

## ANALYSIS OF THE FOREIGNER'S THEMATIC ISSUES BY ARUN JOSHI

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### **Abstract:**

*The British formerly looked down on Indo-Anglican literature or Indian English literature, but it has since made sporadic literary incursions and gained recognition as a well-liked genre of Modern English literature. Those who have not lived in this country or among its people but have read works by Indian authors may barely hope to appreciate their quality and unique style.*

*In contrast to other writers, Arun Joshi is a very unique writer who explores themes of human suffering in practically all of his works. The overarching and most notable quest in all of his writings is seeking a clear sense of purpose and direction in life. Joshi's works demonstrate how existentialists like Camus and Sartre have inspired him. Existentialism is a contemporary philosophical movement that deals with "man's" disillusionment and hopelessness and was inspired by the intellectual and literary works of Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre. The principal topics of "The Foreigner," Arun Joshi's first book, are the subject of the current study, which is a critical view.*

*Keywords: Indian Literature, Arun Joshi, thematic concerns, Existentialism, Rootlessness.*

### **Introduction**

The field of Indian English literature has made an effort to push the boundaries of originality and critique. The previous bandages of doubt and cynicism are absent from the current situation and have vanished with time. This literature has received praise from all across the globe. It's possible that the representations of Indians in their writings are what has garnered their authors' attention on a global scale. A large majority of authors have incorporated Indian themes, symbols, mythology, etc. Some of these include societal attitudes, superstitions, religious taboos, and the caste system.

The literary genre of the novel is relatively new to India. Epics, plays, and songs used to have their own histories that go back many centuries. Along with English, regional languages are used to write and publish novels. The Indian novel is a sufficiently rich and recent phenomenon overall. Most existentialist authors were active during the 1950s and 1970s. Three prominent authors of existential fiction are Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Existentialism, a current philosophical movement, addresses the hopelessness and disillusionment of Man. It has its roots in Jean Paul Sartre's literary and philosophical works. Arun Joshi, Kafka, Albert Camu, and others are authors. Arun Joshi is a superb author who has infused his work with a strong sense of detachment from the ordinary while yet recognising its place in the canon of literature.

One of the most distinctive existentialist pieces of Indian literature is Joshi's first book, *The Foreigner*. Despite having different themes, the book is reminiscent of Albert Camus' "The Outside." The book also makes me think of "Bye Bye Blackbird" by Anita Desai.

In actuality, the book explores the struggle of a young guy who is completely lost in a

meaningless world and seeks to shed some trepidation and significance on his past as well as his attempts to find a way to measure his existence in the present. The main character is stuck between the present and the past and is unable to see how to strike a balance between the two in order to measure his life.

Sindhi Oberoi, an Indian born in Kenya of mixed ancestry, feels like he has no connection to his heritage, lacks any sense of stability, and is utterly lost, almost like a foreigner. In an effort to avoid experiencing this sense of alienation, he engages in relationships with everyone and anything that comes his way because he does not desire attachment or involvement.

There are instances that Sindhi Oberoi tries to distance and disconnect himself from the current conditions throughout the book.

Last but not least, Muthu's remark that "Detachment sometimes lies in actually getting involved" encourages Sindhis to realize that the true definition of detachment is "Consistently getting involved with the word."

Since "The Foreigner" progresses through serious views on love, marriage, death, freedom, separation, alienation, and unhappiness, the reader is forced to think about these topics.

The main character and narrator of "The Foreigner" is Sindhi Oberoi. Sindhi is aware that he doesn't fit in anyplace since he is the kid of mixed-race parents—his father is Indian and his mother is British. His lack of parental affection throughout his early years has affected every aspect of his outlook on life and his actions. He thus had a strong feeling of unreliability, denial, and impatience. He is a stranger to his own spirit as well as the other civilizations he traveled between. In terms of interpersonal relationships and emotional origins, he was an orphan.

Arun Joshi's first book, *The Foreigner* (1968), tackles the protagonist's struggle to come to terms with reality when immersed in complete chaos and the meaninglessness of the mind. He cares about the condition of contemporary man and is aware of the different stresses that are placed on the human psyche in this time and place.

Arun Joshi seems to highlight the sense of meaninglessness and rootlessness shared by Sindhi Oberoi, the primary protagonist, and the other character by analyzing the circumstance and the character that represent the problem of contemporary man within the context of the story. As Sindhi's life leads him to London, Boston, and New Delhi, he becomes dispersed.

In the aforementioned circumstance, it is immediately apparent that Sindhi Oberoi is a confused individual who is always looking for purpose in life, even if the circumstances in his immediate environment are highly important to others present there rather than to him. Sindhi is the perfect outsider, as shown by his upbringing and early years. He was raised in Kenya and completed his education in London and America. His mother was English and his father was Indian. When he was four years old, he lost both of his parents and was raised by his uncle, whose passing subsequently robbed him of any remaining leverage in life. According to Sindhi, his life has been "alone in darkness" all the time.

For his mechanical engineering doctorate, Sindhi travels to America. He became close to Babu Kemka there. Additionally, he meets June, with whom he has an intense and private relationship. He had relationships with several females when he was living in England, notably mentioning Anna and Kathy. He liked these relationships, but they all "fizzled out

like an ill packed cracker" because he "couldn't pay the price of being loved". Even though he deeply loves June and is aware that it would be insane to let her go, he chooses not to agree to marry her. He gives the justification that "One should be able to love without wanting to possess... One should be able to detach oneself from the agent of one's love." He makes an effort to convince her of the value of romantic distance.

"Hatred is not the same as absence of love. Hatred is only one kind of love. There is another way to love, one where there is no connection or desire. You may love without being emotionally attached to the people you love. You may love without deluding yourself into thinking that the things you love are essential to you or the rest of the world. Only when you are aware that the thing you love will eventually pass away is love really true.

From the sentences above, it can be inferred that although though Sindhi had the chance to express his affections for June, he instead starts talking about how love attachment and detachment finally lead to possession and marriage. According to Sindhi, a person should be able to separate himself from the person they are in love with. He was unwilling to participate. Everywhere he went, he saw enrolment, he said. Knowing that he had the ability to communicate his love but choosing not to do so and being wholly uninvolved demonstrates the meaninglessness of Sindhi.

June thinks Sindhi Oberoi is a peculiar person who, although being among people, does not like being around them. She claims that, like any other typical person, he lacks warmth and spontaneity. Even Sindhi is informed about this by her.

"You know, there's something a little strange and distant about you." People may not feel like they are with other people while they are with you, in my opinion. You would probably be treated differently everywhere since this Sindhi explains his situation as being alien.

"My foreignness lay within me, and wherever I went, I couldn't leave myself behind."

These sentences suggest that someone with a healthy mind and regulated attitude forgets about themselves and their egoistic ideas, gets along with people easily, loves their company, and is capable of reacting positively and effectively to any circumstance. He entirely loses track of his position, his expertise, and the opinions he values. Unfortunately, Sindhi's life does not go in this manner.

I have loved others as much as I love myself, Sindhi admits in one of his conversations about love with June Blyth. It makes frequent visits, but I'm not to blame. And thus, to be in love in this sense, one must take things seriously and presume that they are permanent. Nothing ever seems permanent to me, let alone genuine, and nothing ever appears to be really significant.

When Sindhi first meets June and gets to know her, he attempts to keep himself busy with work in order to avoid becoming connected with any women. In an effort to learn more about Sindhi's personal life, June tries to engage him in talks about a variety of subjects, including love. He strives to stay impartial and detached during the whole process while yet wanting to physically possess her. Sindhi really struggles with a profound feeling of insecurity because to a lack of parental affection and realism. He says that being in love entails becoming involved, which causes attachment, followed by commitment and marriage. He sees marriage as a painful and difficult journey that is not lost forever. "I was not the kind of man one could love; I had learned that long ago," he admits.

He is unable to love and be loved by others because of his insecurities and emotional shields.

He lacks awareness of the truth and permanence of things in life due to his carefree attitudes. It causes him to become afraid of getting involved.

This attitude of Sindhi points to a purposeful lack of action on his part. He doesn't react to problems on the spot; instead, he continues thinking deeply about what he believes.

Sindhi became a separated man as a result of his traumatic childhood experiences and his interactions with Anna and Kothey. He had seriously considered suicide in his youth. Even though he is among them, his feeling of loneliness is evident in June and Shiela Kenka's statements that he would be a foreigner wherever and Shiela Kenka's comment that you are still a foreigner and you don't belong here. He does not 'fit in' with society, and as a result, his way of life becomes unpleasant. He is enmeshed in his own loneliness, which is made worse by his isolation from the outside world. "In a way, it's been like a small death," he said. As a result, he develops cynicism and exhaustion, gets prematurely aged, and becomes bored of being alone.

Similar remarks concerning Nalini have been heard.

"You want to fit in; you are a member of the last generation, a foreigner everywhere and nowhere accepted, a haven from yourself. Sindhi responds, "You are still a foreigner, you don't belong here. You can't belong. You'll feel as like you're in two worlds and will fall between two stools.

"I questioned whether or not I was a part of the world that erupted below my apartment window. I was conceived without intent by someone. I could have felt that way because I was an outsider in America. However, I wondered what difference it would have made if I had been a resident of Kenya, India, or any other country for that matter. It seemed to me that I would still be considered a foreigner. Wherever I went, I had to leave myself behind since my foreignness was internal.

While pursuing his doctorate in best on, Sindhi links himself with Babu Rao, Khenka, whom Sindhi identifies with. Babu, the overly guarded son of a business mogul in Delhi, believes that Anonica is a haven for free sex. He debates Sindhi.

These sentences portray the idea of Babu Khenka enjoying himself freely overseas. Babu's connections to Sindhis provide a clear image of an affluent and well-educated Indian family. Babu also excludes Indians from his social circle often and solely makes American pals. "I had brought him up with all the care a father can give to a child," Babu's father says to Sindhu. "Even as a child, I had myself taught him what was right and what was wrong."

Babu, a friend of Sindhi's, is described as just "a Kid" who is overly naïve and well-protected and a little bit of a wealthy father's kid.

This overprotectiveness, naivety, and lack of toughness, as well as the critic's accurate observation of it, are what prevent Babu from making decisions and impair his ability to exercise his free will and make decisions. Babu is always in awe of his father, and the idea of failing a test makes him shudder at his father's expectations. He worries about his father's warnings. When June learns that Babu fears his father, she notices and remarks that he looks to be a terrible bully.

Babu can't make decisions, which is why he is drawn to June. They are not produced by Sindhis "because the pain of breaking them was too unbearable" (P.S. 156). Decision-making is impossible for one, while the other avoids it out of fear. Sindhi's rejection to get hitched

June introduces Babu and June. Despite the fact that Sindhi saw Babu and June becoming closer, he does nothing to stop them. When June is asked to join him for dinner one day, she rejects and tells him that she and Babu are getting married. Due to the stress, Sindhi's carefully developed detachment has entirely disappeared, leaving him in a wretched situation. Strangely, despite Sindhi's unwillingness to part with June, he suffers excruciating pain whenever she leaves him. He continues to mumble to himself as he thinks back on his time with her. The weight of his recollections is shown in the sentences following.

"This is where we first met, this is where I purchased a book, this is where she wanted me to kiss, and as the weight of my memories weighed on my heart, I couldn't help but murmur to myself, my lovely! Oh my sweetheart. These words do not belong to "One who should be able to detach from the object of one's love" (P.S. 60), as is readily apparent.

Sindhi is very open about the norms to follow and the way of life to lead. He sometimes displays objectivity and speaks about the inevitable nature of events, yet he always becomes engaged. The announcement of Babu and June's engagement shocks Sindhi. Babu loves June, yet he is constantly plagued with resentment and misgivings. He made a pledge to his father that he would never get married in America, thus he is completely powerless. Babu's actions has upset June, who wants to go back to Sindhi. Without any real intention, Sindhi makes love to her in an effort to make her feel better. Due of his inability to handle June's betrayal, Babu ended up driving himself to death while intoxicated. By having an accident, he escapes with his life. "Look what your detachment has done" (P.S. 184). June accuses Sindhi of killing Babu, and she subsequently perishes herself during an abortion.

As he gets closer to an insight into the essence of existence and activity, Sindhi is overcome with a feeling of regret and shame. The Gita's example of detachment does not imply inactivity, as Sindhi understands. Arjuna had been cautioned by Lord Krishna to take action.

"At the time, being detached meant doing nothing. I could now see its logical flaw. Detachment meant doing the right thing, not running away from it. To teach me precisely that, the Gods had imposed a high price (P.S. 204).

He is warned by Sindhi's inactivity and the murders of two people close to him. He is suddenly aware of everything. He seeks to find inner peace through understanding the purpose of life. He often interacts with Scottish Catholic priests, which helps him to understand that one "Can love without attachment, without desire" (180).

Sindhi quits America and relocates to New Delhi as a result of these startling happenings. A non-engaged individual named Sindhi eventually becomes entangled in Mr. Khemka's company. Additionally, he improves his bond with Shiela, one of Babu's sisters. He is drawn to Shiela because she liberates him and helps him become aware of and knowledgeable about himself. He becomes aware of a bronze statue of the dancing Shiva thanks to the regular social gatherings held at Mr. Khemka's home. The depiction of a dancing Shiva caused Sindhi to completely transform. He is being born again within and is becoming aware of how the law of Karma applies to him. His statement that "we think we leave our actions behind, but the part is never dead" supports his belief in the concept of karma.

The more you strive to hang on, the heavier the tool becomes since time has a tendency of taking its toll (P.S. 181).

With his eyesight having been widened, he has been acting with greater assurance. With the

flow of humanism and comparison, the walls of alienation slowly dissolve. He adds the word "Surrender" to his name since he is fully aware of this new direction in his life and believes that it may provide him a chance to make amends in the future (234). He is incensed by Khemleas' dishonest pralines and decides to assist the underprivileged laborers. He is sent again by Muthu to take up the position.

Sindhi meets Muthu there. Sindhi's life is given a significant opportunity because to Muthu and his issues. Human pain is precompiled in Muthu. From Nuthu, he learns that "sometimes detachment lies in actually getting involved."

In the broader framework of human life, the small immigrant acquires symbolic significance. The physical suffering and sorrow of the protagonist depicts the significance of his existence. The foreigner has an astonishing level of maturity appropriate for his subject.

### Conclusion

The novel's overall title takes on symbolic meaning as the protagonist deals with "foreignness" in his daily existence. The existential hero is a great fit for the reality that detachment does not exist in retreat but in engagement. The book is existential because it explores a character's sense of isolation, agony, and alienation from his surroundings, traditions, and inner self. The existential issues of rootlessness, alienation, and the search for oneself have been addressed eloquently by Joshi.

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