

Quest for Self-Identity in the Novels of Arun Joshi

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Abstract:

The present research paper is a considered investigation for the quest of self-identity in Arun Joshi's novels. The real story is his existential crisis and how he struggles like every one of his protagonists, searching meaning and a sense to an indifferent world. This research, following R.K. Dhawan's prudent point of view believes Joshi characters to be continually endowed by cynicism and keep wondering aimlessly in panic regarding their own lives furthermore existence. The characters have to deal with inner turmoil and societal pressures as they are pushed towards self-fulfillment. The objective of this research is to explore these thematic cliches in Joshi's works against the traditional backdrop and develop a profound knowledge on his innovation vandalism themes with respect to self-identity, existentialism. This paper delves into Joshi's narrative, dissecting the psychological and philosophical underpinnings related to his texts through some of his major novels: *The Foreigner*; *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*; and *The Apprentice*. It explores a bunch of related themes — from the protagonists' own struggles personifying those greater questions and alienation, identity fragmentation, authenticity. This research thus seeks to contribute towards deepening understanding of these relationships, associating them in a detailed analysis with the anatomy of an existential question posed by a contemporary Indian writer like Joshi. This paper is to elucidate the alienation and fragmentation of existentialism on its protagonists as in John Brion, *Citizen Kane* based Films.

Keywords: Existentialism., Epitomize, Self Realization, Disenfranchised

Introduction

Arun Joshi, one of the towering figures in written word is widely regarded as an acute exponent of existential issues and exploration for self-identity. Joshi is a long-lived author, born in 1939, and his writing career crosses decades of great productivity on serious themes sensitive to the human condition and the interior — that versus exterior dynamics. His novels, *The Foreigner*; *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* and *The Apprentice* are known for their human consciousness with psychological depth and philosophical inquiry.

To this end, Joshi's characters are characterized by critics such as R.K.Dhawan to exist in a state of existential crisis—in search for meaning and purpose in the seemingly meaningless world.

Such existential anguish suffered by Joshi's heroes compels them to confront their personal demons, and the diktats of a disciplined society founding from within themselves new roads of self realization. Joshi is to the millennial what HiraKawa was to me, communicating with his careful character work and tight plots — stories that get at no less than an understanding of authenticity pf modern paradigms in lives ravaged by chaos.

His introspective nature of writing is poignant that immerse oneself in deeper, psychological and emotional landscapes hidden behind the characters. The series echoes the internal conflict of each protagonist, their personal crises carrying universal themes of alienation, loss and even solipsism — newfound knowledge clearly delineated from Borges-style ramifications. Being a novelist, Joshi has major contribution to Indian literature through subtlety in his depiction of the human soul and it makes his novels as one treasure cove for understanding self-identity at grass root level existing simultaneously with existentialism.

Identity, belonging and purpose define the larger part of Arun Joshi's characters in most of his novels. The examination of self-identity is his signature, as he critically analyses contemporary existential issues with a deep psychological insight. Those who read Joshi's works think where they are, how seriously society has influenced their identities and in what form.

Joshi in his Novels Talking of an Existential Crisis

The protagonists of Joshi are frequently existentially troubled figures, and much else in their work is about searching for a kindling which often involves immolation. The Foreigner has Sindi Oberoi as the embodiment of this quest for a diasporic life, teetering between cultures and identities consumed by an intense feeling of alienation. The searching for a rock of purpose to hang on despite his dislocation, he lacks belonging and thus meaning something that allows him the bridge out of all these parts (sense) of selves. Where early Chander in Apprentice repeatedly shies away from defining a path of authenticity and personal purpose. He faces the dilemma of his part in a seemingly indifferent universe and how he came to exist. The characters in existentialist literature often seek to search for a meaning of their lives, despite the apparent randomness or absurdity that they find. Brightness, of that which few Katya asked with anxiety; and this kind of search is typical for the genre. At the heart of Chander's metaphysical crisis is a fundamental tug-of-war over who he believes himself to be and what his ultimate aim in life should be. Existential themes of introspection, and the discovery and creation of true identity play out in his doubts regarding process leading to finality (decision) as well as a reflection upon whether or not what exists within him is truly authentic. The rebellion of Billy Biswas against the structures and norms within which he is brought up, followed by a retreat to live in the wilderness epitomise his rejection of an existence based on false values for very petty ends. What follows for him is a heavy existential despair with deep dissatisfaction of his life that pushes and compels (and almost forces) to pursue a more existentially valid existence. Billy's story serves as a thematic undercurrent to many of Joshi's stories; the struggle between conforming and true individual authenticity. Billy's disenfranchised with the brand washed "10 secrets to appeasing white guilt" nature of his culture. And, unsurprisingly, he finds pursuing wealth or station or social accomplishment to be unsatisfactory for ... their superficiality. Admittedly, his disillusion leads him to question what he has done with himself and all of the grand things that pervade amidst him.

For Billy, who is wrestling with the idea of who he truly is as a person and feeling like an outsider even within his own parameters more frequently nowadays, has begun to ask broader questions about that unfathomable bridge hovering there between mortal mystery unanswered. He explores many eastern philosophies and ways of life that will allow him to find a deep connection with the world purely beyond commerce, money and status. The analysis will also try to understand how the characters of Joshi react when grappling creatures crazier and indifferent their worlds leaving them depleted, they left embroiled in a perpetual quest for meaning. This section will rely heavily on the reflections of R.K. Dhawan to

light up their difficulties. The Grim Saga of Billy Biswas had finally settled. It had been disposed of in the single way known to a humdrum society for disposing rebels, seers and true lovers. “This is where I belong. That is what I have been dreaming of forever.

Contradictions Inside; Pressure from Society to Perform

Inner conflict and societal pressures play considerable roles in many of Joshi's novels, with emotions ranging from feelings of loss, mental instability or dysphoria on one end to admiration for a place that cannot be reached (when the Moon sets) on the other. The Apprentice evokes the moral dilemmas and compromises that Ratan Rathor faces as an idealistic, socially ambitious young man in a story that charts his passage from personal integrity to his ambition. The soul-searching process which follows is one of confronting the dishonesty and duplicity in his life as a businessman, an honest reflection which results in him realising he has to reassess what matters most to him.

Such inner battles are far from just being personal but they reflect the deeper layers of socio-cultural script. Joshi's characters tend to be caught between milieus where traditional values frequently come into conflict with more modern aspirations. This conflict between personal desire and societal standards creates an environment ripe with introspection; one that lends itself to existential reflection. Billy is under an enormous amount of emotional and cognitive distress from the pressures that mainstream society requires. Because his constant companions were the drive to live up to expectations of people around him, and a fear failing those same expectations. That makes him completely inadequate and at unrest. Societal norms of social status and financial achievement leaves Billy dissuaded to behave otherwise His actions are influenced by so far, the pressure of wanting to be successful and sexually attractive ultimately amplifies his inner unrest.

Journey of Self-Discovery

I found Joshi's novels to be a layered and complex exploration of the journey toward self-discovery. This is what invites an inquiry not only into the self but also about external truths. For Sindi Oberoi, this odyssey takes the shape of a series of connections and experiences that compel him to reckon with his shattered sense of self and desire for coherence. Similarly, Billy Biswas' retreat into the wilderness is at once a literal and metaphoric journey back to his true self; as he attempts to refine in solitude of silence an elimination of spirit with body.

The Apprentice the narrative follows Ratan's self redemption path as he strikes an epiphany and comes clean with his grim wrongdoings before deciding to salvage back his principles And the path to that realizing your authentic self can be long and dark with many obstacles, but I have come to know that such a journey always leads right back into oneself.

Here are a few lines that highlight the process of self-discovery in the book —

“Within an unfamiliar world, I noticed parts of myself that had never been identified.”

The protagonist self-results in this one how new encounters can expose that other side of oneself.

“Even though I did face challenges abroad, the whole couple of weeks made me realize that there are strengths within myself and ideas floating in my head too arresting to remain locked inside,”

It works: the protagonist grows, learns something about herself and emerges on top after overcoming obstacles.

“It was a journey not only across continents, but also through my own layers of identity.

This serves to underline the idea that identity is about travel and new experiences.

Psychological and Philosophical Facets

Through his narrative of self-identity, Joshi also delves deep into the psychological and philosophical layers. The introspective nature of his characters' road trips is a reflection of this, and one that casts long shadows over the ideas put forth by infamous existentialist thought – Sartre but mainly Camus. These themes of absurdity, freedom and authenticity are littered throughout his works exemplifying the existential crises that many of Joshi's protagonists undergo. The protagonist, Billy Biswas goes through a complete identity clash. The main character ditches his affluent city life in India to live out of a sack and take care and protect tigers from poaching gangsters, hence delves deep into the tribal jungle culture. This shows the struggle he is having to fight inside his own head between what he wants and accepting society. Your Quest your story is representing one of the biggest Psycho-logical theme: The search for a more real, deeper self.

In *Apprentice*: as well, identity is something the protagonist grapples with. He viewed his apprenticeship as a path to self-discovery and growth. This battle of the mind is a microcosm for all our trying to find meaning and purpose in life. If wasn't he who showed patriotism than it could have been any body, what mattered more was that because of his money others had started respecting...he paid respect corporate style. Money made friends. Where all else failed, money opened doors. There was so many laws but the money itself is a law«

Part of the motivation for Billy's ultimate withdrawal into the wilderness is his acute sense that he does not belong in mainstream society; The isolation signifies the emotional and psychological pangs of being separated from their societal history — it's not only physical but also philosophical.

The plot device of the hero trying to find his place in relationships and work is a sign that he doesn't really belong anywhere. It follows a mother away from her traditional life, and the isolation of feeling at odds with one's environment discover some as-of-yet thin themes on what makes life meaningful.

Sindi's existential thoughts highlight his battle against life's absurdity and the quest for meaning in a seemingly uncompromising world. Billy Biswas' constant striving after an authentic way of life also strikes a chord with Sartre an ideas on existential freedom, where the individual has to posit their own essence through actions.

Conclusion

The novels of Arun Joshi vividly depict the search for self-identity in man which is reflected through his alienation, dehumanization and a sense of loneliness; an existential crisis where he undergoes mental torment, confusion leading to frustration because he is often caught between desire and duty. In portraying protagonists such as Sindi Oberoi, Billy Biswas and Ratan Rathor with a certain grace that Joshi wades through the psychological and philosophical existentialism of self-discovery. This multifaceted problem essentially goes on to show how of internal conflicts and cultural norms affect life, which is demonstrated in the story "Strange Case of Bill Biswas". This is where the psychological and philosophical elements come in to a much better knowledge of why these characters do sure issues, which revolves around each motive for being right here on this acquainted small metropolis with higher themes tied into it. His work speaks to the core of navigating these abroad experiences that allow us perhaps an even deeper connection to ourselves than ever before.

His works have a deep connect with the existential anxieties of an individual and this inter-woven dynamic between identity, authenticity found within his texts opens up unraveled insights into contemporary Indian literature. This paper underscores Joshi's importance in literary exploration of

existentialist concerns and search for self-identity, by drawing attention to the catalytic transformations that his characters undergo.

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Example

In-Text

Citations

As Dhawan (1986) points out, Joshi's characters are forever burdened by another pressing question of human existence: that is how to make sense in the midst of an indifferent world.

Source: Filmgrenade Pathak (1993) shrewdly divides the kernel of spiritual and philosophical with reference to Joshi's novels, where he painstakingly narrates how character descends into a shell retaining incidence at an overlap in time).

Sharma (1991) points out that the search of self-identity in Joshi's novels is outlined by alienation and deepest detachment from his very world.

In one such article, Singh (1987) draws attention to the psychological depth of Joshi's characters that manifest man in his complete modern existential dilemma and how these desires come into direct clash with long standing social anxieties.

More recently, Asnani (1981) has observed the influence of Western existentialism on Joshi's writing and seen his characters struggling with such themes as absurdity, freedom, authenticity.

Kohli, Asha (1975), contextualizes the kind of cultural and social context in Joshi's novel to suggest that the quest for self-identity is majorly enmeshed with Indian socio-cultural setting.

Arun Joshi and Identity Politics Area—Providing One's Due with Research Paper Help Two-thirds of the way through creating the outline for Analysis of Given Day by Arun Joshi, you have already done plenty in terms of relating his exploration to self-identity issues that resonate today.

— Arun Joshi, The strange case of Billy Biswas