



Aestheticism in the Novels of Arun Joshi

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Abstract:-Arun Joshi is one of the few Indian writers in English who has successfully exposed the intricacies and complexities of modern Indian life. He has written convincing fiction. This study focuses on Arun Joshi's books *The Foreigner* (1968), *The Strange Case of Billy Budd* (1969), and *The Strange Case of Billy Budd* (1970). *Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), and *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) are some of his films. Joshi's paintings have attempted to extend the urgency of today's urbanized and deeply industrialized growth, with its dehumanizing effect on the individual. Existentialist thinkers such as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Sren Kierkegaard had a big influence on Arun Joshi. Joshi, a master of mental understanding, delves deeply into the internal openings of the human mind. Arun Joshi added more direction and measurement to the Indian English story. His works depict the forlorn questers' terrible anguish. According to Joshi, the significance of life lies not in the polished surfaces of preconceptions, but in the murk overgrown mazes of the spirit.

Keywords: Fiction, Urbanized, Craftsman, Assumptions, problem of current man, Obscurity etc. Arun Joshi, an administration chief by training and calling, was born on July 7, 1939 in Benaras, Uttar Pradesh, as the most youthful child of Dr.A.C.Joshi and Mrs.Sumitra Joshi, and had an extraordinary academic career that included a science certificate from Kansas University, U.S.A., and an M.S. degree in Industrial Management from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, U.S.A. Joshi returned to India in 1961 after briefly working at a psychological facility in the United States. He soon became the head of the Recruitment and Training Department at the Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co., Delhi.

He was the Head of the DCM Corporate Performance Assessment Cell and the Secretary of the DCM Board of Management. Joshi is currently the Executive Director of the Shri Ram Center for Industrial Relations and Human Resources in New Delhi. He is also a member of the governing bodies of the Shri Ram Center for Art and Culture and Hindu College, Delhi. Joshi has established

his own company, creating products such as diesel engines, machine tools, foundry items, and car parts. With the publication of his first novel, *The Foreigner* (1968), Joshi established himself as an Indian English author. The rest of his books—*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1973), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The Last Labyrinth* (1981), and *The City and the River* (1990)—were also well received in creative circles. In 1979, at the invitation of the East-West Center, Joshi attended the World Journalists' Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, United States of America. Joshi received the prestigious SahityaAkademy Award in 1983 for his novel *The Last Labyrinth*. Aside from the novels mentioned above, Joshi also published *The Survivor* (1975), a collection of ten short stories. Another short story, "The Only American from Our Village," appeared in *Quest* (Mar-Apr, 1975) and also in Madhusudan Prasad's Contemporary Indian English Stories. Joshi, who is a businessman, has also published two books on business: *LalaShri Ram: A Study in Entrepreneurship and Industrial Management* (1975) and *Remembering LalaShri Ram: Reminiscences* on his 100th Birthday (Edited, 1984).

Arun Joshi is one of the few Indian authors writing in English who has totally exposed the intricacies and complexities of contemporary Indian life. He has written fiction that is really believable. Joshi has illustrated the tragic consequences of the absence of major value and confidence throughout everyday life, deftly alert to the challenge of modern man. Indeed, it has occasionally dominated in depicting the existential problem of the modern world. He has also figured out many aspects of weight applied by the unpredictable character and public requests in which present man is destined to live. This awareness of man's rootlessness and tremendous uneasiness is a trait of Joshi's unique perception of modern man's position. His novels focus on human difficulties rather than issues arising from transitory allegiance. Joshi deviates significantly from the overall run of Indian authors in English, and his experiments with issues and methods have contributed new dimensions to the art of the book. As he pursued new issues, he "repudiated the larger world for the internal man" and linked with himself in "a quest for the essence of human living." Joshi, a magnificent writer of human turmoil, has contracted the internal emergency of the advanced man across the course of his writings.

His heroes are self-centered individuals who are prone to self-indulgence and idealism. Despite their flaws, they are genuine seekers who strive for a reason and self-satisfaction.

Joshi had never considered his self-image as a writer. "My novels are essentially attempts to gain a better understanding of the world and of myself," he explains. As such, they have nothing to do with my line of work. If I did not write, I am sure I would continue my exploration in another media." According to SujathaMathai, he is "a writer in disguise, ambivalent about his identity." Joshi enjoys writing, which he considers to be a basic need or a mystical urge geared

toward self-expression. He understands that writing is impossible—a fantasy—and he becomes an alien in his own writings. This validates the creator's claim at a meeting that *The Last Labyrinth* is a novel that he does not own.

In his own words, Joshi has depicted the internal crises and existentialist inquiry of the cutting edge man throughout the course of his writings. His saints are estranged animals on a mission to discover the meaning of presence. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, Joshi's third work, is a study into the total detachment of its legend, Billy Biswas, from India's cutting-edge common society. As B.G.R.Krishnama puts it, "the typical and the irregular, the common and the phenomenal, the normal and the powerful hobnob with each other." We find Billy being propelled by an extraordinary power—a crude power of his heedless self—that pulls him to abandon the polished universe of eagerness and fake reverence and live as a crude man in a crude world. Billy succeeds in finding that piece of himself for which he had searched his entire life by responding to the ancestral young girl Bilasia's summons. In any event, Billy's pursuit, which is unusual for Sindi, ends in tragedy when he is shot dead by a havildar. Joshi depicts the virtue and directness of everyday living in a crude society, the virtues of which may "act as a corrective to our money-based culture." Joshi had something to say about the novel:

“It is very difficult to explain this novel. Tribals are very civilized according to mine and Billy Biswas’s understanding. It is the postIndependence pseudo-Western values that he rejects. The book is about a mystical urge, a compulsion which makes Billy go away. In a number of our legends and religious texts people go away to forests to heal themselves spiritually. Possibly that's what I am suggesting, though not consciously.... Billy’s death is metaphorical. The modern Indian city is disoriented and kills sincerity. A woman who enjoys dancing might be married off to a person who does not let her dance after marriage. This kind of killing goes on when the social organism does not know its values.”

We only understand the value of money and force. *The Apprentice*, Joshi's third novel, is an extreme depiction of the oppression of a general population devoid of values, bearing, and, perhaps, reason. It is a novel with a completely different tone from his previous works. RathanRathore, the storyteller hero in this work, discovered his own dangerous character as an interior talk. Joshi has also given an original audience to whom the storyteller frequently addresses in order to relieve readers of the monotony of continuous portrayal. This work has received the most fundamental evaluation due to its delivery in the confession booth structure. It depicts the position of the modern Everyman, and as a "fictional study of the anatomy and dynamics of the country's almost omnipresent corruption," *The Apprentice* is a devastating condemnation. "Both the human story and the stark message come through." However, other critics felt that, in terms of

characterization, the narrator protagonist fails to pique the reader's interest. "He is full of bland platitudes with no trace of humour.... The language lacks freshness and immediacy.... The frequent use of a romantic reverie or stream of consciousness device makes the narrator's soliloquies sound like maniac ravings."

This work is reminiscent of Camus' *The Fall*, although Joshi's environment is absurd and dramatic by all accounts. Mr.P.P.Mehta describes the sustained monologue as "attractive and interesting, but the sentiments sound a false note." RathanRathore, the hero, who becomes estranged from his true self in order to conform to the behaviors that most people find acceptable, differs from the other saints Sindi and Billy in that his scholastic degree is significantly lower. Joshi acknowledges that this novel, with its circumstances and logical results structure, presented him with the most challenges, particularly in terms of language: "I felt awkward putting English in the mouths of characters who do not normally speak it and had to develop a structure where the reader is not distracted by language." I went with the monologue because it is a difficult style." Rathan's life is one of "innocence to experience, as well as self-love to self-remorse."

The Last Labyrinth returns to a theme that Joshi has previously addressed: distance and the crisis of individuality. We meet SomBhaskar, a quarter-century-old current tycoon who is guided by logic rather than faith and is frequented by mysterious voices. He feels gaps within as he puts it in the report, and he finds himself existentially alone, despite the fact that he has a gorgeous and caring wife and two children. Som similarly seeks importance throughout his life, but his path becomes increasingly entangled due to his desire to have the best of both universes—the universe of issue and the universe of soul. Joshi connects the cosmos of reality to the universe of dreams, figments, and questions in this work. The novel's setting alternates between Bombay and Benaras, making *The Last Labyrinth* "a tale of two cities, Benaras and Bombay—one symbolizing Western, rational, industrial, and technological, and the other Oriental, occult, feudal, and treacherous."¹⁰

Arun Joshi's writings re-authorize the predicament of the modern man, snatching through the mundane back lanes of life and reality. His saints—Sindi, Billy, Rathan, and Som—are all 'outsiders' and 'pariahs' making risky attempts to connect with the world. Prof. SrinivasaIyengar regards Joshi's books as a solo work in progress. While the external likeness undergoes chameleonic alterations, the unfortunate individual stays basically the same. Despite their wealth and guidance, his legends are prisoners of their predicament. They genuinely speak to the common man, distant and bobbling in the shadows for an unearthly desert spring. As an essayist, he has been influenced by the *Bhagavad Gita* and Mahatma Gandhi's lectures, as well as Western existentialist scholars such as *Sartre and Camus*. He admits that he has read *The Plague* and *The*

Outsider and that they have influenced him. Joshi is also interested in the figure of Christ and Christian thought.

The City and the River (1990), Joshi's most recent novel, is markedly different from his other works. This is a political fiction that mirrors Indian reality, however the author chose a fantastical universe as its setting. The plot revolves around the Grand Master, who has learned to become the unrivaled ruler of the city, which he runs by the river. The royal house Astrologer's information about the presence of an old prescience that anticipates the coming of a lord animates his certainty. He makes a statement from the castle, marking the beginning of a new era known as 'The Era of Ultimate Greatness.' It warns people to be wary of the opponent within and the foe without, and it fills them with fear and foreboding.

The Hermit of the Mountain, the Astrologer's kindred supporter, reads the foresight differently. He agrees that the prescience is not unavoidable. The hand that made it believes, above all, in man's potential to modify his destiny. So, regardless of whether it is about what happened to a lord, men might behave in such a way, so selectively, that the ruler does not appear. Alternatively, the monarch who arrives is of the right kind. He believes that God is the ruler of the universe He created. The fulfilment of the Grand Master's fantasy is partly hampered by his own councilors, who are preoccupied with the compatibility of their own expectations and goals. The disobedience of men like Bhumiputra and his associates, as well as the resistance of the boatmen who deny the Grand Master's incomparability, further complicate matters. The boatmen consider themselves to be the progeny of the stream, and they are devoted to the canal and the stream alone. They accept, tragically, with their souls, and for their beliefs, they are eager to die.

Despite the fact that he is better known as an author and his books are more well-known, Joshi is also a skilled short story essayist. In any case, some of his accounts are more exact and incisive than his writings. Joshi's qualifications as a short story essayist stem from his subjects' decisions and treatment.

Joshi depicts the modern situation as witnessed and felt by a survivor of the decaying societal request in his accounts. The Gherao is the story of a well-known Principal, Ravi Mathur, who was involved in public development. He had to spend five years in detention as an understudy because he fought for chance, not for himself, but for his clan. He is crippled and disturbed by the disintegrating estimates of advanced understudies who attempt to disintegrate the universe of possibility that millions like him worked to create. When surrounded by his understudies, whom he considers his own children, he feels discouraged and ashamed. He withdraws and dies as a result of a coronary crisis.

Despite the fact that Joshi has not written much, he has done so successfully and capably, establishing himself as a competent fiction writer. According to Prof. Srinivasalyengar, the foremost living authority on Indian English writing, Arun Joshi has a strange capacity obsessed with the craft of fiction, and there is a mix of mind, respectability, and intensity of composing in his work. Joshi explores the crisis of the advanced urbanized world with its dehumanizing influence on the people on the run in his short tales and books. Aside from the topical significance of his subjects, the subtle portrayal, and the realism of his scenes, the criticality of his works rests in the simplicity of his style and his refined taste. Joshi demonstrates an uncommon depth of knowledge of human instinct, and the force and quality of his plausible description makes his works all the more convincing.

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