advised him to give up his journalistic activity to save his family. By the suggestion of the doctor Talwar had been gripped by a moral dilemma as nobody understood his commitment. He had thought “over the years he had devoted himself to his family, wife and children, but now that he was older, he felt he had to act according to his conscience, otherwise life would have no meaning” (1112). He decides “No matter how much she rails, when it is the question of morals, I act according to my conscience” (941). The ambiguities of his life had made him suffer from existential angst of meaninglessness. He had thought,

What is life? What is family? What does the relationship between a husband and wife mean? He knew the answers Indian metaphysics offered - that
relationship is related to Maya or illusion and are temporary and transient. ‘It could be Maya, but you still have to live through these things.’ (1113).

Ravindra too thinks like Talwar to suppress existential angst “I’m going to be fifty in the not too distant future. If I don’t spend at least the next ten to fifteen years sacrificing my own material wealth in the fight for freedom for expression my life will be meaningless” (947). But later Honnatti’s affair with his wife Kanti gives a serious jolt to Ravindra’s moral conviction. It becomes the most demoralizing event that shook his very faith in virtuous life. The effect of this event on Ravindra’s morale is described thus:

It had completely shattered Ravindra’s ethical and moral beliefs. His very faith in the goodness of human nature had collapsed, completely undermining his interest in life. There didn’t seem to be any point in starting a new school to shape the characters of future citizens. Life was just about getting and spending money and developing one’s animal instincts - power and wealth, name and fame, sexual indulgence - that was all there. Any struggles were fought with purely with these aims in mind. Ravindra didn’t see any point in trusting or respecting anyone (1000).

He felt totally empty- going back to Vidyashala, or starting a new school, all looked meaningless for him. “He couldn’t escape the feeling that things were the same no matter where he lived or went or what he avoided” (998). In his hellish state of despondency, he feels no place to go and no human to correspond with “I must go home. Home? But where is my home?” (1001). Ravindra in all demoralizing moments had tried to maintain the stability of identity and had recuperated fast to spearhead his ideals in new forms. But Honnatti’s behavior
demoralizes him so acutely that he is pushed into a hellish state of despondency. In his desperation symbolic of existential angst, he thinks thus:

He experienced the same old feelings of emptiness. He went to the lodge and lay down for a while and came to the realization that it was his conscience that was making him feel so completely purposeless, a state that was mirrored by the whole of the society, indeed by the whole nation. Anyone who believed that they had managed to fill this nihilistic emptiness was living in a fool’s paradise - it was nothing but an illusion. Ravindra concluded that all he could do was to live with this existential reality (1000).

Annaiah like Ravindra is an idealist but in the field of education. He has tremendous faith in traditional mode of education and felt that modern education did not make youths self-reliant. To realize his ideals of true education he had started his dream school Vivekananda Vidyashala at Halakere. Since he believed “teacher is the school and the school is the extension of the teacher” (243) he hired teachers who are full of idealism, enthusiasm and devotion to teach in his school. Many of the teachers in Annaiah’s school believed “life had no meaning unless there was a goal to strive for” (97) and did pursue their goal by forever remaining bachelors or following celibacy The school mainly tried to put into practice the principles of Gandhi; an education institution should be economically self-reliant and should not depend on government. But due to the petty politics of certain vested interests Annaiah and his ideal teachers have to make many compromises and give up all their ideals one by one. The purpose of shaping at least a few honest citizens had nosedived caught in the quagmire of immoralities. All teachers started feeling “a nagging feeling of emptiness” (750) a sign of identity crisis. The developments
affected the teachers immensely as it had undermined their entire belief system and they had all lost sense of purpose and direction in life. Annaiah describes the changed public morality in post–independent India thus: “Heroism is associated with corrupt officials and parents rush in to marry their daughters to them and allegations against corrupt people are converted into publicity stints.” (765) He is infused with feelings of emptiness but he does not allow the feeling to erode his peace of mind or zest for life. Annaiah felt highly embarrassed at the way the school was heading and at all the recent changes. He is pushed to inactivity and suffers from ineptness and inefficiency in the general disarray of corrupt ambience. Annaiah and all the ideal teachers leave their dream school and join Honnatti’s school for the handicapped to pursue their ideals.

Hemanth Honnatti, is an engineer by profession but has tremendous love for music and so resigns his lucrative job to pursue music full time. Music to Honnatti was a spiritual experience. As a man of science he had no faith in God of which he tells - “I developed an intellectual and scientific framework, which was enough to shut out God” (195). But while engrossed in music he had felt “a divine power asserted itself” (195). His identity conflict with regard to his faith in god he had resolved through his ardent love for music. Honnatti under the influence of Kanti desires for name and fame in the world of music though he basically believed “fame in the art world should be attained purely on the grounds of merit, even without any publicity...An artist had to build up a following by word of mouth, because seeking publicity by any other means compromised his artistic integrity” (632). But when Kanti with her strong business acumen plans to sponsor him to gain national and international recognition using publicity gimmicks and popular media, he doesn’t stop her. Thus Honnatti falls prey to duality, signifying identity confusion
in him. The other moral imbroglio of Honnatti’s life is his affair with Ravindra’s wife Kanti. He had been seduced by Kanti and he though sincerely regrets his affair with her yet is not able to come out of it. In Benares, on the banks of river Ganga and in the vicinity of Harishchandra Ghat - “a famous cremation spot where all Hindu’s wants to get cremated after death” (783) Honnatti is inspired to regret his sinful affair with Kanti sincerely. At the Harishchandra Ghat Honnatti is profoundly affected “it was as if the story of Harishchandra had been waiting to burst into his consciousness. . .. His mind was on fire” (784). He feels inspired by Harishchandra and Chandramathi’s incredible strength; his total devotion to truth and her undying chastity inspires him to give up his relation with Kanti once for all. Honnatti even after the end of his relation with Kanti is unable to suppress his sense of sin. He goes on a pilgrimage to Haridwara, Badari and Mathura. Throughout his journey he contemplates on human relationships and issues of papa/punya (sin and virtue) bother him. At Badari he had felt it is “a place of tremendous spiritual power where one could cleanse one’s mind”. Honnatti’s faith in music as a spiritual experience is also shaken and he vacillates between faith and unfaith as to the real virtue of music. He abandons his love for music on realizing that all music seemed to do was “plunge him into emotionally turbulent waters” (978). He decides to “do anything other than teach music” (979). He is tormented by Hindu traditional belief of Satyasya satya - which had referred to the idea of “inescapable past sins”. Unable to overcome his guilty conscience he suffers thus: “is there no atonement and punishment for a sinner? Is there no escape? He felt he had tried everything, had wandered all holy places- even playing music couldn’t rid him of his feelings of guilt and betrayal”. In his search for salvation Honnatti is guided by the words of Jayaprakash Narayan - a man of deep morals. Jayaprakash’s words that as long as
Honnatti atoned for his sin and never committed the mistake again, he was free from guilt soothes him. To give meaning to his life Jayaprakash asks Honnatti to start a school for handicapped- the most marginalized of the people who did lead a demeaning life by begging. Honnatti verbatim follows the suggestions of Jayaprakash Narayan and is freed from identity conflicts. He feels that the true meaning of life was best expressed in selfless service which Annaiah and the self-sacrificing teachers had followed.

*Crossing over* by S. L. Bhyrappa mainly addresses the emerging complications in caste practices in the immediate aftermath of Indian independence. The novel represents indeed with historic authenticity the varied intricacies of caste consciousness in individuals and its influence on human relationship. Modernist perceptions and the capacity for liberal thinking after independence had indeed inspired lot of changes in caste faith inducing identity conflicts and confusions of different kinds. Identity conflicts inspired by the transformations in caste practices are mainly studied in the character of Venkataramanayya and his daughter Satyabhama. Venkataramanayya is a traditionalist, a conservative with immense faith in the caste practice and he finds it very difficult to digest the transformation evinced around in the matter. His daughter Satyabhama’s decision to marry a Shudra sends shockwave through him. He is happy that the marriage is thwarted but with time his daughter’s rationalising on caste infuses identity confusion in him. Religion and scriptures had always been his source of faith in caste practices. The transformation in the matter had meant denial of God himself and his daughter’s words “The author of the Bhagavat Geetha was a man and not a God” (32) haunts him. Her words “It’s our own conscience which tells us the truth. Our experience shows us the right path. These ancient traditions obscure what our conscience tells
us and hide the validity of our own experience”, (113) affects him most. He is particularly perturbed by her statement “It’s our own conscience which tells us the truth. Customs and traditions obscure it” (113). Satya’s words sensitizes him a lot and his conscience starts perceiving the caste experiences in a different light. Faith and unfaith jostles in his consciousness and the confusion affects his behavior. He behaves in a weird way; symbolic of his inner confusion and turmoil. The duality of traditional wisdom and its modern counterparts in the matter confuses him. Like his daughter Satyabhama he couldn’t stabilize his identity by anchoring to any one of the duality with conviction. Caught in the turmoil of doubts he denounces God thus: “this thing is stone nothing but stone. Why worship it?” (155) and gives up priesthood. Stops wearing the sacred thread for he felt “it’s just a few yawns of spun cotton” (241). He vacillates between reality and fantasy. His sense of justice is in fact awakened in consultation of his conscience. His behavior though is judged by people as insane yet his acts expresses logic and spirit of equality. He initiates his daughter to Brahminhood; a gesture expressive of gender equality and dreams marrying Matangi, the Dalit woman with whom he had a secret affair. But all these acts he performs when people believed him to have gone mad and thus his acts are not heeded seriously. While he is thus struggling to understand and compromise with the changes he is humiliated publicly by a Dalit boy in a very mean way and he commits suicide in shame. Unequipped either by modernist perceptions or education like Satyabhama, Venkataramanayya fails to rationalize the caste related changes and suffers from acute sense of identity conflict. Satyabhama interprets the social identity of caste in a highly personal way. She employs reason and conscience to the whole affair and realises the injustices underlying the matter. Her personal identity in the matter she imposes with conviction and she impresses us as the very epitome
of identity stability for the same reason. She rejects caste practices as adharma and expresses a strong desire to transform society. She explains her father “I haven’t been influenced by anyone else’s views. I read for myself and think. I act according to my convictions” (40). Satya’s opposition of caste related creed also stems from her faith in democracy. As a part of her reforming activity she proposes marriage to a Shudra boy but fails to marry him because he lacks the will power to resist the opposition of his parents. She who opposes ritualism of all kind performs fire ritual regularly and this act is interpreted as symbolic of identity conflict in Satyabhama. But Satya’s interpretation indeed is logical and is proof enough of her capacity for identity stability. In the world that reveled in falsehood Satya imagines fire as symbolizing ‘the truths manifest’. To keep the fire burning for her signified keeping intact the truth she had understood about caste. She lives like a Shudra woman and initiates a Dalit girl into Brahminhood and even thinks of marrying a Dalit boy. She tries to explain the meaning of Brahmin as it was conceived in the time of Vedas and Upanishads before it took on caste meaning. But Satya is unable to convince Mohandasa, that use of violence to attain equality is ineffectual and simply watches him perpetrate violence by blasting the village reservoir. She interprets his impatience thus: “She considered the matter. It was true that there had been injustice: but it had to be eradicated gradually. Customs, beliefs, rituals which had come down through many millennia could hardly be changed within ten or fifteen years” (412). Throughout Satya is rigid in her faith and committed to the cause of destroying caste discrimination. She has indeed attained stability of identity in this matter and literally has no confusions. Satya is ready for self- sacrifice, self-mortification to prove her point but people lacked singular opinion and the varied reactionary stances converged nowhere to destroy caste faith. In the face of failure to
prove her view, she begs god to help the misguided people. Her last words “Dhiyo ya nah Prachodayat”- ‘god help us to improve our intellect and guide it towards what is right’, suggests the long route that lay ahead to suppress caste faith in India.

The novel The Uprooted discusses the way socio-cultural transformation affects the individuals mainly because of the ambience of dualities/multiplicities it generates. To choose between things of past (tradition) and the new (modernity) often confuses individuals especially in contexts where both do co-exist. In circumstances where neither the new values are ascertained completely nor that of the old are yet indispensable, the conflicts are more pronounced. In all such moments of skirmishes the capacity for strong conviction and rationalizing skills becomes the saving grace to avoid identity conflicts. The same is proved in the character of Srinivasa Shrotri and Katyayini in the novel The Uprooted.

Srinivasa Shrotri’s is a traditionalist, a firm believer in the traditional wisdom of the country. His faith in traditional wisdom has evolved by his profound learning in Vedic lore and science for nearly thirty years. He is highly virtuous and his scholarly pursuits have given him “incredible self-control” (7) and had fetched him the name “a Rishi, a sage” (303). Shrotri is an avid follower of ‘Dharma’ and he lived life according to Sanatana Dharma (the Ancient Moral Law). Srinivasa Shrotri is a firm believer in the nobility of the Shrotri lineage. The person to be worst affected by his penchant for family honour and purity is his daughter-in-law Katyayini. “To maintain the honor of his family tree unsullied” (39) is his chief concern. But the accidental discovery of a letter asserting that he was not a Shrotri family member shocks him. The revelation generates intense identity conflict and how he behaves is a proof of his capacity for identity stability. He proves his
capacity for identity stability for he follows the dictates of tradition in the most testing moment of his life without any hesitation. He gives away all the privileges he hitherto enjoyed as a Shrotri family member and goes away to Haridwar to become a Sanyasi. Shrotri though successfully avoids identity conflict personally, he is the source of acute identity conflict in his daughter-in-law Katyayini. She is a widow and when an offer to remarry comes her way she is confused. Caught in-between the notions of tradition and their counterparts in modern parlance, she suffers from acute identity confusions. Liberal thinking inspired by her education though justify the naturalness of her desire to remarry, traditional ideas on the purpose of marriage deters her from accepting the marriage proposal easily. Tradition-modernity duality, culture-nature dichotomy assails her and her lack of conviction in the matter makes her an easy prey to the traditional impositions of Shrotri. When she seeks Shrotri’s blessing for remarriage he opposes her decision strongly by describing her act as adharma, something not allowed as per traditional meaning and purpose of marriage. Though she successfully resists Shrotri’s attempts to stop her remarrying by her modern perceptions of a widow’s rights for a householders’ life, she fails to remain consistent in her thoughts when other personal disasters affect her. When she is left issueless from her second marriage she fails to convince Shrotri of the rights of her motherhood to claim her son Cheeni. Personal disasters scare her into believing that they were the repercussions of her sin; of remarrying flouting the norms of tradition. She is haunted by her own fears which she is unable to rationalize well in time to save herself. In contrast to Katyayini we have Shrotri who is well aware of both traditional notions and their corresponding modern ideas but his faith is too strong in the virtues of traditional norms and acting by the same he is literally not affected by identity conflicts at all. Katyayini’s husband Raja Rao too has full faith in modern
notions and is free from identity conflicts. With Katyayini it is not so, she lacks will power to hold on to her beliefs strongly when it is needed most, vacillates and becomes an abject victim of identity confusions. Personal disasters deter her further from holding on to any particular faith and she falls prey to her own doubts. Though she had been inspired by the rationale of modernity, she lacks the conviction born of deep faith. The modernity rationale she has picked up from her education and society has not yet been converted into a strong faith in her. She starts assessing herself in traditional terms of ‘papa-punya’ (sin and spiritual merit). She expresses her confusion thus: “Oh, God, why have you tied up my life with such hopeless knots that defy my understanding? What is the point of all this anyway?” (212). Her mental turmoil affects her physical health and she takes to bed and finally dies. She becomes an exemplar of the ill-effects of acute identity conflicts on an individual’s psyche. In Shrotri and Katyayini we have two different reactions to the context of identity conflict. Shrotri is capable of identity stability and he in all adverse moments of his life sticks to his faith and is consistent in his behavior. But Katyayini succumbs to identity conflict and the crisis is so acute that only death can put an end to her turmoil.

The novel The Witness has Manjaiah who is quite opposite to the character of Parameshwariah in terms of the identities he recognizes with. Manjaiah believes in the individual right to sexuality and therefore least cares for the submissive norms of the society. So he lives a life of sexual promiscuity without any scruples. In fact, he prides in his libidinal potentials and epitomizes the mythological character of Manmatha—the god of sensuality and carnal pleasures. He has affair with all sundry and all proprieties ordained by the strictures of society in the matter is mercilessly flouted by him. His marriage with Savitri, breaks mainly due to his life of sexual
profligacy. He interprets his affair with women as an attempt to give what women wants. One of his woman means the same thus: “This man has got a special power over women. I am sure of it. He gets them running after him like bitches in heat” (38). Manjaiah derives his identity from this faith that sexual desire is the most basic and fundamental of the desires and not to satiate oneself to the fullest in the matter is a grave wrong. He embarks on sexual relation with all sundry; the respectable and the less reputed, the young and the old unscrupulously. As per the normative parlance of any society his libidinal excesses remind us of a ‘sexual maniac’. Quite contrary to Manjaiah, Parameshwariah derives his identity by his tremendous faith in moral uprightness. To always tell the truth is the chief principle of his life. They both are exemplars of identity stability in their respective faith and belief. But Sarojakshi plays a spoil sport in the life of Manjaiah. Of all the women Manjaiah finds Sarojakshi very endearing and to have her all for himself is his chief motive. His ego is immensely hurt when she resists his sexual advances and her resistance makes him all the more obsessive of her. He suffers from acute feeling of meaninglessness in life without her and is puzzled by his lack of sex-drive there afterwards. He feels “After all, sex or no sex, he still found himself having to go and see her” (178). He had always prided in his capacity to lure women and his failure with Sarojakshi affects him immensely. After this confrontation with Sarojakshi he suffers from acute impotency symbolic of his threatened psyche (identity). He vacillates between thoughts of conquering her to boost his sagging ego and escaping from her fearing failure once again. Sarojakshi had managed to turn topsy-turvy his abundance of confidence in himself and he suffers from lack of self-esteem; an important expression of identity crisis. Thus Sarojakshi becomes the source of identity confusion in Manjaiah. Or she becomes a means to understand the identity
intricacies in Manjaiah. Manjaiah is a man dominated by a singular identity; sexual prowess and all his complexes is related to it. So when it is threatened he suffers from existential angst. Sarojakshi becomes the cause of identity instability in him making him for the first time feel disinterested and bored in life. Parameshwariah believed in the virtue of ‘truth’ and followed the principle of truth every moment of his life. To live a life of righteousness is his goal and he verbatim follows the dictates of duty or ‘Dharma’. He is a man of Satvik capacities, a philanthropist who has vowed “I would tell whole truth and nothing” (5). His adherence to his principle is such that when he comprises his principle under the duress of his duties as a father and a citizen he commits suicide. On compromising with his identity he suffers from alienation. He tells “I had lost my moral centre of gravity” (28). By being untruthful he feels “I myself had gone and destroyed my very basis of living” (32). He suffers from “lack of purpose in life” and he declares “my own cowardice filled me with disgust”. Parameshwariah’s predilection for identifying with values of dharma and truth had got him ensnared in the trap of Manjaiah. The duties of his social self had conflicted with the faith of his personal self and this precipitates identity instability in Parameshwariah ending in his suicide.

Arun Joshi and S. L. Bhyrappa’s characters share resemblances mainly in their experience of identity conflicts and the related feelings of crisis. Both the novelists discuss individuals undergoing conflicts caught up in a plethora of contradicting identities; both social and personal. Their characters always express a dialogue of the complex kind carried on between the different identities they partake from that of the society and the needs of the ‘self’. They are no commoners but are all intellectuals with good education and are highly sensitive with an ever alert conscience that keeps reminding them of the dualities they are trying to live. All of
Joshi’s men belong to the Indian Diaspora living in the multicultural context of America except for Ratan Rathor of *The Apprentice*. The characters of S. L. Bhyrappa’s novels belong to the immediate post-Independent India where binaries of opposing nature; east-west, oriental-occidental, tradition-modernity, regional-national, marga-desi, multi-linguistic and north-south discrepancies etc. galore taxing the identity claims of individuals. Difference between personal faith and societal ways, between natural impulses and cultural norms generate varied kinds of behavioral nuances characteristic of identity conflicts. In all such moments of skirmishes rationalizing abilities of the individuals and their disposition for conviction decide the course of identity conflicts. Those with strong conviction resolve the conflicts positively but many are unable to do so and thus suffer from indecision and become victims of identity crisis. They all strive to attain what Emmanuel Renault has said of identity,

Identity is to mean what we are individually, as well as what we aspire to be, what determines or specifies us, as well as how we present our particularities to ourselves, how we refer to ourselves individually, and how we identify ourselves with groups and with the general norms (103).

Joshi and Bhyrappa’s men strive to be distinct for they are not satisfied at what they are and do aspire and strive to inculcate new identities of worth and value. Joshi and Bhyrappa’s men are all the highly inquiring kind accepting nothing passively. Their alert conscience keeps interfering and makes them the prey to the intricacies of Identity conflict. They undergo the rigours of identity formation, deformation and reformation to resolve conflict and to attain identity stability. They try to resolve identity conflicts through individuation or ‘identity formation’;
decisive acceptance of certain identities at the cost of rejection of other/s consciously. Identity formation moments thus signify the resolution of identity conflicts and attaining of what psychologists’ call ‘stable identity’- “where inner personality traits and outer behavioral traits are one and the same”. Sudhir Kakar has recognized acquisition of identity stability as an important step towards attaining “psychological maturity” (119) or “Healthy adulthood” (119)-best expressed in “the ability to tolerate anxiety without being crippled” (119). Kakar mentions Freud’s meaning of ‘psychological maturity’ thus: “where id was, there shall ego be” or “to make the unconscious, conscious” (119). Majority of Joshi and Bhyrappa’s men strive to attain ‘ideal adulthood’. Identity stability thus formed at times may be against the expectations of the societal norms but essentially coincides well with the individual’s earnest desire to live life as per his/her personal choice. What Leila Sabnis had grasped as the difference between Billy Biswas and others hold good to all major men of Bhyrappa and Joshi.

You would be surprised. There are people whose sense of identity at the end of life doesn’t go beyond: I own this house; earn so much; have four children; drive this car; have so much in the bank and so on. May be such identity is not enough for you (112).

Of the many kinds of values, moral values that imply ideas and concepts of right action (Halstead J and Taylor M) cause identity conflicts in Joshi and Bhyrappa’s men. This is because both Joshi and Bhyrappa believe in the primacy of moral values and propagating right values is their chief concern. There is a strong desire in both the writers to reverse debased values which is an important offshoot of the modern era. Through their men they give a fine perspective of the shift in the
traditional value systems and its difference with value system of the modern era. Modern values are encoded mainly in excess materialistic concern, rampant corruption, lack of historical sense and decline in ethical responsibility so on and so forth. Excessive attraction for immediate material gain or advantage and strong desire for sensual pleasure has distracted people from traditional virtues which Yogeshwar of the novel The City recognizes thus: “We need ‘purity’” and “to attain purity we have to shed off egoism, selfishness, stupidity and develop capacity for sacrifice” (262). The sensitive characters of Bhyrappa and Joshi caught up in maze of the debased values and meanings of contemporary times undergo acute moments of identity conflicts. The major angst causing source in Joshi and Bhyrappa’s select works is the post-independent corrupt ambience of India. In Joshi the sham pretentions of developed countries mainly that of America serves as the added dimension. Other than countering debased values, Joshi and Bhyrappa’s men suffer identity for cultural reasons. With Joshi’s men the problem is unrootedness in the socio-cultural maze of cosmopolitan identity, with characters of S. L. Bhyrappa profound rootedness deeply in the traditional thought patterns of the society conflicts with the modern corresponding notions introduced in post-colonial contexts.

Of the five novels of Arun Joshi which the present study has picked up for analysis, the novels The Apprentice, The City and The River share striking similarities with the colossal novel Tantu of S. L. Bhyrappa mainly in the socio-cultural context against which identity intricacies is explored. The hero Som Bhaskar of The Last Labyrinth and Sindhi Oberoi of The Foreigner do share striking similarities in respective personality disposition with Manjaiah of the novel The Witness. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas and The Family Tree stand apart but all
novels together provide abundance of opportunities for the study of the intricacies of
identity conflicts at individual levels. Billy Biswas in *The strange case of Billy
Biswas* and Som Bhaskar in *The Last Labyrinth* and Sindi Oberoi of *The Foreigner*
all have studied in America and they rebel against modern day problems related to
industrialization, urbanization, intergenerational tensions, and economic pressures
due to the rising market economy and cross cultural dilemmas etc. In the novel *The
Foreigner* Sindi Oberoi is the victim of greed, selfishness and vanity and other vices
characteristic of modern technocratic society and the same causes identity conflict in
him. He resolves his conflict and attains stability on realizing the virtue of selfless
service. Som Bhaskar of *The Last Labyrinth* is a living metaphor for human greed
for material wealth and carnal pleasures. The spiritual and the material dichotomies
cause identification problem for him which he fails to resolve and the confusion
takes him to the brink of suicide. The novel *The Apprentice* is an attack on the post-
independence decadence of India characterized by corruption, nepotism and bribery
in all walks of life. Ratan is the central character of this novel who has succumbed to
the false values of the time and is allowed respite when he recognizes the depth of
his moral down fall and strives at atonement for his sin by wiping the shoes of the
devotees at the temple gate inspite of being a millionaire. In the novel *The Strange
Case of Billy Biswas* it is the very achievements of contemporary civilization and the
kind of progress and development it has attained is attacked through the character of
Billy Biswas. He protests the modern material society by retreating and identifying
with the tribal community in the remote wilderness of Mikala hills in Orissa and by
marrying a tribal girl. The novel *The City and the River* is judgmental of the human
propensity for vices and therefore makes a culminative observation through the god
like *The Great Yogeshwar* who believes that human history is an endless cycle of
periodic disintegration and regeneration. He also knows the means to break the cycle and change the nemesis of the city. He declares the disintegration can be arrested if humanity is capable of suppressing “egoism, selfishness, stupidity” (263). Capacity for Purity can be attained only through sacrifice. In Bhyrappa’s works the traditional notions of the native society [India] are still strong enough and keep influencing the sensibility of the characters within whom the awareness of the corresponding modern notions is alert as well. The labyrinthine ways of life tradition dictated, to the most modern of the ways of life, become the source of identity dilemma in Bhyrappa’s select fiction. For instance, in *The Uprooted*, Katyayini in whom modern expressions are not yet strongly rooted is confused acutely in her interaction with Shrottri who epitomizes traditions of his society. In *The Witness* the high sense of individualism and personal faith in matters of sexuality and material pursuits of Manjaiah conflict with the traditional ideals of charity and celibacy of Parameshwariah represents. *Satvik* virtues tradition advocates epitomised in Parameshwariah conflict with the *tamasik* gunas represented by Manjaiah. *Tantu* touches upon the varied fibres of social structures; Virtues of traditional education is compared with modern notions of education; ethics in journalism and corrupt practices of the Media in modern societies is embedded in the struggles of Talwar and Ravindra. Spiritual values tradition associated with music conflicts with commercial implications of music in Honnatti experiences as a musician. In Bhyrappa’s novel loss of faith in traditional virtues generate the feeling of uprootedness which in turn give way to existential angst characterized by feeling of meaninglessness and boredom.

Both the novelists react to the most modern of the vices of the present advanced societies weather that of India or America. In this sense it is the crisis of
the present and G. S. Amur’s observation “Joshi’s vision of the modern world and man’s place in it is Manichean and his heroes though rooted in the industrial civilization have always been at odds with it” (153), holds true to Bhyrappa’s men as well. The recourse to “acculturation” described thus: “A set of social processes by which we learn how to ‘go on’ in a culture through the acquisition of the languages, values, norms and maps of meaning that constitute a way of life” (Barker 435), is said to be advantageous allowing for synthesis or assimilation between distant cultures, the same is attained not before individuals suffer lot of uncertainties and psychic upheavals. Or in other words though acculturation provides ample scope for both the retention of selected elements of traditional culture and also the adaptation and assimilation of new elements from the ‘other’ culture, it is easier said than done.

The *modus operandi* employed by Joshi and Bhyrappa’s characters to resolve the conflict is quite interesting as well and indeed has lots of similarities and differences. The demoralizing ambience of utter chaos and dishonesty characteristic of modern society or the value debasement in all walks of life especially in post-independent India cause identity conflicts in both Arun Joshi and S. L. Bhyrappa’s novels. The angst of having wasted the hard won freedom is expressed by both the writers. Ravindra’s father in *Tantu* expresses his disappointment thus: “Swaraj meant self-rule, but that first, one should rule oneself. To do that one need skill, one needed character. Without these, what kind of Swaraj is it?” (33). In the novel *The Apprentice* Ratan is disappointed at the prevalence of rampant corruption everywhere from the top level bureaucratic officials and politicians to lower level of them in independent India. The freedom that has been achieved at the cost of great sacrifice is no more than a word and a new mode of slavery had persisted after freedom which Ratan describes thus: “Yes, a new slavery with the new masters:
politicians, officials. The rich, old and new. Swindlers in fancy cars…” (63). In *The City* Joshi leaves very little scope for better days though some solution is suggested in the words of Yogeshwar. The great Yogeshwar envisions the continuity of life and changing of the old order by giving place to new with not much difference. He tells one of his disciples thus:

> On the ruins of the city, as always happens, a new city has arisen. In the city of the future as well, the character types remain unchanged. The men have other names but the forces they embody remain unchanged (262).

But Yogeshwar also has a sure means to stop this endless repetition of periodic disintegration. He declares, “We need ‘purity’ and to attain purity we have to shed off egoism, selfishness, stupidity and develop capacity for sacrifice” (262). Both Joshi and Bhyrappa’s men resist becoming the part of the general collapse and try to work their individual salvation. Their enlightened conscience come to their aid and seek salvation for both the social and personal malady by outgrowing their personal interests and involving in self-less service for the wellbeing of the community. Both with Bhyrappa and Joshi ever alert conscience become the guiding principles to resolve identity conflicts. When Bhyrappa’s men witness their life long cherished identity of idealism crumble before their very eyes they are acutely depressed. But instead of giving way to desperation and existential angst of meaninglessness they try to find out a way out of it. When they had nobody else to guide for, they had turned inwards, had listened to their conscience and had acted as it had suggested. The same holds true with Joshi’s men as well. The novel *Tantu* by Bhyrappa protests the value debasement and the increased corruption of the modern India. If Ravindra, Honnatti and Anaiah and Talwar struggle in *Tantu* to resist the
demoralizing ambience in the novel of Joshi, Ratan Rathor is flabbergasted by the evil propensities of the modern society. Billy protests civilizational achievements in general and regrets the journey away from nature. Sindi Oberoi protests the prevalence of inequality in modern society in forms of racism and class structure of the society. While involved in acts of personal gratification they are all alert to the parallel notions of the impersonal encoded in traditional wisdom and this awareness becomes the saving grace of them all. Many of S.L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi’s characters’ resort to Hindu ideals of detachment and renunciation to resolve their conflict and attain peace of mind. The solutions these writers strive for is not to be sought elsewhere but is available ready at hand in the feasible philosophical and spiritual repertoire of the traditional wisdom of the country. The myths they explore and values they assert for rescuing their characters are very much characteristic of India’s philosophical and spiritual ethos. Both of them believe that regeneration of right values is possible by rehabilitating oneself in one’s native culture and spiritual norms. That doesn’t mean that they are advocating a complete reversal, a return to traditional past. An assimilation and synthesis of cultures; native and alien in modern times is inevitable and also one cannot reverse the historical process. They are very much aware of this and so they advocate a judicious selection.
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