



Study of Arun Joshi novels' in a psychoanalytical approach

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Abstract

India has proffered a significant contribution to the global literature, particularly in the arena of fiction writing. Charismatic Indian writers laid an elegant foundation to the Indian English Literature. Every day new theories are coming up and the writers of work of art are adamant to apply them as devices of their novels. In fact the fictionalist explored the history in a more brilliant and delightful than the historian. Critically speaking, the fictionalist interprets the human aspects and peculiarities but not concerned with the historical significance. Indian English fiction has been involved in giving Indian expression of the modern predicaments and continues to reflect various ranges of issues like nationalism, social realism, freedom struggle and individual consciousness. The contemporary Indian fiction writers have been trying to give a new shape and color to Indian English fiction by portraying variegated pictures of life from various lands. Arun Joshi is one of the most brilliant Indian fiction writers who depicts modern man in his novels as hovering between despair and delusion. Different kinds of human relations are portrayed and analyzed through the different social settings. The novels of Arun Joshi guide us to the contemporary problems of our society and the regard in them centers round the psychological development of characters. The Gandhian ideology of self-sufficient which is considered as the superstructure element of the Indian life has become the centrality of all his novels. Arun Joshi records the constant shifting of angst and mental dispositions which are common elements of the protagonist in all his novels with varying emphasis.

Keywords: modern society, individual consciousness, despair and delusion, psychological problems and angst

Introduction

It is generally admitted fact that the genesis of the creative process is inseparable from an artist's initial perception, but he has to restrict himself to the experience of his own imagination and does not leave the actuality of his shared experience. Truly speaking every novelist must begin by creating for himself a world great or small, in which he can honestly believe. It also resembles something already familiar to the experience, thinking, and perception of his readers. It may be a reality which he could imagine, capture and create by giving a consistent form to the shapeless facts of actual human experience.

Writing against a background of post-independent India within a rapidly changing social, political scenario opens to various alien cultural influences. The authors deal with the dilemma of the younger generation of Indians who find themselves caught between the traditional ethos of their old culture and the demand of the modern progressive way of life. In their writings, the search for self transfigures itself leads into a search for the Absolute. Their protagonists are individuals, resisting the superimposed principles of the society, shaking off the overwhelming philosophy of their civilization to determine they are being by themselves. They are in a state in which an individual is capable of defining or realizing or determining his essence. The predicament of modern man and his life is found in deep-rooted anxiety and alienation, this is the result of man's looking before and after pining for what he is not. The sociological problem is to some extent because of the international phenomenon of the shrinking of the world. The problem of East and West encounter has created a generation that is alienated not only from the world but also from its own 'self'.

Industrialization, globalization, multinational corporations, and capital oriented economy, the changing family set up and relationships are some of the factors that have changed the Indian society and have increased the psychological traumas and tensions. Albert Camus said that the absurdity lies in a relationship between man and the world, which is discourteous. Conflict arises between man's awareness of death and his constant desire for life. A man comes inevitably under the net within the given fact of existence, passes through conflict, suffers agonies, but eventually finds it untraceable to reject life.

Such a philosophy of thought, rooted in the 20th century with the name "Existentialism", is centered upon the analysis of existence and the way humans find themselves existing in the world. The important elements in it are that a human exists first and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature. To be in clear terms, existentialism is concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. Naturally, it sprouts new ideas and thoughts giving scope for people who are searching to find out who and what they are throughout their lives as they make their choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook. Thus, personal choices become unique without the necessity of an objective form of truth. So it is evident that an existentialist strongly believes that a person should be forced to choose and be responsible without the help of laws, ethics, rules or traditions.

It inspired many Indian writers writing in English to shed their focus on common platforms and shifts to the individual problems in the Post-Independent period. They started revealing the views of Inner man and probing into the

individual psyche and for self-introspection. Existential dilemmas and social psychological predicaments have persuaded Indian writers in English during 60's-70s to contemplate more on the existing environment of loneliness, isolation, corruption and the quest for meaning, finitude, alienation, death, despair, anxiety, boredom, responsibility, freedom and unfulfilled emotional life.

At this juncture, Arun Joshi is distinguished from other Indian English writers because of his primary interests in the individual and the psychological complexities of his inner world. In the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R K Narayan, Ruth Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgonkar, and a host of others have been their stress on contemporary problems like social, economic, political and cultural. But Arun Joshi is not interested in the traditional themes as taken up by his predecessors. He deals with the psycho-existential problems of his characters. He paid his attention to existentialist philosophical issues and concerned himself with the ultimate aspects of life and the essence of universal truth. He constantly engages in the explorations of truth that lies within the human condition which often tends to be existential.

The Statement of the Problem

The present article, "Study of Arun Joshi novels' in a psychoanalytical approach" explores through the protagonists of Arun Joshi who are confronted with the ferocious assaults of existence, yet they are free to make their choices of negating or accepting their existential situations. They may have the choice of becoming either rootless nihilist or committed and responsible individuals, Joshi delves deep into the inner recesses of the human psyche where he finds instincts and impulses at work; he seeks to apprehend the reality which leads him to the core of the truth of man's life. He realizes man's uniqueness and loneliness in an indifferent and inscrutable universe.

Arun Joshi: Novels, themes, and characters

Arun Joshi is a departure from the social realism of the early Indi-Anglican writers. He concentrates more on the interiority of experience than in depicting the surface reality. Like Kafka, Camus, Sartre, Ellison, and Malamud, Joshi is also concerned with the quest for meaning in life. "The Foreigner" (1968) deals with the theme of loneliness, alienation, and uncertainty of human love. The Protagonist Sindi Oberoi always feels loneliness as belongs to no country and no people. "The Strange Case of Billy Biswas" (1971) discusses the deep significance of primitive life as a better and alternative life to the civilized and cultured imperfect society. Various turnings of Billy's life give only ashes to the civilized world. "The Apprentice" (1974) predominately deals with the "New Slavery" that came into existence in post-independent India with new masters: Politicians, Officials, and the Rich. The protagonist Ratan Rathor is embroiled in the confusion of values and moral anarchy. "The Last Labyrinth" (1981) prize-winning novel explores the meaning of desire and resignation, illusion and reality and life and death. The novel deals with the longing for the essentials of the life of the narrator-hero Som Bhaskar. In "The City and The River" (1990) the author highlights the distressed caused by confusion of values generated by materialistic and corrupt society. In this novel, the prominent characters like The Grand Master carry with them a sense of alienation, pessimism, and loneliness.

Liberation through Wisdom

This chapter focuses on Two novels of Arun Joshi named "The Foreigner" and "The Strange Case of Billy Biswas". In the foreigner, Arun Joshi explores the individual consciousness of being isolated from the rest of the world. Joshi also shows how the absence of meaningful relationships becomes the greatest curse in Sindi's life. It leads to the detachment not only from self but also from his surroundings. His detachment transcends barriers of geography, nationality, and culture. The novel can be studied as a pure Existentialist in nature as it deals with the protagonists' loneliness and feelings of anguish emanating from his estrangement from the environment, tradition and his true self. He realizes the vanity of human achievements and the purposelessness of his life at the bare age of 25. June and Babu come closer to each other with the realization that their desire and attraction for each other is mutual. Unlike Sindi, Babu has his roots in India and represents the typical Indian fantasies. Babu sees America as a paradise for indulgence in free sex and where many dreams find expression. Babu fails in his studies but continues to love June. Arun Joshi describes Babu's sense of Indianness through his love for his elder sister and the fear of his father. But the second novel, "The Strange Case of Billy Biswas" is completely different from the first in all the concepts. But there is an underlying thread that shows some similarities. This novel presents a metaphysical quest and deals with the deeper meaning of human existence. Joshi, with this novel, made it clear that he surpasses socio-cultural conservatism and enters into the realm of conflicts and confrontations between the inner and the outer world. This often leads to one's strangeness among one's own people, living in the same environment. In the first novel, Joshi interprets the themes of alienation and dispossession in terms of interpersonal and social relationships. "The Strange Case of Billy Biswas" is a sequel with regard to Sindi's spiritual quest for identity in the modernized world.

The confrontation between Ideal and Real in "The Apprentice" and "The Last Labyrinth"

Arun Joshi asserts that man must face nothing in order to become something. Nothingness is a presence within our own being. The novel, "The Apprentice" delves deep into the inner consciousness of the individual with a view to explore the mysterious world of the human soul. It is a kind of confrontation between the ideal and real that has to be gone through in order to come to one's own self. Ratan is a man thrown back upon him, left completely alone to struggle with the existential dilemma. He seems to be a victim of the petrified and frozen society of the modern world throughout the novel. Taking a different turn, Joshi jumps from the themes of alienation and dispossession to the protagonist's intense desire for name, fame, power and social status. In the earlier novels, the sense of alienation and disposition is intensified for various reasons. "The Last Labyrinth" is the extension of the earlier novel's existentialist's quest and explores the dilemma of existence in the life of Som Bhaskar's incessant urge to understand the labyrinth of life. It follows the pattern of 'withdrawal', 'return' in the life of its protagonist who passes from ignorance to affirmation which seems to be far-fetched. The novel is a kind of longing for the vitals of life in the mystical urge of Som, a plastic magnet and a millionaire. He lives in the anguish of alienation, but soon gets the

realization that his dilemma is the result of cause or situations.

Quest for meaning, value, freedom, and truth in the city and the river

Joshi is obsessively occupied with the individual's quest for meaning and value, freedom and truth that offer spiritual nourishment to the estranged self in a seemingly chaotic and meaningless world. This novel is not a philosophical tract mounting the utterances of its characters. It is completely a political fable. The Writer uses a mixture of fantasy, startling real vision of everyday politics and skillfully handles plotted by intrigue and corruption in high places. The author shows the existential dilemma of its characters in the hostile world, but this predicament has been replaced by the socio-political crisis of the city representing the whole community itself. The main plot of the novel revolves around the power struggle. The unchallenged king is the Grand Master who rules the city by the river face stiff resistance from the boatmen who refuse to fall in the line with the Seven Hills. The novel lashes out at corruption in public life, the selfishness of the rules and the political crisis. The story moves after the Great Master of the city who resolves to strengthen his authority supported by a group of ambitious ministers.

Conclusion

Unlike Western Existentialists, Joshi's novels selected for the study, explore the themes of quest and all his characters are questers and seekers. They combine both Malamud's Yakov Bok's search for humanity and Kafka's for God. His novels have a universal significance for the simple reason that he lays the remarkable importance of the existential situation, and the realistic solutions he puts forward. Arun Joshi holds out the real solution of regeneration and redemption in all his novels.

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