

## Personality Description in the novel *The Apprentice* by Arun Joshi

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### Abstract

The most prolific Indian novelist Arun Joshi is considered as a new vision in Indian literature. In his themes, he rejects the world around him in approval of the inner consciousness and engages himself in the inherent search for the ethos of human living. His novels' basic concern is human dilemma and so he attempts to picture, in all his novels, the inner crisis of the contemporary man. He deals extensively with certain ridiculous problems which emerge as forces to demolish every sphere of human life. Joshi's hero Ratan, in *The Apprentice* gives the image of present society. His novels signify the kinds of perceptions in the society as well as the life style which is imbued with the ambitions of the people. The entire novel adopts the oration mode of narration; the protagonist Ratan Rathor narrates his experiences with a lens on his eye to capture the hard realities of life. Rathor, the son of a freedom fighter, struggles to exist between two different ideals of his parents: the Gandhian's flawless ideas of Ratan's father and the bourgeois attitude of his individual mother. As the novel carries the inner disputes of an individual with the alien world, he learns the strategy to lead a life of his own. The hero, being caught between conflicting ideals, he ventures to follow his expedition of life, however, the expedition, in a world preoccupied with several ideologies, is not an enjoyable one as the entire world stands in his way as an enemy. They are unable to grasp their personality in such a world of upstanding scepticism. The character, feeling isolated from the society, this paper focuses attention on how Ratan in the novel *The Apprentice* shows the real life in the contemporary world as pictured by the author Arun Joshi.

**Key word:** psycho – narration, existentialism, crisis, consciousness.

### Introduction

Arun Joshi's novel *The Apprentice* proclaimed in the year 1974 is his best outstanding work. Joshi, in this novel, highlights the material aspect of the present world and its impression on the present life of man in every aspect of life. Ratan Rathor, the hero of this novel, is torn between two different convictions of life and living. The theme of the novel presents the current situation prevailing in India. The writer Joshi uses the special technique followed by his dramatic monologue. This novel records the disclosure of Ratan, who is born in the pre-independence India.

Ratan loves his father most, but, unfortunately his father gets killed in the struggle for Independence. Ratan's father is an ideal man who always insists Ratan to be a true patriotic. To his father a man learning a personal life is like "Bourgeois filth" (32). But, Ratan's mother points, "It is not a patriotism, but money, she says that brought respect and brought security. Money made friends. Money succeeded in life, where all else failed. There were many laws, she said, but money was law into itself" (TA19). The contradiction in the principles of his parents one wants to be devoted to the nation and the other wants to amass money land Ratan in to a crisis. According to Tapan Gosh, "Crisis is in the soul of an individual, who is entangled in the mess of contemporary life with its confusion of values and moral anarchy and his untiring quest for a remedy lie at the core of Arun Joshi's exploration of human reality in *The Apprentice*" (90).

Arun Joshi is different writer as compare as the other Indian English novel writer as he begins his absorption in solitude and also moves towards emotional twist of inner consciousness. Although Arun Joshi's conflict does not concentrate on the traditional concept of present social, economic, political orders, whether he intends to deals with the psycho - narration of his characters. This story, *The Apprentice* is talks about a senior officer

Ratan Rathor, is the Defence department, in the period Indo China disputes who trust a large sum of money to procure defective war material from Himmat Singh, who exercises prominent influence of protagonist. Arun finds on how Ratan Rathor become a victims of corrupt modern society. The period of the novel is pre and post-independent India. In a period of two decades, Ratan grows from boyhood to a Kingpin. Adopting a note of satire the novel apprehends the essence of the post independent India and portrays the scenario between the past and present situation.

Ratan is casual man who belongs to the metropolis area with a lot of belief to seek a good job. But, he experiences a lot of problems and unable stands the streak realities of city life. All his dreams about urban life, ambitions and desires get discoursed. His significance and passionate spirit started by declination and lives a life full of understanding. Throughout the novel there runs a thread of persistent disputes in the Ratan's mind that is toil links with romanticism and pragmatism. Actually, Ratan is a child of dual endowment. He takes patriotic and pragmatic ethics of his father's devotion to the country and his mother's materialistic perception of life.

Ratan is an innocent young boy, who seeks to establish his life in Delhi by searching a career. Rathor says, "And I have no doubt that, with their help, I makes a mark on the world, a mark as visible and striking as my father's (23). While he finds fall of nation and humiliation of moral ethics. In the dishonourable bourgeois community Ratan tries to evaluate his morals and ideology at every step. His friend's death affects Ratan severely forcing to lose his mental peace and derives him to commit suicide.

Ratan lives the dual life endowed with the patriotic, human egocentric and intelligent universe of his mother. His father, an embodiment of honesty, gives up his legal profession, and even sacrifices his life. Being a believer of sacrifice he believes the Gandhian faith of non - violence. He is shot by a British Sergeant leads a sequence of patriotic fighters. While Ratan is tenacious by suckle his father's ideal but his unexpected death creates a void and frighten him. His mother brings him, face to face, the terribly true materialistic world.

After Ratan comes from college after passing his exams and grapple for a job, he soon finds the honour of realities of the son's freedom fighter is not a practical values. His father's sacrifice for the cause of national freedom has left behind only suffering for his survivors. His mother has been suffering tuberculosis and cannot perfectible treat for money. He undergoes several enbattaces experiences while looks for a job. His intelligence and education does not rescue him. At this moment Ratan finds himself as a shark position:

“And what is more shattering than the breakdown of a faith? Nothing that I know of. It is not the facts themselves that hurt. 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” (TA 23).

Ratan enhances a contemporary man is filled with a sense of terms – devious, ambiguous, egocentric and easily – going. He goes with his mother to see a girl he is marrying knowing a full competency that her accord is bare a formality and feels that his marriage is also to be degraded into a contract. This night while the train is going his mother comes upon a painful agony for him. He endures from this humiliation and can't sleep for every night: “Apart from all these are the nights of humiliation's, nights when you are ashamed of

something, ashamed of yourself, when the darkness is full of insults pointing fingers and mocking laughter” (TA 47).

With an agonized ethics of Ratan's encounter of Himmat Singh, who provides a large incentive and persuades him to strike a major contract of deformed war materials to the army. Ratan discerns less truth relates to his country. He obtains grit from his utterance that each one has been gathered prosperity by makes use of chance thrown out of the war. He approves the imperfect battle which is in the unexpected in the death of his close friend Brigadier. It is only that he realises his after the death of Brigadier faults: “What happened to me during that time and this? That is what I ask myself time and again, without getting an answer” (TA 59). And “How could it be so? How could men who had burnt away twenty years of their lives for a cause do things that would so surely make a wreck of it?

How could they possibly change so suddenly?” (TA 60). He criticizes the triumphant feeling for his humiliation. He finds himself confined in the corrupt system where money rules everyone's inner conscience” (TA 62).

Ratan converts rich with wealthy life starts slaughtering the concept that has guided him during teenage period. A journey of his diligent of inner minds to collapse the ideals and morals. He calls himself a nobody without an identity:

“I was a nobody. A NOBODY. Deep down I was convinced that I had lost significances. As an official; as a citizen; as a man. How could then my actions have significance? What significance was there in steering a boat that had no destination or watering a tree that would never bear fruit?” (TA 70).

Though Ratan looks up to Bombay, “It seemed to me then that here was a city reclaimed from the sea for purposes no other than that of commerce” (TA 76) gives him consciousness that tied up a parliament “trustee of the Republic” (TA 82). Ratan is astonished to know that the Sheikh, “. . . Says he manages his operations for neither money nor power but in order only to destroy” (TA 77) and acquires heartless pleasure in destroying that even, “Everything, he said. Everything from top to bottom from one end of the continent to the other” (TA 77). Then, the leaders were cheating people who know only how to make address, be rude and their consciousness makes an article without his knowledge. All such things that Ratan leaves him need to be old dispiriting feels that has gone mistakes with his life. His reality is tormented by the questions because he feels that he is accepting the bribe when he really does not need money. His similarity with Camus Jean Clamence states, “Still I am unhappy about this, as if I had evaluate the code of honour” (Camus: 47).

The agonised stage of Ratan mind results in his physical ailments. He himself observes stoop in his spine, as his body bends on one side. He loses his physical fitness and feels mentally disturbed. His dissimilarities himself with his father and the Superintendent who had been his inspirations once;

“For some reason this disfigurement of posture disturbed me. The best men in my life – my father, the Superintendent the Brigadier had marked them out from the crowd, a briskness that I had envied and emulated. Not without success. I too, at one time had been complimented on my demeanour and here I was slouching and slumping and yawning every five minutes of a crisp winter morning. It was rarely that I had seen those other men yawn except when they were ready to go to sleep or something” (TA 67).

Joshi’s illustration of Ratan’s soul turn in to ashes is a confirmation of his moral humiliation and segregation; it occurs due to the affluent unhappy life. In an evening time, hesits by the side of his wife inside the temple before the idol of God, he feels demoralized and speaks thoroughly disturbed: “That evening, as I sat with my wife at the temple before the

great God, the God of courage and renunciation, that evening as I sat courting and watering at the mouth before this great god I was already beyond his pale” (TA 69). His wife is also aggrieved in spite of their opulent life and material prosperity. Ratan comments with a feeling of irretrievable loss: “But why blame my wife? It is true her discontent got on my nerves, rather innerved me. It created for me perpetual disturbance, the nagging feeling that our lives had been robbed of an essential substance, that I had somehow failed her” (TA 69).

After returns of his Brigadier friend from the Indo China war are lost from the Brigadier, Ratan visits the Brigadier who is terribly ill. “The man whom I had always looked up to and who had been the nicest to me, was in panic, scared out of his wits” (TA 90). Suddenly Ratan takes the Brigadier to admit in the Emergency ward of the hospital. That time, he recollects their childhood memories, that Brigadier saved his life, when he was attack by hooligans. It is a satirical fate that becomes responsible for Brigadier’s refuge from war and Ratan is scared to see his friends’ condition; “I watched him with a sense of doom.

And watching him. I remembered the autumn evenings on an athletic field and in the growing dusk the cry of the nightingale. Believe me, my friend, that was a rare, honest moment in my life” (TA 100).

Ratan travels in the novel with from different identities. The youth stage and utopianism, stage of adulthood and leads in a tough life style, the stage of discouragement and delinquency and finally the stage of contrition. His father’s life is dotted with courageous moments diverted towards the cause of Indian independence and he earnestly tried to reproduce his father’s ideals by joining Subash Chandra Bose’s army, “lay the foundations of a glorious future” (TA 20). Though his draws awaits him, his feeling suffused with pleasure and contentment at the sacrifice his all promise of a reward, that is identification with his father and respect like him.

The novel protects the natural psychological needs of a child who wants to win gentle appreciation for his general heroic achievement. But, in the last minute, the memory of his father’s death strengthens his decision to join the army. He weeps in humiliation and feels ashamed of his own cowardice. An opposite kind of situation created by Bernard Shaw, in *‘Arms and the Man’*, where the captain Sergius, engaged to Looks, leads his battalion forward into distressed action without much information in which, however, because of the imperfect arguments in the opposite camp, he becomes a hero in the battle of Silvia only the enemy’s guns fall through:

“And there was Don Quixote flourish like a major, thinking he’d done the clever thing ever known whereas he ought to be court martialled for it. Of all the fools ever let loose on a field of battle that man must be the very maddest.

He and his regiment simply committed suicide; only the pistol missed fire that's all" (*Arms and the Man's* 17, 1983).

The reference of the Chinese invasion, reminds the same thing that happened to them. They get much better army, but those weapons fail because of defective missiles.

Over the course of time Ratan raises as a king of corruption and he feels not only nervousness but also a kind of indifferent attitude within himself, "Upon me. Inside me. Like a boil. Like Leprosy" (1974, 66). His role in the betrayal at the national hazard makes him realise that he "was a liar as crooked a liar as any common thief" (1974, 148). He tries to get out of "the crookedness of the world, the crookedness of oneself" deals with the conscious decision in as such kind-hearted by wipe the shoes in outside of temple.

*The Apprentice* is close to philosophy. As Thakur Guru Prasad says:

"Ratan Rathor, the protagonist of the novel, conforms to the dot to the dictionary definition of existential the doctrine that man forms that man forms his essence in this course of the life to chooses to lead. He is born a good man, the son of a martyr in the national movement. But when he goes out of his village to graduate in life of the crooked world, honesty does not get him even the lowest job, and he makes his essence as he goes choosing the life he leads" (99).

Ratan's confessional mode of the narrative is also an assertion of his real pursuit of identity which had been a description of offensive dilemma which persuades him on to act as disgraceful with his other associates in the official hierarchy. Ratan's confessions make it obvious that *The Apprentice* is an ironic hymn to the corrupt people as a satire. Through the narrative Ratan reveal a fake Indian character. This is to be discerned at the political and bureaucratic levels. Its existence at the lower official level is a deliberation of the people around us.

The pursuit of Joshi's hero is directed towards probing the consciousness of the meaning of life and the realization of self-knowledge. The problem of the self is anticipated to draw the consciousness of the people. This problem dealt in the novel of Arun Joshi is the problems of the modern man. In this novel, Joshi's hero endeavours to understand himself by turning inside and enlarge outside. The pursuit of a of spiritual commitment is the primary concern of the novels. This shift towards interiority, preoccupation with independence self- identity or realization of the inner consciousness and the psychological treatment of agony, estrangement, isolation and anxiety are the techniques like self – introspection, interior monologue, dream succession and archetypes are the signs of fictional modernism in Joshi's novels.

## Conclusion

Through this novel, Joshi expresses the predicament of Dislocation, retrieval, nostalgia, passion, shame, and serenity. These elements are alternate flavour a narration, wisely refined, used as a technique which is always at the mood of moment. Though Ratan's soul a character fights at the same time unfortunate circumstance of pride that forces him to perceive reading this novel.

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