

CHAPTER: V



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

Arun Joshi succeeds in depicting the theme of alienation in his novels. His novels portray man's feeling of anxiety and isolation in the modern society. The modern man is suffering alone to find out the meaning of his life. But all his attempts to find out the meaning are fruitless. He is caught into the strange predicament. He is conscious of his being alone in this absurd universe. He has a feeling of rootlessness from the society.

Arun Joshi attempts to explore the self. He brings to central focus the way in which the self tries to assess its alienation from the family and society. His novels bring into the limelight the distresses and tensions of the modern man. He succeeds in portraying his characters overpowered by conflicting urges within themselves. The protagonists of his novels are hopeless outsiders and isolated strangers.

Arun Joshi's protagonists are lonely and ill at ease in the world in which they have to live. They are mentally disordered. Their mind is filled with despair, self-hatredness and self-pity. They regard themselves as strangers in the physical world. But the more significant thing is that they are humble in learning the lessons which life teaches them. None of them aspires to be a saint. They all experience the claims of love and hatred and learn to meet the demands of their inner selves by out-stripping the narrow confines of the self.

Through the experiences of Sindi Oberoi, Billy Biswas, Ratan Rathor and Som Bhaskar, Joshi portrays the predicament of the modern man. They are highly placed, both by training and by profession, in the society. But they are not society's men. They are driven by unknown and irrational forces. Their inability to escape from this world makes all of them strangers to themselves.

In his first novel, *The Foreigner*, Sindi, the protagonist, feels alienation and loneliness because of his inability to form meaningful relationship in life. He is engaged in the search for wholeness. He loses his parents at the early age. His feeling of alienation is emerged from his childhood deprivation of love, familial nourishment and cultural roots. His life takes him to the London, Boston and New Delhi but wherever he goes, he remains alien.

Sindi's brief affairs with Anna and Kathy teach him to practice detachment and non-involvement in human relations. This detachment later costs him heavily in his relations with June. His cynical detachment drives her into the arms of Babu and consequently to her tragic death. Then Sindi moves to the India but there also he remains alien. He keeps himself detached from the dishonest business ethics of Mr. Khemka. But the plight of the helpless factory workers brings him to the involvement. He, thus, find meaning, a purpose in his life in looking after the welfare of the poor factory workers.

Billy, in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, also presents the human predicament. Like Sindi, he is, also, in search of a way to escape himself

from his alienation. He is in search of the human world of emotional fullness. He is a man of extraordinary obsession destroyed by his absurd meandering away from civilization. He is aware of the deeper layers of his personality. He feels totally alienated from the superficial reality of the life. His is a split personality — split between primitive and civilized. After completing his education, he settles down in New Delhi but there also he remains alone.

He gives response to his souls urges and makes the trips to the tribal wilderness. Because of his obsession, one day he vanishes into the forest. He escapes not from his alienated life but it is an escape into real life. He finds the essence of his life in primitive tribal world. But ten years after his disappearance, his friend Romi discovers him. When his father comes to know that Billy is alive, he launches a big search, leading to Billy's tragic death. Thus, Billy forsakes the existence which is powerless, normless and meaningless. Though, Billy succeeds in escaping himself from his alienation, the materialistic world can not allow him to live there.

Ratan Rathor, in *The Apprentice*, feels alienation in the materialistic world. His ethics are useless in facing the ways of the world. He is a child of double inheritance. On the one hand he inherits the patriotic and courageous world of his father. On the other hand he inherits the materialism and worldly wisdom of his mother. He starts his life with high ambitions and ideals. But he finds himself a misfit in the modern world. He gives up his moral principles to the corruption of the society.

Ratan learns that one is alienated in this materialistic world unless one accepts and adjusts himself in the modern society in order to belong. He takes bribe which leads to the death of his closest friend, the Brigadier. This event turns the life of Ratan. He makes the effort to redeem his sin by shining the shoes of the pilgrims on the stairway of the temple. He realizes the futility of his life. He decides to be of some use to others. His sense of alienation makes him to understand that a combination of humanism and religion can save him from corruption. But the cause of Ratan's alienation and inner emptiness is the civilized society, which shatters his idealism and turns him into apprentice.

Som Bhaskar, in *The Last Labyrinth*, feels alienation because of his spiritual hollowness. He is relentlessly driven by undefined hungers. He loves his beautiful wife Geeta and has two children. Yet, he is existentially alone. He tries to tide over each new existential crisis in his life by indulging in booze and women. He tries to grab another company in Banaras and gets involved in the game of chess. He also tries to win the owner's concubine Anuradha. He flits from one pleasure to another but there is no sense of fulfillment.

Everything in this mysterious world, Som finds, is a haze. At the highest of his love affair with Anuradha, she disappears, conveying the idea that one has to sacrifice something to gain anything. Som is not happy because of his spiritual hollowness. He does not attempt to resolve the contradictions of life through faith. The complications of life can be resolved through intuition and faith rather than science and reason.

Arun Joshi's heroes suffer from alienation because they are rootless. Their rootlessness is due to the lack of their right adjustments or conducts. Of the four heroes Billy alone is able to come out of this predicament successfully and convincingly. While Sindi, Ratan and Som act as the victims of the circumstances, Billy acts with knowledge and conviction against circumstances. While others rationalize, Billy totalizes. Sindi is sorry to deny the reality of the June Blyth. For Billy the Maikala Hills are the only reality. For Ratan his career and for Som his reason is the only reality. In the character of Sindi, Ratan and Som, the novelist has been able to achieve a further excellence by separating the self that suffers from the self.

Thus, we find all Arun Joshi's heroes feel alienation in the modern, materialistic and corrupt society. To escape themselves from their alienation, they involve themselves into womanizing. They make love to series of women. Sindi makes love to Anna, Kathy and June to find solace from his alienation. Billy makes love, including his wife Meena, with Rima Kaul and Bilasia. After meeting Bilasia, he finds the meaning to his life. Ratan makes love to series of women when he returns from Bombay. He gets fond of womanizing. Som makes love, including his wife Geeta, with Leela Sabnis and Anuradha. Only after possessing Anuradha, he finds satisfaction to his restless soul.

Through the projection of his heroes Arun Joshi highlights the individual's capacity for ethical choice and self realization. Man should be committed to and responsible for his finite existence in the world. Parvathy Jeevan appropriately says that, "Like Sartre, Joshi is also primarily concerned with the action that is concrete and directed towards the

individual who is free to choose for himself a personal way of life out of the nothingness and vacuity around him.” (Jeevan, 1998: 33) Arun Joshi’s hero chooses many ways to escape themselves from their alienation.

In *The Foreigner*, Sindi chooses detachment as a possible solution to come out of alienation. He does not want to get involved but wherever he turns he sees involvement. He considers involvement to be the root cause of all problems. In due course of time he comes to the realization that one should be able to detach oneself from the object of one’s love. In the initial stage he becomes detached from everything except himself.

The detachment, which Sindi cultivates to overcome his painful memories and meaninglessness of life, becomes a source of deeper agony to him. His detachment makes him shrink his responsibility. He does not want to take responsibilities. It is his detachment that is responsible for the tragedy of Babu and June. But June’s death finally breaks his detachment. He begins to see the fallacy in it. He thinks, detachment consisted of right action and not escapes from the action. Muthu makes him to realize detachment sometimes lies in actually getting involved.

In *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, Billy chooses tribal life to overcome his alienation. Billy, as we know, is seeking something else than merely a tribal way of living. His search is for the truth to come out of alienation. He sees futility in the materialistic life. He tries to make himself free from the upper-class society. When he comes into harmonious contact

with the tribal Bilasia, he realizes the very essence of life. In tribal life, he gets the real meaning of his life.

In *The Apprentice*, Ratan chooses the ways of world to overcome his alienation in the materialistic society. He accepts bribe to become an apprentice. He becomes selfish to get wealth in order to overcome his meaningless life. However, in the course of time, he comes to realize that life may well be a zero, but it need not be negative. He learns ultimately the lesson of humility and the resignation to the Gods Will. He becomes conscious of the folly of his earlier life. He undergoes the most difficult penance for his earlier misdeeds. He, now, wants to be of use to others. Every morning on his way to the office, he sits on the steps outside the temple and wipes the shoes of the worshippers.

In *The Last Labyrinth*, Som feels alienation because of his rational way to live the life. He struggles hard to come to the terms with life and find out its meaning, but all his attempts are useless. He is curious to know the secret of life. He is fully convinced that all problems can be solved if one has knowledge. However, his dilemma is not solved by his thirst for the knowledge. There is something wrong with the very means followed by Som to attain knowledge. He is the person who does not believe on the faith and God. He does not realize the value of genuine understanding and trust.

In this mysterious world everything is a haze and there is a mystery into which everything is fitted. Som's efforts are directed towards perceiving



and explaining this very mystery of the world. But he is torn apart by his doubts. Against this world of dreams and doubts, we have the world of reality and understanding. It is this understanding born of suffering and humiliation that seems to have been presented as a solution to overcome alienation.

For Arun Joshi the themes like freedom, detachment, loneliness, and selfishness are one. Being asked in an interview by Pier Paolo Piciuccio Arun Joshi says: "They are actually one. I guess freedom (or liberty, if you like), which is both political and spiritual, I have not much dealt with. But the inner-liberation and the outer-liberation I guess are quite important to me. So inner-liberation without detachment is not possible and selfishness is always stopping you from getting liberated. Loneliness is the state where you become aware that you are not liberated and you also do not know how to get liberated. That is the loneliness stage in a man's life." (Piciuccio, 1997: 91) Arun Joshi expresses his views about these concepts. According to him these concept are inter-related.

The novels of Arun Joshi, thus, explore the complications of the soul that languish forever. They tried to arrive at self-realization. They are relentlessly driven by the quest for meaningful life. Their spiritual hunger brings out them worldly prosperity which all of them already has or achieve in the course of their lives. As O. P. Mathur and G. Rai puts it, "In the novels of Arun Joshi man is able to relieve himself from the pressures of anxiety stemming from his terrifying degradation and to regain his capacity for love, affirmation and fulfillment, but only after he has undergone some

very painful experiences in the process of his awakening.” (Mathur, 1986: 153) Arun Joshi’s hero comes out of their predicament, but only after they have undergone some painful experience. Their awareness of the self is inspired by the confrontation with some crisis. The death of June for Sindi, the seduction of Rima Kaul for Billy, the death of Brigadier for Ratan, and the disappearance of Anuradha for Som.

Thus, all Joshi’s novels deal with the theme of alienation. His heroes are alien because they are rootless. They try to seek meaning in the absurd universe. They are torn between their divided states of mind. They can not decide what to do to get the meaning of life. They choose the way according to their approach. But their attempts to solve the contradictions of life are fruitless. They remain alien throughout the novel.

## REFERENCES

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