

ARUN JOSHI'S NOVELS: A SEARCH FOR SELF

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ABSTRACT

The writings of Arun Joshi explore a variety of topics, such as the notions of nihilism & materialism, along with the concepts of quest & complacency. Other topics that are explored include alienation and engagement, compromise and east-west encounter, and nihilism and materialism. The extreme mental agony that his lonely travels went through is strongly depicted in the works of literature that he has created. The individuals in question are animals that are entirely bewildered and are always looking for the reason for their presence on Earth as well as their origins. After doing an analysis of Arun Joshi's work, *The Foreigner*, it becomes evident that crisis and longing are the key topics that are explored in his writing. In her work *The Foreigner*, Sindi Oberoi clearly depicts the suffering that she goes through as a result of her profound solitude and what she refers to as "rootlessness." This occurs when she moves from a state of detachment to one of active interaction with the world. In spite of the fact that Sindi was born into an unorthodox environment, he is making an effort to isolate himself. In spite of the fact that he is involved with other women, June forces him to confront his hypocrisy, cowardice, arrogance, and foolishness. The passing of June and Babu serves as a turning point in the narrative, while also increasing his sense of estrangement from the world. As part of his efforts to learn more about himself, he decides to travel to India (India). Although Sindi endures adversity on his path to enlightenment, he finally achieves a rejuvenated and purified spirit as a result of his perseverance. During this time, he comes to a profound realisation on the reason he is here on Earth. As a result of his understanding, he is able to appreciate that detachment does not include giving up one's own interests, but rather participating in deeds that are unselfish, as demonstrated in *The Gita*. This is the true essence of the notion of detachment. Essentially, the book is a severe condemnation of Sindi's estrangement and his flawed understanding of the process of generating distance between himself and others.

KEY WORDS: Search for Self, Arun Joshi, Perseverance, Detachment, Rootlessness.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian literature that was written in English was changed by Arun Joshi and some other authors who wrote in Indo-English. One of the common themes in his works is around the main character's unrelenting quest for self-realization, despite the fact that they do not have a permanent place to call home. Evidently, a major percentage of the characters in his novels are taken from the actual experiences he had when he was living in a foreign country. Joshi's writings investigate a variety of topics, including love and hatred, the pursuit of objectives and satisfaction, nihilism and consumerism, and the coming together and reconciliation of Eastern and Western civilizations. Existential conundrums and the search for one's own identity hold a vital place in the life of every single person within the fictitious world that he has created. Through the medium of literature, he was able to improve his comprehension of both himself and

the environment that he was surrounded by. Existentialists such as Albert Camus and others have contributed significantly to his development as a person. The spiritual and moral crisis that contemporary Indians are facing is investigated in greater depth by Arun Joshi, who possesses a unique talent for the subject. He is one of the few notable Indo-English writers of his day and has written a number of works that are captivating. It was the publishing of a number of novels and short tales that brought him to the zenith of his artistic career. He exhibited his imminent rise to prominence as a novelist with the publication of the novels "The Foreigner," "The Strange Case of Billy," and "The Apprentice," as well as the collection of short stories titled "Biswas," which was published in 1971 and 1974, respectively. With the title *The Survivor*, it was released to the public in the year 1976. "Lala Shri Ram: An Industrial Management Study of Entrepreneurship" was the title of his biography, which was published in 1975. He then moved on to his next piece of work, which was his novel *The Last Labyrinth*, which was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in the year 1982. In 1990, his final piece, titled *The City and the River*, was released to the public. His sudden death in 1993 brought an abrupt stop to his writing career, which he had been pursuing for centuries. *The Foreigner*, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, *The Apprentice*, *The Last Labyrinth*, and *The City and the River* are some of the books and short stories that Arun Joshi has written and published. He has also compiled a collection of short stories. The novels written by Varghese investigate the underlying basis of human existence. They deal with issues of societal alienation and investigate universal elements of human life within the setting of India.

CONNECTION TO SOCIETY

Camus's protagonists, in contrast to the social outcasts shown in *The Outsider*, have a deep connection to society despite the fact that they feel as though they are on the outside looking in. At the moment, they are making efforts to determine where they stand in relation to the rest of the globe. However, because of their self-centred mentality, they are unable to address the truth of the situation, even when they engage in introspection and consider their consciousness. Their self-centred worldview, together with their lack of resolution and self-assurance, is the source of their existential torment and concerns. Because of their apathy, they have now found themselves in a difficult situation, which has forced them to confront the imprudence of their previous actions and hesitations. As a result of their inability to create a connection with the fundamental principles of existence, they have come to terms with the fact that, just like every other human person, they are intrinsically isolated and that death is the ultimate and unavoidable truth. In order to get an understanding of Arun Joshi's ideas and the difficulties he has in relation to identification, the purpose of this thesis is to analyse the novel *The Foreigner* written by Joshi. The work of this individual will thus be analysed via the lens of existentialist frameworks. The purpose of this research is to unravel the enigma that is the human mind and to discover its origins in the early stages of human history. Arun Joshi is a writer from India who, in his writing, discusses the difficulties that individuals have in today's linked world, despite the fact that globalisation is being praised as the most significant ideology in terms of commerce; life has grown increasingly tough under the current circumstances. As part of its efforts to find a better way of living, humanity has purposefully separated itself from its own

civilization. It is possible that he was able to obtain all of the essential material assets; yet, in order to achieve a sense of tranquilly, he compromised his moral integrity. The writings of Arun Joshi, in especially *The Foreigner*, convey the concept that although people may obtain worldly belongings, they may never achieve real tranquilly in their lives. In the film "The Foreigner," the character played by Sindi Oberoi shows the human yearning to find solace in the company of other people. On the other hand, Joshi contends that the only way to truly find solace is to give up one's own sense of identity and devote one's entire being to the assistance of other people. Throughout the course of his voyage, the protagonist goes through periods of desolation, which is a motif that appears again throughout existentialism. On the other hand, Joshi is able to transform these feelings into positive consequences on a constant basis.

SEARCH FOR SELF

The Foreigner, Arun Joshi's debut novel, was the catalyst that catapulted him to the forefront of the Indian English literary scene. The work of Arun Joshi displayed his abilities as an author who had a great deal of competence and a high level of talent. Considered to be among the most engaging works of Indo-English fiction with existential themes, *The Foreigner* is often considered as exceptional. We are exposed to the inferno of existential torture that grows more severe in his later works, which is explored in the novel, which delves into the most profound levels of human misery on a human level. The main character of the novel, a young man named *The Foreigner*, is a person who has been uprooted from his home and is currently residing in the latter half of the twentieth century. As he wanders aimlessly through life, he is looking for a sense of security and purpose. In a heartbreaking way, the existence of Sindi Oberoi, which is both heartbreaking and pointless, is depicted. Arun Joshi investigates the profound understanding that an individual has of being divorced from the established standards and values of society, as well as the individual's attempt to comprehend and handle the embarrassing absurdity of life in a manner that is respectful. Sindi Oberoi, who does not have a sense of belonging or connection, has feelings of alienation, loneliness, and grief on a constant basis, regardless of the area he is in. At this point in time, he has been unable of recognising or comprehending the significance of it. He became an orphan when he was four years old as a result of the collision between his Kenyan-Indian father and his English mother, which occurred in an aeroplane accident close to Cairo. "A few creased and damaged photographs" is the sole evidence that he considers to be evidence of their authenticity. As a consequence of his parents' lack of care and caring throughout his childhood, he develops a profound sense of emotional devastation and becomes extremely vulnerable. Sindi has been left without any following sources of emotional dependence ever since his uncle passed away. Sindi's uncle was the person who supplied him with emotional support throughout the time that his parents were absent.

When seen in the perspective of Sindi's emotional instability, the myriad of events that have occurred in her life become more transparent. Having originated from Nairobi, this peripatetic scholar pursued education in London, held positions as a dishwasher and barman in Saho, served at a modest rural library in Scotland, encountered June and Babu during a six-year period of study, and ultimately established a permanent residence in Delhi, where he has yet to

discover a profound sense of connection with the world. The phrase "I was regarded as a misfit" is a reflection of his ongoing perception of himself as an outsider, even in Delhi. My foreign background was a barrier for me. An individual who is "an alien everywhere physically as well as metaphorically" is someone who is born into a society that is odd to them. He is a nomadic individual since he does not have any stable relationships or a regular place of residence. He would be continually dissatisfied with the realisation that having a degree does not bring the information or skills that are essential for leading a life that is satisfying. The pursuit of misguided goals in unsuitable environments led Sindi to embrace a philosophy of detachment rather than a pragmatic attitude to life. This was the effect of Sindi's actions. His cynicism and detachment serve as a tangible representation of his deep-seated inability to join and devote oneself, and they demonstrate this unwillingness as he moves from one catastrophe to another. His philosophy of non-involvement is in direct opposition to the realities of life, which has caused substantial harm to his false conviction in living a life free of desire.

This is despite the fact that he has a deep attachment to June British. As a result of this catastrophe, Sindi's lack of expertise, cowardice, and dishonesty are brought to light. The underlying shyness that Sindi possesses causes her to be afraid of commitment and involvement, despite the fact that she yearns for love and acceptance. When compared to his interactions with Anna and Kathy, his interactions with June showed striking differences. The story of Sindi's relationship with June illustrates the progressive dismantling of the barriers of disengagement and detachment that he had constructed around himself over the course of his life. A moral conundrum arises for Sindi as a consequence of the attachment she feels and the religious beliefs she has. The sensations of connectedness and alienation, which are in direct opposition to one another, are something he has never experienced before. "One should possess the ability to love without desiring ownership and should possess the ability to separate oneself from the subject of one's affection." This is something that he says about the powerful feelings that he has for June, but he makes an effort to keep a certain amount of distance from her. Nevertheless, he finds himself in a relationship with June Blyth. The narrative of his intense love affair with June narrates the progressive disintegration of the emotional barrier that he had erected in order to isolate himself from other people. Despite the fact that he is aware of the situations that are now taking place, he is helpless to stop them.

Sindi, on the other hand, is unable to resist giving in to June's appeal, despite the fact that he is making every effort to circumvent this situation. It is a fallacy to believe that a person may continue to exist independently and without attachment. He convinces himself that he does not have any emotional attachments, despite the fact that everything is going against him. Despite this, June is entirely bewildered by Sindi's emotional detachment, which causes a split between the two of them during their relationship. It is impossible for her to accept Sindi's idea of distancing oneself from others. "Even though you did not want it, I yearned to be a part of you," she admits to him. "I loved being a part of you." Aside from the fact that you are a mistress, I do not see many prospects for me to be involved in your life because you are quite independent. When June is dissatisfied with Sindi, she seeks solace in the company of Babu, a young Indian

student. June, who finds meaning in helping other people, makes Babu her friend. Despite the fact that they continue to be engaged, the couple's relationship comes to an end soon before the wedding. In spite of the fact that she is in a great deal of pain due to the fact that her adaption with Babu was unsuccessful, Sindi engages in a passionate encounter with him in the mistaken notion that it will be of assistance to her. On the other hand, he fails to take into account the fact that "she was in a relationship with Babu and there were three individuals involved, not just two". The failure of Babu's academic endeavours, his apprehension of his father's authoritative presence, and his suspicion that June had an affair with Sindi all contribute to his emotional dissatisfaction, which ultimately leads to his death by suicide. The argument between him and June becomes so intense that he has a mental breakdown as a result. As a consequence, Babu's demise is brought about as a consequence of Sindi's deliberate disconnection. June points the finger at him and exclaims, "Look, what your detachment has done," as she blames him. The strange western way of life is the root reason of Babu's demise, which will be attributed to the deterioration of purity in the East. In the end, June is unable to avoid passing away. Her fall from grace is a representation of the idea of "cultural lag." After the deaths of June and Babu, both of whom was the consequence of Sindi's erroneous understanding of attachment and detachment, Sindi makes the decision to leave the United States of America. This is a crucial juncture in his professional life. It is clear that the user does not place much importance on meticulous consideration and comprehensive preparation, as seen by the fact that their choice to travel to India is based solely on a simple coin flip. This marks a shift away from a way of life that is oriented on material goods and towards a way of life that is centred on personal development and full realisation of one's potential.

As a consequence of this, Sindi comes across the bronze sculpture of Shiva dancing at Khemka's residence as she is journeying through India. A symbol of the contradictory aspect of life, the dancing Shiva embodies both destructive rage and creative force. This is a depiction of the paradoxical nature of existence. In a same manner, Sindi Oberoi possesses a paradoxical character since he goes through the process of dying and then having a resurrection thereafter. As a result of his experiences, Sindi comes to the realisation that he has been aimlessly roaming around in quest of the meaning of his existence. This realisation finally leads him to accomplish his objective. Due to the fact that he has successfully overcome his fears, he is now fully capable of feeling love, personal growth, and active participation. After everything is said and done, he comes to terms with his innate masculinity and, as a result, thoroughly accepts his identity as a man. Last but not least, Sindi, who has been lacking in direction, discovers her genuine calling in life. The feeling of alienation that he has is more towards him than it is towards society. The intense sense of belonging that he experiences causes him to move back and forth between India, where he experiences sensations of connection, alienation, adoration, and hostility. In India, he experiences a condition of inclusion and acceptance, in contrast to the United States and Great Britain, where he was previously in a state of estrangement. The storyline of the book not only follows a linear evolution, but it also follows a meandering trajectory. As a consequence of the hero's life taking place in a number of different places, such as Boston, New York, and London,

the setting of the story is constantly shifting between these locations. The events are portrayed in a manner that is purposefully chaotic in order to generate tension and effectively capture the attention of the reader. The *Foreigner*, which was written by Arun Joshi, is a literary work that is constructed in a commendable manner. Within the realm of Indo-English literature, this book stands out as special since it examines the positive and negative aspects of existentialist philosophy within the context of an artistic framework.

CONCLUSION

When it comes to modern Indo-English literature, Arun Joshi consistently outperforms all other authors in terms of both quality and accomplishment. While his characters are going through times of profound spiritual upheaval, he utilises novels to dive into the existential issues and dilemmas that they are going through. He is a dedicated writer. The literary traditions of Kafka, Camus, Sartre, Saul Bellow, Elison, and Malamud are more closely aligned with Joshi's writing style than those of Jane Austen, Dickens, Anand, Narayan, Kamala Markandya, or Bhabani Bhattacharya. Joshi's writing style corresponds more closely with these literary traditions. Within the context of his major characters' journeys, the investigation of one's identity and the process of coming to terms with one's own identity are of the highest significance. As is the case with existentialists, Arun Joshi is very concerned with the persistent sensations of loneliness and discomfort that people experience in their day-to-day existence. This issue is comparable to another concern that existentialists have. The fundamental focus of his work is different from that of Western existentialists since it does not largely concentrate around the existential problem, the misery of alienation, and the absurdity of life's circumstances. This is a significant departure from the work of Western existentialists. His presentation of renunciation as the ultimate manifestation of Indian living and his inclusion of Indian intellectual frameworks into his literary works are two areas in which he diverges from Indo-English authors such as Sudhin Ghosh and Raja Rao. As a result, he is able to distinguish himself from these authors. In his opinion, the feelings of alienation and absurdity are not anything that are inherently associated with the human condition. On the other hand, the journey is the primary focus of his work, and each of his heroes is a person who works hard to acquire new information on a constant basis. Through his portrayal of the complicated and troubled essence of the modern human, Joshi has, in a nutshell, expanded the frontiers of Indo-English literature. It is because of the positive and lyrical message that his poems provide to mankind that they will forever be cherished all around the world. The cleverness and intellect that he possesses like no other are readily apparent in them. After being confronted with what appears to be a lack of purpose and energy in modern existence, the major protagonists in his works commonly come to the realisation that love, compassion, honesty, bravery, and commitment to one's own individuality are the only things that have the potential to really define and explain life. One of the ways in which Arun Joshi differentiates himself from other existentialists is by his unwavering faith in the efficacy of positive affirmation strategies. In spite of the fact that he has only written five novels and a few short tales, Arun Joshi has made a noteworthy contribution to the canon of Indo-English literature.

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