



EXISTENTIALISM IN ARUN JOSHI'S THE FOREIGNER AND THE APPRENTICE

G.BUVANESHWARI

Sakthi College of Arts and Science for women, Oddanchatram, Dindigul-624 624

Ms.X.CECILIA MARY

M.A., M.Phil., Assistant Professor Research Department of English, Sakthi College of Arts and Science for Women, Oddanchatram - 624 624.

Indian English Literature refers to that corpus of Literature that has been written in the English language by native writers who belong to one of the many regions of India speak different languages. Indian English literature is just about a century old and is said to have begun with the colonization of India by the British people in the 19th century. kind from Indian Literature. It is a part of it, a modern fact of that glory which commerce from the Vedas, has continued to spared its Mellow light, now with greater and now with lesser brilliance under the inexorable vicissitudes of time and history, ever increasingly up to the present time of Tagore, Iqbal and Aurobindo Ghose. Indian novel in English has come into its own only during the post Independence period. It was only after 1940's that the Indian novelist's writing in English came into terms with the political and social realities of Indian life.

Arun Joshi explores deeper into the spiritual crisis of the contemporary Indians. Joshi has to his credit five novels *The Foreigner* (1968), *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The Last Labyrinth*, (1981) and *The City and the River* (1990). The source of Joshi's novels is actually the experience. Joshi, an artist, however, is not content merely to restate experience in a cloudily scientific manner. He feels a need to shape it, a need to discover the reality which lies hidden in the actuality of his own life.

Existentialist writers would return to again and again, as their characters come to recognize what they thought to be true is really false. Unlike the protagonists of existentialist books such as Camus's *The Stranger*, however, Gide's Michael is constantly thinking over his situation, not just reacting, making him a well-rounded character while some other existential heroes come off as being hollow. Existentialism derives from the principle that human behavior is based on nothing except free choice.

EXISTENTIALISM

Arun Joshi is indisputably one of the few front- ranging fictionists of today. He made his debut in Indian-English literature with his maiden novel '*The Foreigner*' (1968). It has been hailed as "One of the most compelling existential works of Indian English fiction" (Prasad 51). With it begun Arun Joshi's Odyssey perennial problems of human existence" (Sharma 38). The novel is thoroughly about existentialism as it is about individual's loneliness and feelings of anguish emanating from this estrangement from the environment, tradition and his true self. Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* is as Khushwant Singh puts it, a compelling work of fiction, which penetratingly, records a grim, but productive encounter with life. This novel may be considered as a love story, as a literary representation of restlessness, or as an artistic triumph that unifies feelings and ideas, characters and events, the prose and the passion of life into an articulate whole. This novel, Joshi has very dexterously handled some serious thought-provoking themes in an unpretentious manner such as rootlessness, detachment, quest for better alternatives in this ostentatious world and self-realization, high lightening our glorious cultural heritage and imperishable moral values.

Problems lies in the fact that if one cannot change the social order,

it does not imply that the society is bad. Rather one needs to actively participate in the system to change it. One can't change the system while remaining aloof to the system and society but by going within that only can help to take out the anomalies of the system and the society. The identity of Sindi is not only the identity of a character of Arun Joshes *The Foreigner*; rather it is an identity of the millions of the young generation of the world, who have a lot of questions but no answer. It is the call of the world that when industrialization and the urbanization are at the highest peak , alienation is the natural result and if this alienation is allowed to continue, the whole system , be it the system of the West or of the East, will collapse and the anarchy and dehumanization will prevail. The identity of Sindi is a warning to evolve a system to meet the need and challenges of the time. Sindi taking the charge of Mr. Khemka's business symbolizes the labour welfare and the induction of the Corporate Social Responsibility.

SUMMATION

In *The Foreigner*, readers find Sindi Oberoi preoccupied with the philosophy problems of involvement and detachment. In an interview with Purabi Banerji he tells: Hindu is a highly existentialist oriented philosophy since it attaches so much of importance to the right way to live (to exist) (Sharma123). The influence of the *Bhagava Gita* is well marked in *The Apprentice*. RatanRathor, the protagonist devotedly follows the karmic principles as enshrined in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Arun Joshi says, "I strongly believe that individual action have effects on others and oneself. So one cannot afford to continue with an irresponsible existence but has to commit oneself at some point" (Srinath42). *The Foreigner* has a remarkable degree of maturity and technical competence well-suited to its theme. While Sindi's in *The Foreigner* depends on his careerisms. Sindi slowly learns that real detachment lies in involvement. In the same manner combination of humanism and religion can be saving grace of mankind stepped in corruption. It has been argued that the novel commends the value of humility ad self-purification. In this sense, the novel is a study of the loss and the retrieval of one's soul. The cause of alienation and inner emptiness of Ratan is not like the rootlessness of Sindi. The compelling force of the civilize society shattered the idealism of the young like Ratan and compels them to turn cynical and even hypocritical. The extraordinary novelty of Arun Joshi is that is a part from making the exquisite study of the underworld of the soul in the people like RatanRathor, Himmat Singh, the Sheikh and the secretary, the Minister has actually covered social psychiatry. The broader topic of this novel is the rotten soul of a whole generation in a nation and the Chinese war of 1962. In the words of the narrator, "Frustrated men sailing about in a confused a society without norms, without even, perhaps, a purpose" (TA 74). RatanRathor realizes that there is no end to human vanity. He is filled with an endless torment of fear. He realizes the gravity of his sin and his life has been a great waste. Hence out of an acute sense of alienation and a quest to understand the meaning of life, Ratan undergoes the sternest apprenticeship in the world that every morning on his way to the office, he wipes outside the temple by the shoes of the looking at congregation. The novelists vision of life, his compassion and sensibility are manifested in the archetypal pattern of conflict between good and evil which it typically Indian.

The crime manifested is amended in the protagonist's mind itself which is hundred times more forceful to a punishment than to what courts of law can conflict. Hence the connection before a student who himself is apprentice is more appropriate.

References

1. Joshi, Arun, *The Apprentice*, New Delhi, 1974.
2. ---, *The Foreigner*, New Delhi, 1968.
3. Mukerjee, Meenakshi.; *The Twice Born Fiction*, New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1971.
4. ---, *Twice Born Fiction*, Delhi: Arnold
5. Narasimhaiah, C.D.; *Awakend Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature*, New Delhi: Sterling, 1978.