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**Tracing the mythological preoccupation in the writings of Arun Joshi: A Study of The
Apprentice and Mythic Narratives**

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Tracing the mythological preoccupation in the writings of Arun Joshi: A Study of *The Apprentice* and Mythic Narratives

Mythological associations with literary text are conspicuous in Arun Joshi's fiction. His writings have mythic touch both in content and in style. He has tried to modernize ancient myths through his novels. The myths of split personalities which gradually lead to isolation are inter-woven. Arun Joshi's *The Apprentice* is an effort to explore a repentant soul, which strives to find its way in this crooked society. Akin to *The Foreigner* and *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, the present novel too, Joshi defines the unbearable dilemma of the character. At present, in every walk of life, one is bound to face disorder, bewilderment, dishonesty, insincerity and illogicality. It makes the current man, who is beautifully responsive, feel powerless and estranged not only from the culture and his neighboring but also from himself. He becomes injured party to the "petrified and frozen" society of the contemporary abuses world, which he finds not appropriate for his disposition.

His endeavor for alteration goes in vain and creates him desolated. As a consequence, he daringly rejects the so-called cultured society and resisted to determine some meaning of his existence. *The Apprentice* is stimulated by Albert Camus's *The Fall*. Similar to Camus, Joshi also appears to be trying to make his hero simultaneously a picture of mask and mirror of the contemporary man and puzzled as much by the loss of strictures to judge right from the wrong as by the absence of moral values. It explains the pathetic quandary of the modern man sailing about in a puzzled society without norms without direction, without even perhaps, a purpose. It is understood in a confessional form wherein the life of the character is related in the form of an internal monologue. Ratan Rathor, the hero, opens out the way in which he becomes a victim of dishonesty in an urban society during the Indo-China War, before a young N. C. C. trainee like the ancient mariner in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of Ancient Mariner* where he relates about the sin of killing an albatross by him before the guests who were attending a wedding ceremony. Ratan very bravely unmask the unfaithfulness, chicanery, shyness and immorality of his own nature. He is an existentialist in the genuine sense of the term who institutes the belief that man forms his spirit in the route of the life he chooses to guide. Like Sindi in *The Foreigner* and Billy in *The Strange Case Of Billy Biswas*, Ratan Rathor too is an thoughtful recluse whose main problem is to instruct himself in order "to be good", "to be of use" and be polite to the mankind. Unlike Billy Biswas, a mutineer and Sindi Oberoi, a nomadic stranger, he is a realistic man who, receiving his idealism shattered in the dishonest society, proposes himself to all sorts of dishonesty that the current world offers.



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The novel as a disquisition on present social and political image depicts the mourn of a tormented soul. In the words of Hari Mohan Prasad, “The novel enacts three stages in the human – divine comedy of Ratan. The pre-independence period is the dawn, the period of idealism, the phase of innocence; the post independence India is the broad daylight of experience, the inferno of corruption the last part, the area of expiation, is the door to the purgatory.” As a result the novel is a psychological study into virtue, incident and expiation of the protagonist’s life - history. His romanticism and virtuousness get devastated in the corrupt society and he gains knowledge that he has to be sycophant and charlatan and has to submit himself to the dishonesty of the civilization in order to survive. When he misplaces his brother-like-friend because of his own fault, he expiates for his wrong performance by cleaning the shoes of the worshippers.

Ratan Rathor, the son of a twice inheritance — the nationalistic and ideal world of his father and the experienced wisdom of his mother, is a divided character. His self has two opposing parts — the advanced self and the lower self. Ratan is really stimulated by his freedom fighter father. His father was an active contributor in country’s freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. His father gave up his practice as a lawyer and dedicated all his prosperity in order to join the radicals and eventually shot dead by a British sergeant while important a procession of freedom fighters. As he is very much prejudiced from his romantic father, towards the end of his instructive career, he chose to follow the philosophy of his father: “to be good! Respected! To be of use!” (19) and to be polite to the mankind . He needs to join the army of Subhash Chandra Bose and serve up the nation. But his mother, with her experienced wisdom, counsels him to earn money: “Don’t fool yourself, son ... Man without money was a man without worth. Many things were great in life, but the greatest of them all was money”. (20) She is deprived and tubercular woman who has been sufferer of deficiency and that is why she thinks that money is the most significant thing in this world: “It was not patriotism but money — that brought security. Money made friends. Money succeeded where all else failed. There were many laws — but money was law unto itself”. (20)

Her mother is a sensible woman according to whom one should by no means give up oneself in favor of others, not even for one’s state. Ratan finds puzzled by these two opposing philosophies of romanticism and of sensible wisdom and cannot choose which one to follow. The superior self in Ratan attempts to keep him away from “strange bargains with the world”. While, his lower self incites him for the chase of career in life. His romanticism motivates him to join the army of Subhash Chandra Bose. He states: “I am on my way to greatness. I tell myself about to lay the foundations of a glorious future.” (21) He needs to “set out to prove something” (31) and thoughts of the great tasks pending him. At the time when he ends his educational life, his thinking is of a selfless optimist who holds his ideals above all. The carnage of British administration



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makes him thunderstruck and he believes himself by some means or other accountable for it: “Month after month young men were sucked into the turbulence — to be imprisoned or shot down or disappear underground. Every now and then someone I knew was imprisoned maimed or killed and for days afterwards I felt burdened as though in some wave I had been responsible for the killing”. (21)

He discovers the chance to overcome this guilt feeling when Subhash Bose describes people for workers to his army. But all of a unexpected he sprays a prey to his inferior self and all his enthusiasm turns to dust and ruins and he realizes that he cannot go throughout with his dream of a magnificent future. Eventually, he chooses to pursue the career. To get a job he leaves home and arrives at the metropolis of Delhi, a city of prospects. If he falls short in Delhi, it would have been “the sign of the greatest incompetence”. (31) “Tight in the stomach, no doubt, but quite full of hopes”, he goes to all the associates of his father seeking their help in getting a job. However ubiquitously he comes face to face with aggravation and feels himself unhappily alone, discouraged and disenchanted. In the development of making a search for a job, his “back had nearly been broken by the world’s unjust thrashing”. (44) He thinks this world as “petrified and frozen”. For him this world is zilch but “a bundle of mirrors, tempting and somehow held together, hut on the brink always of falling apart”. (18) When he comes in the creepy and money-oriented world, his faith in the values like virtue, humankind, sincerity and understanding gets devastated and he feels himself “struck dumbly by its other face, the ridiculous servility with which it was eager to turn about and adoration the very men whom it had previous thought nothing of annihilating”. (44) The conditions, in which he is hurdle to live, make him consider that chaos, peculiarity, atrocity, imperceptivity, deceit, falsity, nervousness and campaigning are dissimilar facets of life in the so called contemporary civilization. “And so I redoubled my efforts, or rather the frantic thrashing of the great sea of indifference that surrounded me and that showed every inclination of drowning me. My struggles. I imagine, acquired the form of frenzy”. (44)

He turns out to be crazy about his career and is prepared to go to any degree to follow it. He senses mortified by both his surrounds and his own true self. This sentiment makes him estranged from his own self as well as his environment. In the procedure of looking for a job, he faces the embarrassing experience of being “examined, interviewed, interrogated and rejected”. (30) These embarrassing knowledge make him feel unsecured and to shun it he controls to insincerity and deceit. He himself admits: “I had become, at the age of twenty-one, a hypocrite and a liar; a sham. I had been insecured before and full of strange fears.” (28)

He believes that only insincerity and sweet talk can secure him a job. Ratan, alongside his father’s wish, dedicate himself to structure his career to make a development in this money-oriented and apathetic world



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by fair or unclean means. He gets shamed by the fall down of faith: “What hurts is the collapse of the faith that they destroy. You believe there is justice in the world. You go about the world for fifty years, this belief sitting in your heart. Then something happens and you go seeking justice. And justice is just not there. Or you assume your wife is faithful, your children love you, your boss fair, or that God exists. And, then Someday proof comes along that nothing is so. This is what hurts”. (24) Wherever he goes, he finds prejudice, insincerity and infidelity. He does not discover a single man who is truthful, not even the priest. His wife too considers in the pump and show. Anywhere he goes, he locates his faith failing and it hurts him a lot. Ultimately, with the help of a roommate at the inn, he thrives in receiving a job as a provisional clerk in a management office of war acquires. It transports an alteration in his life. Right from the first day in his office he turns into strong-minded to make his Career: “educated, intelligent, cultured and it was my right that I should rise in life, to levels higher than the other aspired for”. (32)

He works “harder than almost anybody in the department except the superintendent himself”. (37) He depends on his education, cleverness and hard work and is resolute to get achievement. He is sure that with these charming characters he warrants a higher level than others who have no flair for vocation making. The “reflexes” urbanized by him cumulatively obtain the pressures of an intuition and incites him to make a development in his career. Ratan, being a passive, “pretending”, “practical”, and Machiavellian man and doing all the time “yes sir, no sir”, knows the significance of compliance, submissiveness, servility, docility, cajolery and chicanery, “the mechanisms of the great Machine” (36) and it becomes normal within him “like breathing”. (35) He has all the potentials of becoming a dark horse who is very talented and eagerly waiting to deliver consequences in his vocation hunt as an official. To amaze his seniors he deceives his colleagues who command an overtime payment for added work. For his generation he is “a whore”, “an upstart”, who quite fragrantly sucks up to his older. Although he revolves a deaf ear to these mocking commentary and becomes thick painful. He admits before his young friend: “I am a thick- skin now, a thick-skin and a washout but, believe me, my friend. I too have had thoughts such as these. But what was to be done? One had to live. And, how was a living to be made except through careers.” (41)

Now Joshi has used the Pascallian tone. With these lines he attempts to establish that it is only vocation which is the most significant thing in one’s life. One wants a vocation to earn one’s income and for this, he pedals his feelings and emotions. He attempts to establish his point that if anyone has to achieve achievement in life then one has to conquer failures and humiliations. He, who once aimed to be a naive person, falters when he observes failure and being shamed by people with whom he would have some prospects, he got discouraged and become an obstinate person who squashed everything which comes in his



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way to get winning career. For this, he even does not trouble about his colleagues' feelings and feelings, and move in front to achieve it at any cost. Here Joshi attempts to discover the atrocities of the world through self-mockery and self mockery.

The romanticism, which deceits in his heart, makes him fidgety in this undeserved and unjust world. But very soon he conquers this agitation by forgoing the human principles and morality for the sake of his career and does all the infamous acts of the so-called civilization like inducement, graft, insincerity, lying, drunkenness, and womanizing. His longing for getting endorsement makes him lose individuality. The romantic Ratan becomes "a thick-skin and a washout". (41) He is made to appreciate that he can get a winning career only throughout "flattery and cunning". (69) He obtains distorted into "a man of ambition" (52) and wants only what outfits his aim. He obtains the trends of contemporary civilization — wiliness, deception, selfishness and easy-going. He marries the niece of his boss in order to get corroboration of his job and endorsement as a supporter with a dozen clerks working under him. Afterwards, he is endorsed as an officer in the department. And in this specialized voyage he is made to appreciate that the world runs on the basis of deals, and "if men forgot how to make deals the world would come to stop ... It is not the atom or the sun or God or sex that lies at the heart of the universe: it is deals". (51) After profession, the second most significant thing in his life is "deal".

His own wedding too is nothing but a "deal" for his career. However we cannot ignore the fact that the separation of Ratan's self turns into more sharp when he approves, of course, under contingent compulsions to marry the niece of his boss. He does not sense happy and undergoes from disgrace. After having approved several "nights of humiliation, nights when you are ashamed of something, ashamed of yourself, when the darkness is full of insults, pointing fingers and mocking laughter" (49), he discovers himself in a mismatched situation. He experiences a sour quarrel between his higher self and inferior self. Ratan's quandary is actually Hamletian. His inner self is divided like Hamlet's and he is glaringly aware of this separation of self. His lower self incites him to train his "choice" liberally to follow his fabric ends on the Sartrean line of existentialistic philosophy. Ratan corroborates to the principle that man shapes his core in the route of the life he decides to lead and that, in his option lays his liberty. As soon as the "deal" of wedding gets done, Ratan turned into an official. He rises in his career through dishonest practices. He promptly recognizes bribe. He possesses a car, a flat of his own, a refrigerator, and also twenty thousand rupees in the bank. With getting more and more achievement, he becomes more hypocritical, depraved and deceitful. He confesses: "The more money I accumulated, the more I was dissatisfied and the more I was



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determined to 'enjoy' life". (189)

The currency, which he earns by unjust means, makes him more disgruntled and he believes more bribes to please his hunger for currency and materialistic possessions. The administrator, who educates him the art of deceiving service, is his role model and he esteems him (the superintendent) a lot; "More than a teacher, he was sort of sage, priest of that obscure cult that rules this country. The officers might have been its princes, but he was without doubt the priest." (43) For him the administrator is just a pastor who lectures him to rise in the life. By following his lecturing, Ratan becomes an administrator in that very workplace where he (Ratan) has labored as a provisional clerk. This dishonest and hypocritical way of life fills a sense of revulsion in Ratan. Although the other part of his spirit, his superior self reminds him of his beyond optimism and his behavior gets distorted. He often evokes about his father's principles. He thinks himself as the best patriot of India. The sad condition of India becomes his favorite topic for conversation. He collects contributions for the territorial army at the war - front. He marks an article permitted 'Crisis of Character' to bring about a revolution in existing setup.

In this editorial, he shows the character of Indian people accountable for the crumple and worsening of the country. Ratan's character is sarcastic. He takes on all sorts of dishonesty current in our society to attain success and on the other hand portrays the Indian people as "a glorious monument in ruin, a monument of which even the foundations had caught canker." (59) He agrees that the rich Indian culture is now being shattered and it is all because of the dishonest character of Indian people. India is trailing its dignity because dishonesty is existing all over country. Ratan's fabric gains through corrupt perform never let him feel at home. Through Ratan's character, Joshi wants to explain the irony of human existence: "We sink and we think we are swimming." (53) Its sarcasm of human continuation that he never understands his collapse until it is too late. Ratan's tragedy is the result of his consciousness that virtually "he has been gradually sinking into abyss of darkness, of corruption. exploitation and bourgeois filth". Yet he has the fulfillment of swimming and not be anxious of sinking. In the chase of achievement through dishonest ways, his ethics gets worsen and knowledge a great downfall but Ratan, ignorant of his ethical degradation, thinks that he is rising in his life and moving ahead on the path of success.

The nervous Ratan meets Himmat Singh, prevalently known as 'Sheikh', who presents him massive bribe and tempts him into a big good deal. He moved down to humiliation and passes imperfect war material, which causes the death of his own brother like buddy, the Brigadier. He gets absorbed in the dishonesty in such a way that nothing seems him extraordinary. He finds himself under arrest in the dishonest scheme of



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contemporary society where “men were weighed in Money or Power”, and obliged to look for “solace from the annals of corruption”. (112) He attempts to exonerate himself: “If I had taken a bribe I belonged rather to the rule than the exception. Peons were frequently taking bribes. So were the government officials and traffic policemen and railway conductors. A bribe could get you a bed in a hospital, a place to burn your dead. Doctors had a fee to give false certificates. magistrates for false judgment. For a sum of money politicians changed sides. For a larger sum they declared wars. Bribery was accepted by factory inspectors, bank agents and college professors: by nurses, priests and chartered accountants: by all those who acted in the public interest. Men took the bribes to facilitate the seduction of their wives, women for seduction of other women. AH this I knew and had known for twenty years.” (112)

Here he wants to give details that dishonesty has increased its legs in every walk of life. In any situation, one cannot flee the dishonesty. If one wants to live in this so-called contemporary educated society, one has to be accustomed to dishonesty in one form or one more. He turns up Bombay, “a city reclaimed from the sea for purposes no other than that of commerce.”(80) There he resolves and cipher a deal with Himmat Singh, the Sheikh and believes a big quantity of money to clear false war fabric to the war-fronts. There he discovers everybody busy in making money by exploiting the chances provide by war. Even a Member of Parliament, “a trustee of the Republic”.(86) takes it so flippantly as if it were a small matter and is not at all concerned about the penalty of the war: “No body lost a war these days, the M.P. said. There were always compromises. To be candid, he whispered. who cared for the wilderness that we were quarrelling over.”

Nobody is worried with the income and loss of the state, everybody thinks only of one’s own benefit. What is more surprising for him is the Sheikh’s aim of life that he “conducts his operations for neither money nor power but in order to destroy” (81), and gets sadistic enjoyment in obliterating “Everything from top to bottom, from one end of the continent to the other”. (81) Sheikh is a sadist being who wishes to annihilate the civilization. Himmat Singh, the Sheikh creates his life as a shoe - shine boy and after that turns into a pimp, a petty thief, a waiter and lastly gets concerned in a minor black market noise. As Ratan Rathor puts it, “with the success of his rackets he was now face to face with the men who had had his foot broken, who had perhaps. made a whore of his mother. Those men had angered him. And then they had made him laugh He had taken first to women, then to drink and finally to drugs.” (145) He is an insurgent who wants to take vengeance on the whole society. He depicts the real picture of Indian society previous to Ratan: “This country had two kinds of people — the rulers and the ruled. The rulers were a fraud — phoney people who knew only how to make speeches, be cruel, and feather their nestpeople who made a mess of things, then



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went off without knowing how to clean it up. The ruled were brainless.” (84)

The monarchs have controlled characteristics who are favorable persons and they whet their skills to take benefit of others from side to side diverse ways, like by giving influential speeches, which persuaded minds of people who do according to them. They occasionally take the path of aggression and are malicious to others to fulfill their petty wants but never care of the punishment of what they did. They bowl other persons into chaos and never make the things in order. On the other hand, the lined people do not believe and relate their mind for what is going on approximately them. They do not use their intelligence that why they are being browbeaten.

When Ratan vacillates before signing the deal that people would come to know, the Sheikh induces him by effective that there is no any law book placed down by God, which they must follow: “There was no such book. Rathor - what existed –was not printed by God but by a silly humanity that would do everything for money”. (76) Here Sheikh denounce the hypocritical nature of civilization where the people themselves are organization after cash and are ready to do any wrong for it and counsel others to fear from God. This enigma of Ratan’s principles and makes him feel that he is going to recognize the backhander when he has no need for money. He experiences an enticing pull and it leaves him depressed. He feels that amazing has gone wrong with his life and he is not where he fits in. He always finds a disagreement going on within him and this inner disagreement obvious in Ratan’s awareness gives an existentialistic feature to the novel.

The worrying question “why did I take that bribe?”(61) quivers his existence. His meticulousness resembles that of Clemence in Albert Camus’s *The Fall* when he declares: “yet I was unhappy about this as if I had violated the code of hour.” He obtains sandwiched between his senior self and lower self. His lower self being more controls than his higher self, hugs the system of “bourgeois filth” (331). He gets cheered up when finds that the concierge of civilization likes ministers, secretaries and bureaucrat are intensely involved in the experienced ways of life in this worldly society. But his superior self often repeats him of his moral poverty. He speaks: “I felt choked, oppressed, rebellious but tied up totally in knots.” (66)

He finds himself tucked in corrupt practices though his inner self drove him to leave this way of living life but in vain. He takes comfort thinking about red tapism common in every nook and corner of the society whether it is administration office or private concerns. He tries hard to break the chains of immoral performance, which he is following but finds himself helpless to pull out from it, and senses demoralized, browbeaten and frustrated.



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He finds himself in a upsetting quandary: "I felt only restless, depressed, painful. Many things concerned me but where I had predictable new attainment, new principles, there were no principles. No standards at all." (66) He needs to attain something new and good but what he obtains is aggravation. He needs to uphold a standard of living but what he finds is that there is no normal of living; there is no one up to the mark. Man can come down to any extent to fulfill his lust for cash and worldly belongings. The fact that he too is a part of this dishonored civilization makes him fidgety and miserable. Ratan acknowledges a cerebral agony, which has a bad result on his physical health. There is a slump in his back and his body curves to one side. His bodily vigor gets lost and he feels himself being "used up" as if the entire world has been using him. His cerebral suffering takes away his sheer energy forever.

Ratan, being a responsive soul, is very much conscious of the insincerity of his continuation. He does appreciate that it is very simple to transport a fine language on Marxism externally but to overcome the innermost monotony and agitation is very hard. He puts it forward as: "And all the time inside, there was no revolution at all. Only boredom and discontent, discontent that bursts periodically into panic." (68) He forever talks of romanticism like Marxism before others but privately, he feels disgruntled puzzled that how everyone is getting wealthier and he is not. All over he observes the lack of social norms. Self is more significant than service. He finds everybody absorbed in fraud, dishonesty and wickedness. It creates grief-stricken man out of him.

When Indo - China War begins and the Chinese intimidate India, the leaders as a substitute of preparing the nation, get occupied in arranging their burning speeches. He gets surprised to see the preacher making wrong statement about the refugee problem and price-hike. He turns into more amazed by the opportunistic behavior of the priest who is accretion affluence by interesting with his escrivore and Himmat Singh to arrange of bogus war material when the refuge of the nation is at stake. He locates graft mellow in the whole society where everybody is passionate for currency as if money is 'the be all and the end all' of human continuation. These days money is beating principles.

The whole society has been made harmful by money - culture. Ratan mourns before his young fellow: "In money's Kingdom, my friend, only money is king. All others are slaves" (77); "It was a kingdom without frontier". (77) Our civilization has turn into the kingdom of currency where money is the only king because it has imprisoned the whole society. Everyone is portion money. The propensity of portion the money increases with the increase of ownership of money. The realm of money has no limitations. Not only one or two civilization but also the whole world is its page. Ratan's conditions make him consider that graft is the



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predictable part of life. He watches people approximately him flourishes on graft, deceit and sycophancy and yet no harm is done to them. It motivates him to be a pure careerist. His ambition to have a good vocation leads him to the wickedness like greed, greediness, womanizing and drinking. Moreover, Himmat Singh's act of indoctrination adds fuel to the fire. A new India with a new set of standards is accessible before him.

In this new India the old ethical values has been restored by opportunism, forgo by self-interest, valour by weakness, sincerity by deceit, bravery by fear, faith by dishonesty, ethics by dishonesty and ideals by deals. He watches that in present India, where there is "a Parliament, and free newspapers, and elections every five years, courts and laws, oaths of offices. Leaders of world repute"(691) only deceits win. All these organizations are made to institute a scheme of truth and fairness but the associate of these organizations, the guardians of civilizations themselves are the congregation of money and to fulfill their wish they decide the path of dishonesty and unfairness. These days, sweet talk has become the key of achievement. It incites Ratan to decide careerism and bourgeois filth. But his superior self, his God - fearing natural world, ignites kindness, religious faith. He considers in the necessary benevolence of human heart.

He often believes of his father's forgo and exhorts: "to be good! respected! to be of use!?" (19) But he is dreadfully conscious of his insufficiency in rewarding his father's prospect, predominantly when he reminisce about his guilt of compliant a bribe at the time when he has no require for money. His philosophy arouse him. One twilight in a shrine, sitting alongside his wife, he senses very worried and speaks completely disconcerted: "But why my wife? It is true her unhappiness got on my nerves, rather frightened me. It fashioned for me a perpetual disturbance, the nagging feeling that our lives had been robbed of an essential substance, that I had somehow failed her. The feeling generated in me a great confusion." (72)

His wife is a womanly with unbounded needs and sadness. Her sadness encourages him to take more inducement and better position in his vocation. Her hunger for more and more comfortable life creates him nervous. He forever feels himself a failure that he could not fulfill her all the wants. However he does not blame her wife for it. He believes himself accountable for all untidiness. This contemplation makes a perpetual uproars in his life and he feels that incredible very necessary has been taken away from him. His tranquility has gone with the growing affluence.

He tries to earn more and more money but is still powerless to meet his wife's needs. This emotion creates him totally puzzled. In this perplexity, he loses his capability to differentiate between the right and the wrong. Flattering glaringly aware of being underprivileged of "an essential substance" of life, he like an



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existentialist shouts in absolute unhappiness: “What had I done, what had I done which I should not have done? What was right? What was wrong? What was the measure for doing things or not doing them? Where were the dividing lines between success and failure, loyalty and betrayal, love and hate?” (72 - 73)

He discovers himself in a fix concerning what to do. In a civilization where everyone is absorbed in misconduct, he cannot appreciate how to distinguish between achievement and failure, authenticity and dishonesty and love and detestation. Joshi has beautifully depicts the inward clash that adds existentialist position to the protagonist’s behavior. He feels self - gave up. His moral quandary minimizes him to “the status of those leaves of autumn that are blown here and there, at the mercy of the wind.” (73) He senses as if all the debasing military are pouring him here and there according to their own requirements and he has no control over himself. The unbearable question “what else can I tell you that would explain my act, why I took the bribe?” (73) dreadfully trembles his susceptible continuation. He tries his best but cannot clarify the suitable reason for his bribe receipt. He is conscience suffering for the act of transient the spurious war - fabric to the war - front that reasons the ruin of so many lives counting that of the Brigadier. Here Joshi’s vision is completely existential. As per to R. G. Das, “Arun Toshi appears very close to Joseph Conrad-Graham Greene and William Golding in the sense that the act of treachery inflicts an irreparable iniurv upon the moral nature of man, and that a guilty Ratan lives inescapably in the presence of his conscience. He too realizes, as Razumov does in Conrad’s Under Western Eves, that all a man can betray is his conscience.” (5)

Ratan believes himself “a nobody” who has lost all implication in life: “I was a nobody. A Nobody. Deep down I was convinced that I had lost my significance: As an official: as a citizen: as a man.” (73). He gets his life as a total misuse and thereby he has lost his significance. He believes that he is a stoppage as a bureaucrat as well as a human being. Having knowledgeable the painful existentialist quandary, Ratan symbolizes the characteristic modern man: “at once everyman and nobody.” (6) Joshi has symbolized him as a typical dissatisfied modern man who is “sailing about in a confused society without norms, without direction. without even, perhaps, a purpose.” (74) The modern man is obliged to live in a state of incomprehension where there is no set code of conducts, which can express him what to do.

He has not set aim of his life. He always remnants in a state of perplexity. He does not appreciate the reason of his deeds. At the onset of his realistic life, Ratan believe hypocrisy and trickery as valuable for his career and accomplishment but after having accepted so many years in this crooked system, he gets fed up with the obtainable system of deception and stratagem. His conditions make him separated and estranged not only from his civilization but from his own self too. He acknowledges the crisis of individuality He is keen to



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know that what he really is – “a master faker”, a charlatan, a sham or a martyr’s son. He like Joshi’s other characters, is an admirer of *The Gita* that lectures people to do ‘Karma’ surrendering attachment and that if a man needs to self - realization, he should donate all events to Him (God) with his mind fixed on Him, concession all obligations to Him and looking for sanctuary in Him. Ratan gets involved in *The Gita* when he takes note of a speech of a Swami Ji who asks men to relinquish their acts.

It confuses Ratan. He cannot recognize “Renounce to whom? Where? How?” (90) When for the first time he is presented a bribe of thousand rupees by a contractor, he shelters it and thereby forces him bankrupt. He gets perplexed that his act is right or wrong. He argues it with the Superintendent who dishonestly remarks: “nothing but God exists. You can be certain only of Him... God was only worried with what one did with the money.” (46) As per the Superintendent nothing but God lives forever and superiority of money is judged by the end to which it is put. Ratan gets more confused by Superintendent’s remark.

The Superintendent pacts that it is the end that validates the means. However Ratan’s idealist father, follower of Gandhian philosophy, has told him that the means validate the end. These two opposing remarks make him utterly confused. He cannot recognize as to what type of God He is who has nothing to do with the idea of good and evil. He requires understanding of God only for knowing the relevance of his actions. He feels troubled and practiced an inward clash. With the passing of the time, his demonstration becomes stronger. His higher self gets suffocates. His soul gets beleaguered. His aloneness and self - alienation increase the tragedy of Ratan. He says in despair: “And all these years. I have been alone, so horribly alone in my anger, in my failures, carrying them in secret, like a thief, close to my heart, until their blazes have turned upon me and turned me to ashes. Believe me. I have seen it happen. I have seen my soul turn to ashes.” (74 - 75)

The mentioned lines explain the sharp crisis of his moral separation. He feels that the fires of loneliness are ablaze his soul and thereby obliterating his continuation. In Bombay while he believes of entertaining the life, his “inner emptiness”, just like his shadow, escorts him all the time. In Bombay “at a sprawling villa”, all the distinctiveness of the so-called elite society exposed before the protagonist: “A retired Major - General was roundly abusing, in the filthiest of language, those who were hostility: some already dead. It seems to me that almost everything I heard or said or did that evening was in one way or another obscene. I was, in fact, at the peak of the dung heap that I had been climbing all my life.” (85) That party was laying bare the insincerity of modern society.

Thus it can be said that Joshi’s *The Apprentice* is well designed novel in terms of its narration and



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characterization.



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