

Existentialism In The Writings Of Arun Joshi

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ABSTRACT

In his work, Arun Joshi explores a wide range of issues, including estrangement and inclusion, the meeting of cultures, the acceptance of difference, the pursuit of meaning, and the acceptance of complacency. He writes about lonely spiritual seekers and their anguish in his writings. They're a bunch of befuddled blokes who can't stop wondering where they came from and what their life's purpose is. After delving into Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner*, it becomes clear that crises and the search for meaning are the driving forces in his literature. In *The Foreigner*, the author describes Sindi Oberoi's suffering as a consequence of his loneliness and his supposed rootlessness as he moves from a state of disengagement to an active participation in the world. Despite the suffering he endures, Sindi finally gains a sense of his spirit being refreshed and cleansed as a result of his journey for enlightenment. The reason he was sent on Earth becomes clear to him. He understands the significance of the Gita's portrayal of the detachment principle, which teaches that the opposite of renunciation is unselfish activity.

KEYWORDS existentialism, novels, Arun Joshi, Self-identity.

INTRODUCTION

'*The Foreigner*' is a great Arun Joshi book. The philosophy of Existentialism is used in Joshi's work. It's a way of thinking that holds that everyone should have the autonomy to make their own decisions and bear the consequences of their actions. It's the most important literary and philosophical trend of the 20th century, and it's all about the individual. The authors Sartre and Camus may be credited with its inception in their own writings.

The works of Arun Joshi are rooted in indigenous social and cultural contexts. His writings explore the moral and spiritual challenges facing modern Indian society. His protagonists struggle with a lack of confidence in the inherent worth of human beings, an identity crisis, uprooting, spiritual emptiness, and the horrors of materialism. They develop as a result of feeling apart from society. Sindi, our protagonist, has many of the same issues.

One of the Indo-English writers who revitalized English-language Indian fiction is Arun Joshi. His protagonists, constantly on the lookout for who they really are, are perpetual nomads in his tales. It seems that his time spent living overseas inspired the creation of many characters in his works. The themes of alienation and inclusion, East-West encounter and accommodation, love and hatred, quest and complacency, nihilism and materialism permeate all of Joshi's books. His works of literature reveal a world in which man must face himself and the big concerns of life. His works are introspective journeys to learn more about himself and the world. He looks up to Albert Camus and the other existentialists for inspiration. When it

comes to delving deeper into the moral and spiritual problems facing modern Indians, Arun Joshi is a true original. He is among the few major Indo-English novelists, and his works are among the most fascinating ever written in both languages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

G., Keerthi (2021) Arun Joshi is one of the great masters of modern Indian literature written in English, and with good reason: he is an outstanding writer of human situation. He thinks that the only place to find the truth is in the minds of solitary people. He imagines the contemporary man's inner dilemma in five books, making him the greatest writer of psychological awareness. His second book, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, is his favorite of all time. The protagonist's life is entangled with the enigmatic realm of the tribal culture. The protagonist, Billy, is on a peculiar journey that eventually leads him to abandon his status as the only heir to a fortune and instead live a simple life in the wilderness. Nothing about his life in the United States, even his marriage, gives him any solace. In addition, the narrative represents Billy's departure from the material world in order to pursue individuality and a sense of self-identity. This study examines Billy's search for identity and its roots in the story's confrontations between the modern and the traditional worlds.

Dr. Sapna Rani (2020) This study analyzes the presence of existentialism and alienation in many of Arun Joshi's novels. One of the most prominent Indo-English writers of the post-independence period of the Indian literary sector, Arun Joshi has donated five novels and an assortment of a dozen short tales to be updated with new material. Without a doubt, Joshi has made excellent use of brain research as a tool in order to elicit the psychological variety experienced by the majority of his heroes, but not more. Despite the fact that his compositions superficially resemble those of Western existentialist journalists who dwell on the futility and invalidation of life and the presence divine, Joshi is profoundly preoccupied with drawing out the embodiment of Indian ethos whose job is inescapable in all aspects of life not only for the elderly, but also for the bewildered modern adolescent, whether he be Indian or an outsider. Therefore, keeping in mind that Existentialism in the contemporary setting is an old wine in a new cup, another name for an old strategy for Buddhism and Upanishads which demand just on the information on self, the focus of this analysis is on how Man, as a survivor of ignorance of his inherent delicacy of ethical quality, becomes egotistical, leading to a feeling of vacancy over the soul that renders the world a waste and a vain show.

DR. C. USHA NANDHINI (2017) Existentialism is the subject of this study. Free will, alternate perspectives, and individual accountability are central to the existentialism's philosophical stance. From this vantage point, it's clear that every person is different and that it's up to them to choose their own fate. Among existentialist works, the topic of free will stands out the most. Existentialists have maintained that, given the freedom to choose one's own path, one must also assume the danger and responsibility of sticking to one's word. Joshi's ability to conceptualize the inner crises of contemporary man is highlighted, as is his discovery and subsequent conviction that the most vexing issues confronting modern man are problems of the self, such as alienation, identity crisis, a feeling of emptiness, and an existential dilemma. The Indian immigrant Sindi Oberoi in *The Foreigner* goes through a lot of hardship on his quest to figure out what his life is all about. The study concludes that the characters of Joshi's works

are utterly perplexed individuals who are restlessly seeking their origins and the meaning of their existence on this globe. Ultimately, Sindi's search for her life's meaning and purpose does not leave her feeling hopeless. He is blessed with a high capacity for transcendence and does not see absurdity and alienation as the ultimate condition of existence.

Dr. Anjan Kumar, (2016) Arun Joshi's works show contemporary man caught between a pit of despondence and an island of fantasy. The protagonists of his stories often illustrate the empty promises of civilization. It seems that the author is trying to make the point that contemporary Western culture is superficial and elitist. Existential distress may be characterized by feelings of emptiness, superiority, isolation, deprivation, and disintegration. Putting life into proper context is of the utmost importance. A person's life span is limited, and once they've started down the wrong road, it's almost impossible to turn back. The price of one's sins must be paid at some point in one's life.

Ms. Anita Sharma (2013) The most significant literary and intellectual movement of the twentieth century, existentialism questions the very meaning of life. The authors Sartre and Camus are the ones who first used this term in their writings and philosophy. The emphasis is on following one's heart to discover the truth. Because it views the world as fundamentally inhospitable, existentialism is concerned with questions of meaning and purpose. It's a way of seeing the world that centers on the value of each individual human life and their contribution to the greater good. The Indian philosophical tradition, as expressed in The Gita and The Upanishads, is concerned with the difficulties of life on this planet. Existentialism is based on the idea that the individual's own existence, rather than theoretical abstractions, is the most fundamental and consequential truth. The primary tenet is that an individual's fate is not determined by other forces like God, society, or genetics, but rather by his own actions.

EXISTENTIALISM IN THE NOVELS

The existentialist philosophy was enthusiastically accepted by Arun Joshi. The core principles of both Western and Indian existentialism provide a strong undercurrent throughout all of his works. It is necessary to quickly explore the key parts of Western existentialism in order to analyze Arun Joshi's unique position in existentialist literature. In the wake of the value crisis that started with Friedrich Nietzsche's proclamation of God's death at the end of the nineteenth century, Western existentialist philosophers came up with their basic argument, that man's existence predates his essence. Man has stumbled across an absurdist cosmos, one without a creator, in which science can expose the mechanistic workings of nature but cannot uncover the cause for their existence or any logical rationale for the existence of man and the universe.

Horror, bewilderment, loneliness, and anxiety are some of the emotions that are sparked in man by the absurdity of life. He struggles with existential dread (apprehension about one's own mortality) and looks for relief in order to live a more bearable life. Without God to rely on, he must accept complete responsibility for his life and make the most of it despite the terrifying absurdity of his situation. Existentialism encourages its readers to ponder, explore, and learn everything they can about their existence. They argue that man is trapped inside himself and his existence, and that the only way out is to see both as a fluid process, a series

of individual decisions and actions that lead to different outcomes. Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Danish writer and philosopher often regarded as the spiritual and historical father of existentialism, brought the idea of man standing in dread and trembling before the most fundamental and catastrophic concerns of his existence to Western philosophy. The core ideas of existential philosophy are on being alone, being genuine, being anxious, being depressed, being hopeless, dying, and the ludicrous. The mortal nature of man and the vastness of his solitude and existential angst in this world are widely held to be universal truths. After World War II, which witnessed the greatest horrors of the twentieth century, existentialist philosophy and literature flourished. This is because they deal with the fundamental questions of life and death, identity and the harsh realities of the modern world, and portray modern man as alone in his fight against fate.

In every circumstance, the individual is emphasized as the most important factor by existentialist authors like Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Atheism permeates the majority of existentialist literature, which often focuses on man's insignificance and accepts that death and emptiness are inevitable. Thus, existentialist literature is fundamentally pessimistic, since existence is considered as pointless and purposeless, and man is portrayed as an alien in this universe, standing alone and hopeless in the face of the anguish and dread of a life stripped of any illusion. Existentialism, on the other hand, is a movement that praises the autonomy of the individual to create his own reality. Since man is free, he is accountable for his own choices regardless of the illogic of the universe, as argued by Sartre and Camus. Having seen the awful killings of the first half of the twentieth century, which only added to the absurdity, terror, and despair, they attempted to discover a remedy for man's affliction and a solution to the most fundamental and difficult question: how to live with the absurdity of life. They said that man may either terminate his life by taking his own life, fooling himself, or fighting against the absurdity and seeking sincerity. Camus advocates for the third choice, stating that man must experience the ridiculous, since it is the only one that makes sense. Sartre expressed it best when he said, "Man is destined to be free," and that is what he must accept: the absurdity of life. It is necessary for man to stand up to absurdity and pursue self-actualization. Whoever does so is a genuine human being, and his or her freedom is defined by his or her existential morality so long as it does not violate the rights of others.

There was a marked movement from the public to the private realm in both Indian and Western English literature after the 1950s. Novelists nowadays are more interested in exploring the many ways in which people search for their identity. Most protagonists in contemporary works of literature have several personalities and are trapped in a Hamlet-like situation. He is a poor, misguided person who can never seem to get out of a bad situation. Existentialist parables and psychological dramas populate much of today's literature. Doestoevsky's main character suffers from a demon possession. A person on the margins, like Camus. Saul Bellow's is uprooted, Samuel Beckett's is ludicrous, Ben Elison's is on trial, and Franz Kafka's is on trial for being a liar. One way or another, they all investigate feelings of isolation.

A person suffers more from the impacts of self-alienation than from societal alienation. In its purest form, it is a type of homelessness. Novels by Arun Joshi focus on the bleak and

depressing experiences of the soul, and it is this inner crises of the contemporary man that has engaged Joshi's attention. Several western and eastern existentialist authors, including Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Kierkegaard, and others, were openly recognized as inspirations for his writings. This study analyzes the absurdity of contemporary life through the lens of Arun Joshi's books. However, he only uses his originality in Indian situations, where he can find answers by studying his culture. A Hindu existentialist worldview has been taken and filtered through his books. Arun Joshi's works are where the topic of alienation is dealt with most explicitly and significantly. Isolation and a search for one's own identity are important themes in his first book, the compelling psychological classic *The Stranger* (1968). The Gita's depiction of attachment and non-attachment as the source of a crisis inside a crisis is at the heart of the situation. The Bhagavad-Gita argues that a societal obsession with work is the root of all evil. One drop of water on a lotus petal represents the idea of detachment. In the context of *The Stranger*, it means that Sindi has been uprooted from the beginning of his existence and will remain so until the very end.

The protagonist, Sindi Oberoi, embodies the existentialist ideal of a person who is at sea in a strange, horrible, ludicrous world, and her narrative illustrates what Spengler calls the crisis of the present. He is "an uprooted young man living in the latter half of the twentieth century" (TF 207) with no permanent place to call home and the constant burden of being an alien in every one of the countries he visits: Kenya, Uganda, England, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and India. His wanderlust is "rooted within his soul like an ancient curse and drives him from crisis to crisis," (TF 8) and not just a matter of location or ethnicity. He is a person who claims, "I have no roots" (TF 143), revealing that he has no established identity anywhere in the globe. To himself, he seems really strange:

I wondered in what way, if any, did I belong to the world that roared beneath my apartment window. Somebody had begotten me without a purpose and so far I had lived without a purpose, unless you would call the search for peace a purpose. Perhaps I felt like that because I was a foreigner in America. But then, what difference would it have made if I had lived in Kenya or India or any other place for that matter? It seemed to me that I would still be a foreigner. My foreignness lay within me and I couldn't leave myself behind wherever I went. (TF 65)

In Sindi's mind, and in the minds of others he encounters, he is always an outsider and never quite fits in. A very early on in their time together, June says to Sindi, "I have a feeling you'd be a foreigner anywhere" (TF 35). After returning to India, Sheila informs him, "you are still a foreigner, you don't belong here" (TF 149). Sindi is a biracial woman. To a Kenyan-Indian father and an English mother, he was born in Kenya. At the age of four, he loses both of his parents in an airplane accident outside of Cairo, making him an orphan. In Kenya, he is raised by his uncle, who unfortunately passes away at a young age. The loss of his uncle has stripped him of any feeling of stability he had felt while his uncle was still living. He realizes that he is a guy of neither family nor nation nor anything else at all. He did not experience external hardships like poverty or job loss that led him to question the purpose of his life; rather, his crisis was internal and led him to this point. R.S. Pathak writes that "his existential drifting over the

surface of the earth and his experimentation with self only intensify his dismal loneliness and an acute sense of the meaninglessness of life." (44).

CONTRIBUTION OF ARUN JOSHI: NOVELS, THEMES, AND CHARACTERS

Socrates, Ecclesiastes, St. Augustine, Dostoevsky, Henri Bergson, and many more are explored in order to provide context for my next claims on the history and evolution of Existentialism. According to context, we explore not just Tillich's three existentialist notions but also Franz Kafka's ideas. The significant impact that Jean-Paul Sartre has had on the development of existentialism is presented via the use of a selection of his own writings. We also talk about the central theme of his philosophy, "How he made his ontological questions of being." Also included is a short discussion of the evolution of the Indian English novel and its authors, who wrote in both English and Indian languages. This study focuses on the life and literary work of Arun Joshi. This section of the book is dedicated to discussing Arun Joshi's fiction, namely its books, themes, and characters. The novel "The Foreigner" (1968) explores feelings of isolation, otherness, and the unpredictability of romantic relationships. Sindi Oberoi, our protagonist, is always isolated since she is not a citizen of any nation or a member of any ethnic group. The profound relevance of primitive existence is discussed in "The Strange Case of Billy Biswas" (1971), where it is presented as a superior alternative to modern civilization. The many paths that Billy's life has taken have produced nothing but ashes for society. The hero, Som Bhaskar0, in "The Last Labyrinth" (1981), who is driven by a mystical need, integrates existential angst with a yearning for life's essentials. Through the work, Joshi implies that if one abandons reason, they would be able to experience the ultimate truth and reality. To go closer to God, you need to take three steps: toward humility, sacrifice, and suffering. As the work is dissected, the many different Oriental and Occidental literary influences become readily apparent. The works of fiction that Joshi has written reflect the many ways in which his mind and creativity have been shaped. Knowing the important turning points in his life and the people who had an impact on his development as a writer is crucial. The effect of these literary concerns on Arun Joshi's imaginative sensibility is clear. The works of Western existentialists like Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, were all significant influences on him. The absurdity of contemporary human life is captured in Joshi's works.

One of his key themes in his works is hopelessness about one's own existence. Modern existentialist thought emerged in the 20th century. The current cynicism and hopelessness of man is explored. The works of thinkers and authors like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Kafka, and Beckett are where this concept first emerged. Existentialism is defined by M.H. Abrams in his "A Glossary of Literary Terms" a:

.... a tendency to view each man as an isolated being who is cast ignominiously into an alien universe, to conceive the universe as possessing no inherent human truth, value or meaning and to represent man's life, as it moves from the nothingness which is both anguished and absurd (1985:86).

The novel "The Foreigner" explores existential themes and questions. It takes a close look at the issues that have plagued heroine Sindi Oberoi. Throughout the story, there is a pervasive sense of isolation and disconnection.

It delves into the individual's agonizing self-awareness when he or she realizes how far they have drifted away from the accepted norms of society. Sindi feels bothered and ashamed by his newfound identity as an alien on his own world.

The philosophical questions of existence are addressed in 'The Foreigner. It takes a close look at the issues that have plagued heroine Sindi Oberoi. Throughout the story, there is a pervasive sense of isolation and disconnection.

This movement has grown rapidly into a formidable opponent of reason, rationality, positivism, and the standard methods of characterizing man's autonomy. The works of existentialism's activists center on topics such the rejection of reason and logic, the rejection of established values, institutions, and philosophies, the exercise of will and freedom, and the recognition of the absurdity and emptiness of existence. In the 1940s, the globe was in a bind because of the two wars that were raging at the time. At this juncture, existentialism emerged as a major philosophical movement, and philosophers began to think about how to define anxiety, anguish, guilt, dread, despair, death, and meaninglessness in their ways, having a profound impact on the thought of literary artists around the world.

In 1950, a few of writers left behind signs of existentialism in their work. Existentialism, in fact, is not a brand new concept in Indian thought. According to the author, "the traces of existentialism have been found not only in the biblical writings but also in the Indian philosophical system" (2003:42).

Problems like man's nature and the world's personalities, as well as the path one might follow to achieve enlightenment and freedom from temporal constraints, are central to Hindu thinking. The belief that man is ultimately responsible for his own development is the foundation of the Doctrine of Karma. The Upanishads stress that the only way for man to break with his karma is via collective effort. The progress of man is determined by his schemes. He takes charge of his own life and makes things happen. Therefore, man is an integrated agent of Karma. Arjuna's existential questions of what to do in the face of evil and how to respond are answered in the Bhagavad Gita. In its pursuit of the oneness of Being, Indian Vedanta recognizes the unity of the human condition as an individual in the world and in relationship to other individuals. Man is exceptional among creatures because of his independence and boundless potential. But reality smacks him in the face and he has to deal with it. Novelists like Anita Desai and Arun Joshi of India draw inspiration from the existentialist works of Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others. This study analyzes the works of Arun Joshi, which reflect the absurdity of contemporary man's life. His use of singularity, however, is in an Indian setting, and he draws his solutions from that culture. His books take on a Hindu existentialist aesthetic and are influenced by it.

CONCLUSION

The 1968 film "The Foreigner" explores themes of isolation, alienation, and the unpredictability of romantic relationships. Sindi Oberoi, our protagonist, has a hard time making friends since she is a foreigner wherever she goes. The profound relevance of primitive existence is discussed in "The Strange Case of Billy Biswas" (1971), where it is presented as an alternative to modern civilization. The twists and turns of Billy's life have only brought ashes to the world of the cultured. In "The Last Labyrinth" (1981), Som Bhaskar's spiritual drive is synthesized with his existential angst and his yearning for life's essentials. The principles and ethics shown in "The Apprentice" are contributing to the decline of modern civilization. The lack of social and emotional support from his family lies at the heart of his socio-psychological predicament.

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