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Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.isrj.net



CONTRIBUTION OF ARUN JOSHI IN THE INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH



M. D. Awari

Head Department Of English A. A. College Manchur

Abstract:-Arun Joshi was born at Banaras (Uttar Pradesh) on July 7, 1939. He was the youngest child in his family. Prof. A. C. Joshi was his father. He was Vice Chancellor of Punjab University. He was an adviser in the Planning Commission and Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. He was married in 1964 to Rukmani Lal. He passed B.S. from Kansas University, U.S.A. in 1959. He passed M.S. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, U.S.A. in 1960.

Keywords:Contribution , Literature in English , Planning Commission , automotive.

INTRODUCTION

He joined The Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co. Delhi as Chief of its Recruitment and Training Department in 1961. He was Head of the DCM Co-Operate Performance Assessment Cell and Secretary, DMC Board of Management. He was Executive Director, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. He was associated with Shri Ram Centre for Art and Culture and Hindu College Delhi, as Member of their Governing Bodies. After 1965, he set up his own industries. Diesel engine machine tools, foundry products and automotive parts are some of the products manufactured by his industries.

Arun Joshi wrote novels and short stories. He has published the following novels.

1. The Foreigner (1968):

The Foreigner is a seminal novel of Arun Joshi. Sindi Oberoi is the hero of this novel; who is a globe trotter. From his childhood he is rootless and alienated and he suffers from a crisis of his identity. He has travelled Nairobi (Kenya), India, London, and has been influenced by mysticism under the impact of a catholic priest in Scotland. His relationships with various European girls such as Anna, Cathy and American June Blythe do not stop his worldly hungers. He comes in contact with Sheila, Khemka's daughter. The crisis of identity in the novel surfaces at various levels of plot and characterization. The Foreigner has several thematic problems in it. But it is, above all, a study in the crisis of identity arising out of the different manifestations of alienation.

The Foreigner is primarily an attempt to explore the hazards of the heaving structure of existence. True happiness and real salvation are found, it is argued here, in one's relation with others. Person in communion with person can transcend his narrow, isolated selfhood. The novel is a moving portrayal of Sindi Oberoi's unhappy, lonely and meaningless existence. Thus, Sindi is a psychic case. He purposelessly ponders over his life. His cause is not a study of an

individual, but the whole mankind suffering from the modern disease like rootless, powerless, abnormal , cultural estrangement, social isolation and self estrangement.

There are three considerations: prescribed duties, capricious work, and inaction. Prescribed duties mean activities in terms of one's position in the modes of material nature. Capricious work means actions without the sanction of authority and inaction means not performing one's prescribed duties. Sindi forgets the last tenet altogether. In fact Sindi wishes to become a 'yogi' without acquiring the pre-requisites for becoming one. Describing some of the characteristics to become a 'yogi', Lord Krishna says:

"Sense objects fall away from the abstinent person, leaving the longing behind. But even that longing ceases when one realizes the supreme."

"The turbulent senses, O son of Kunti, do violently snatch away the mind of even a wise man who is striving after perfection" (2000:226, 229).¹

Detachment in Sindi's case is another name for inaction. Unlike Arjuna he confesses his ignorance. Yet he sticks to his concept of 'detachment' and 'non-involvement' until he meets Muthu who is really a 'Karmayogi'. It is from him that Sindi learns his lesson of Karmayoga. Muthu also suggests:

"Maya (illusion) keeps the reality hidden. It is all Maya"(1968: 22)². Muthu defines for Sindi the ideal of non-attachment or non-involvement as it is preached in The Bhagavad Gita.

The Foreigner is existential to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga. Arun Joshi's information about The Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads find expression in the novel which he does in a very spontaneous and subtle manner. He mentions the concept of 'karma' enunciated in the Kathopnishada. The Upanishad says that no action of ours goes unrewarded or unpunished. Sindi uses the concept both in right and wrong senses. He uses it in the wrong sense when he blames Mr. Khemka, Sheila and the civilisation for the Babu's death.

The archetypal image of the dancing Shiva, which is a product of Sindi's racial unconscious, is a symbol of this paradox. The sorrows and delights, the possessions and bereavements of the ego dissolve into unreality. Arun Joshi's attitude towards life is that of a positivist. So, the protagonist of this novel, though a cynical alienated young man, belongs to a prolific species both of life and literature. He appears to have discovered his home in India where he accepted challenging job and probably found the perfect woman of his heart's choice. His journey from America to India has been a long one indeed but fruitful, his pilgrimage from "Existentialism to Karmayoga."

Through *The Foreigner*, Arun Joshi reveals to us his keen awareness and understanding of a deeper reality of our times. The search for meaningful existence ends when one achieves the state of happy co-existence and harmony with his fellow beings.

2. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971):

This is chronologically Arun Joshi's second novel published in the year 1971. Billy Biswas is a hero. Romesh Sahai is Billy's friend, who is known as Romy to his friends. He is the omniscient first person narrator. He had been with Billy Biswas in the U.S.A. Romy appears for the IAS Examination and gets through it. He becomes a collector of Jhansi. Romy has to be actively involved in the novel. Romesh Sahai, along with Tuula Lindgren, a Swedish researcher, understands the nature of Billy Biswas. They have no confusion regarding the root cause of the crisis of identity in the character of Billy Biswas.

Arun Joshi has divided the novel into two parts. Part I is up to 98 pages and Part II from Page 99 to 244. Harish Raizada has divided it into three parts. Part I - 'the civilized world', Part II - 'the primitive world', and Part III 'the impingement of the civilized on the primitive world.'

Billy is always plagued by some kind of inner crisis and duality in his character. He was sent to America for an engineering degree and the parents never knew that their Bimal had switched over to Anthropology in which he got a Ph.D. degree from an American University.

Billy speaks about his experiences with the Oriya tribal near Bhubaneswar. He also recollects his impression of the sculptures of the Konark's Sun Temple. Tuula's assessment of Billy's character is very correct. He escapes into the tribal world deserting the world of civilization and the members of his family including wife and son. Yet the Buddha is a kind of an archetypal figure upon which Billy has been moulded in some respect in the context of the urban society versus the tribal world.

Billy's escape from a civilized society to a primitive world is not for the sake of his becoming a yogi. Bhatnagar rightly points out that Billy "renounced this materialistic society and civilization not to be an ascetic but to fulfil all the demands of his self to the perfection of participated joy" (2003:100)3.

Thus Billy Biswas prefers leading a life with the primitives to that of a city society where one has no time to stand and stare. The tribals are not interested in the mundane affairs but only in the rhythms of nature. Billy Biswas is called a rootless and helpless man. Thus Billy is very critical

of the organised society and its so-called measures of civilization.

As regards *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, we have to realize that Billy as Purusa is in the grip of the crisis of identity until his union with Bilasia as a symbol of prakrtti. Billy's soul is never at rest. The novelist as an omniscient commentator writes about Billy that, he was one of those rare men who have poise without pose. This is hardly completely true.

3. The Survivor (1976) (collection of short stories):

Arun Joshi is one of the most prominent of the post-independence Indian English novelists. He published only one collection of short stories - *The Survivor*. It came out in 1975 after his first three novels *'The Foreigner'* (1968), *'The Strange Case of Billy Biswas'* (1971), and *'The Apprentice'* (1974). He was to write two more novels before his premature death - *'The Last Labyrinth'* (1981), and *'The City and the River'* (1990).

The Survivor comes in the middle of his literary career. It is a collection of ten short stories which include a starkly realistic story like "The Homecoming" as well as a fantasy like "The Intruder in the Discotheque". The psychological insight for which Joshi's novels are known is very much in evidence in the stories of this collection. Like most of his novels, his short stories also provide an illuminating commentary on the erosion of values in contemporary society.

The first story of this collection is "The Gherao". It describes the gherao, the seige that the students of a college put around the principal of that college. The short story also makes a comment on the changed political ethos of the country when the police officer who has been called to the college to deal with the gherao shows his unwillingness to do so.

Arun Joshi's attempt at social criticism is not so successful in the second story of the volume "The Frontier Mail is Gone." In this story a poor young girl lands herself in flesh trade willingly because this seems to her to be only way to meet the rich and the glamorous people.

The next short story "The Eve Teasers" is quite short in length. It is about two eve teasers whom the writer calls Ram and Shyam. They are two good for nothing young men hailing from well-to-do families.

"The Boy with the Flute", the next story of the collection, deals with the complications, sex, particularly the unsanctioned gratification of it; brings in the life of a man. But here also Arun Joshi has tried to give it an unusual end and this gives it an aura of mystery. Mr. Sethi, a highly successful businessman, takes up a mistress to alleviate the depression that suddenly overtook his life.

The Survivor is the next short story. An obsession with sex in which a man loses his balance of mind is the theme of "The Survivor". In this short story, Joshi has succeeded creditably in depicting the inner world of a young domestic servant who passes through a series of experiences in life, most of which are unsavoury, but still retains his naiveté which ultimately proves his undoing.

The title story of the collection "The Survivor" depicts the search of a modern man for happiness in life, a

recurring theme in the novels of Arun Joshi.

"The Homecoming" is the best story of this collection written on the background of the Indo-Pak war on the eastern front of what was earlier East Pakistan and later on come to be Bangladesh. It is one of the most powerful anti-war stories written in English. The central character of the story is a young army officer who has returned from the front after cease fire. He is the son of a rich industrialist and so he comes back to a world of opulence, fashion, parties and spoilt youngsters.

4. The Apprentice (1974):

The Apprentice is chronologically the third novel by Arun Joshi. All the heroes in his novels have been educated in British or American universities. This novel is distinct from other novels. Educationally, Ratan Rathor, the hero of this work of fiction, is a "home-spun" one.

In The Apprentice, as Prasad writes, "Through self mockery he exposes the world. Self remorse will rehabilitate him. The fall contains recovery; it is a necessary process of his individuation." Ratan Rathor exposes hollowness of the Indian political and social systems. Professor Prasad has rightly pointed out that, "The novel is both a social document and threnody of a tormented soul." (2003:113)⁴

The main thrust of the novel is a contrast between pre-independence idealism preached by Mahatma Gandhi; "a man of suffering" and post-independence disillusionment. Ratan Rathor is the son of a freedom fighter. He has been an eye witness of his father being shot dead while heading a procession; shouting patriotic slogans such as 'Inquilab' and 'Sarfarsi ki Tamanna'. Ratan is the child of double inheritance. His father, an ardent patriot, gives up his lucrative practice as a lawyer to join politics at Gandhi's call. He donates his income and property to the national cause, without thinking of the difficulties faced by his wife in running the family. She is herself tubercular. She coughed and spat blood. Ratan reminisces that in living with his tubercular mother, it is like living with death.

Ratan Rathor is torn between the world of his father's idealism and mother's pragmatism. He takes an extreme course to amass money for him by compromising the entire idealist given to him by his father.

The Apprentice deals with Ratan Rathor's adolescent innocence, manly experience and saintly expiation. It is the protagonist; Ratan Rathor, who narrates the story of his life and times to an N.C.C. cadet who has come to New Delhi to participate in the Republic Day Parade. The novel reads as a cynical hymn to corruption which has a biting and corrosive edge.

Thus begins Ratan's life as an apprentice clerk. He keeps his eyes upon careerism despised by his father as bourgeois filth. But Ratan ignores this and works hard to please his superintendent. He gets confirmed in the service on his assurance that he would marry the superintendent's niece.

The Apprentice is a self analysis by Ratan of his own crisis of identity and consciousness. He narrates the story of his life in the form of a dramatic monologue in which, time and again, he dwells upon his character. He goes on with his affairs and not till his Brigadier friend commits

suicide on being court-martialled does he feel anguish.

Ratan Rathor, in his introspection, feels that the most striking aspect about his life is a discrepancy between idealism and realism. He had high hopes as the son of a freedom fighter; but in his practical life he associates himself with the biggest of the frauds. Ratan sometimes even gets disillusioned with the concept of, and the word freedom. He speaks in the monologue: "Freedom, freedom what is freedom but a word; my friend? Freedom is nothing but freedom of man and nation. It is more than a word. We thought we were free. What we had, in fact it is new slavery. Yes, a new slavery with new masters....." (1971:63)

The Apprentice is not only very close to existentialist philosophy, but also Nishkama Karmayoga's philosophy. In his life full of compromises and deals, Ratan's conscience is restless and he spends sleepless nights.

In the case of Ratan Rathor we come across both these types of alienation. He is alienated from his true self in the process. Ratan's distinction between zero and negative contains in it a subtle point of life's philosophy. His life might have been a zero. He upholds honour, so that his life should not degenerate into a negative one. Ratan's awareness of the need of a positive attitude to life. The Nishkama Karma is beyond the zero, negative and positive attitude. The Apprentice as a sarcastic hymn to corruption is also a satire. Through the narrative Ratan goes on to expose a duplicity in the Indian character. This is to be seen at the top political and bureaucratic levels.

5. The Last Labyrinth (1981):

The Last Labyrinth is the fourth novel written by Arun Joshi. Som Bhaskar is the main character in the novel. The Last Labyrinth deals with the problems related to the academic and the industrial world. It is a quest for meaning in life. The narrative located mainly in Bombay and Benares; is an account of Bhaskar's business deals and love story. Running alongside is Bhaskar's crisis of identity. It is also concerned with the business and personal relationships. Som Bhaskar is himself a businessman. He is highly educated in the world's most famous universities. His wife 'Gita' is beautiful and his love affair with 'Leila Sabnis' in Bombay and 'Anuradha' in Benares are mentioned.

Som Bhaskar writes a research paper on Pascal at Harvard. He is also of Krishna and Sermons of the Buddha at Sarnath. In both the words of business and love, he explores possibilities of new experience. But his indulgences have also an inner contradiction in that the more he runs after the material needs and sensual pleasure. He is dissatisfied with his existence and cries, "It is the voids of the world, more than its objects that bother me." Yet he is always haunted by an insatiable cry of "I want, I want, I want" (1981:11).

Leila Sabnis is a philosopher and psychologist and a polyglot divorced by her executive husband for her reading too much. She has rightly analysed the character of Som Bhaskar when she refers to his problem of identity. The identification is more at the level of the inner personality than the outer. Som Bhaskar denies having any quest of his for mystical identification as a Hindu. He psychoanalyses his own character in the context of his family background. His father was perturbed by the perennial questions of science

and philosophy regarding the first cause and this gave father melancholia. His grandfather had been a contrast to his father.

In business life, Som Bhaskar has little of his father's character. His mother died of cancer when he was just fifteen. His father did not live long after Som established himself in business. The quest for the unknown labyrinths touches him in his associations with Anuradha and Gargi. He comes in contact with two ladies, Leila Sabnis, and Anuradha at Aftab's Lal Haveli in Benares. The two ladies are contrasted. Som Bhaskar and Leila Sabnis are well trained in philosophy and psychology. She had an M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Michigan and other degree from London. Som's encounter with Leila Sabnis whets his erotic urges. His next encounter with Anuradha becomes of a kind of an obsession and has an abiding influence upon him. She is a symbol of antique beauty. The demon of love so overpowers him that he visits Aftab Rai's Lal Haveli in Benares. This mansion is built like a labyrinth which is a central symbol of life and death in the novel.

Aftab Rai's family has a great ancestry. His great grandfather had been a courtier of Wazid Ali Shah who settled in Benares where Lal Haveli was erected. Aftab is a man of culture and refinement. He lives with Anuradha as man and wife, but does not claim any possession of her.

Anuradha's history is a variegated one. She was born in Biharsharif of an insane mother who earned her livelihood by singing for her customers. Anuradha was known as Meera in her childhood. She suffered many humiliating experiences. As a child she was sexually abused. She joined the film world where she was seduced by her producer. It was Aftab Rai who lived with Anuradha in his Lal Haveli though they were not married. This is very amazing to Som Bhaskar to whom Anuradha says; moreover, "I can imagine I am married to Aftab. I can imagine I am married to you. My mother used to imagine she was married to Krishna" (1981:128).⁷

Som Bhaskar considers everything about Lal Haveli to be enigmatic. Like the building, the persons and places also become symbols in The Last Labyrinth. To Som Bhaskar, not only the Lal Haveli but also the streets and the bank of the Ganga in Benares and inhabitants of the maize like structure become labyrinthine. Anuradha is as mysterious to him as her sudden disappearance from Lal Haveli.

Aftab Rai introduces Som Bhaskar to Gargi. She is deaf and dumb and communicates by writing on her pad. She asks Som not to quarrel with Anuradha because "she is your shakti" (1981:121).⁸

In his hectic business life in Bombay, Som suffers a massive heart attack. On his mysterious recovery from it he contacts Anuradha who expresses her inability to see him anymore. Gargi in the end agrees to do the miracle on the condition that Anuradha would give up Som Bhaskar forever. Som tells to Gargi, "I want to take not only the shares but also Anuradha. It scares me but I have no choice." Gargi advises Som against it and writes on her pad, "God does not work in the simple manner. God does not seek revenge." (1981:113).⁹

Yet Aftab allows Som to see Anuradha who advises

him to leave Lal Haveli for his safety. Anuradha's disappearance is a mystery. Som Bhaskar comes back disappointed to Bombay where he sees Tarakki, Aftab's driver who used to kill snakes at Lal Haveli. Aftab's letter is full of his inner anguish due to Anuradha's disappearance and he too vows revenge upon Som and curses him. The character of Som Bhaskar, as known in The Last Labyrinth, is that of the violent inner world of an industrialist. He loses his mother at the age of fifteen and at the age of twenty-five, his father.

Though he has become a chronic patient of insomnia and is always accompanied by his family physician Dr. Kashyap, he runs after satisfying his undefined hungers and that leads him through a haunting world of life, love, God, death, the greatest of all mysteries and the last labyrinth. There is a strange contradiction in Som Bhaskar's character. There is difference between his principles and action.

At the symbolical level, the Lal haveli stands for the maze of life and the Last Labyrinth of the title is death itself which is even more mysterious than existence itself. The narrative of The Last Labyrinth is mostly a tale of two cities represented respectively by Aftab and Bhaskar. Som Bhaskar is aware of the roaring hollowness, terrible loneliness and the overpowering void about himself.

The crisis of identity in The Last Labyrinth is not due to the confrontation with society but with forms and forces beyond the recurring of reason and science. The Last Labyrinth does not seem to close with any positive progression of ideas. Till the end, Som Bhaskar fails to get reconciled with the problems of life and death, science and religion, miracle and reason.

6. The City and the River (1990)

The City and the River is a political fable. It is using a mixture of fantasy, prophecy, and a startlingly real vision of everyday politics. This novel is truly a parable of the times.

The city represents the city state governed by the Grand Master, who runs it with the assistance of a Council of Advisers. The river passing by the city symbolizes the endless flow of life of the real sons of the river on the outskirts of the city.

The novel opens with a prologue and ends with an epilogue. It has nine chapters narrating the rule of the Grand Master, who is becoming kind. Prologue and Epilogue inform us of the narrative strategy of the novel. The great Yogeshwar is an ageless seer and teacher at whose feet several persons of the novel such as Astrologer, the Minister for Trade and the Hermit of the Mountain also received education. The prologue tells us about the last day of Nameless-one with the great Yogeshwar. The great Yogeshwar celebrates his pupil's thirtieth birthday.

The great Yogeshwar teaches him the secret of the body and that of the spirit and how the spirit gains the control of the body. He also teaches his pupil the way of the pilgrim and the way of the warrior. The great Yogeshwar teaches him everything but tells him nothing about who he is. Nameless-one is aware of the music and the dance prevailing in the infinite spaces of the cosmic night and he feels as vast as sky and as tall as a mountain.

The City and the River is the narrative novel, which comprises of two hundred and fifty pages. The great Yogeshwar then goes on to tell him of the fact of the periodic disintegration and regeneration of the city and its different activities. In Epilogue, the great Yogeshwar sends him back to the city. The great Yogeshwar tells the Nameless-one of the endless repetition and periodic disintegration and sends him back to the city.

The sage promises him that he would be with him as an instrument "of the great God in the highest heaven who is the master of the universe." Regarding the fate of the city, the great Yogeshwar elaborates, "On the ruins of that city as always happens, a new city has risen. It is ruled by another Grand Master... To someone this replay, this repetition of things, might appear as a charade, a joke. But then, whoever said the good Lord did not have humour"(1994:262)¹⁰.

Prologue and Epilogue do not bring the cyclic motion of the novel. There is nothing concrete about the narrative, but these prepare us for the interpretation of the novel as a whole. It is like extracts from some allegory or parable. Arun Joshi's interests in these have shifted from the narration of the personal crisis to that of the public. It has certain deeper associations as well. These are associated with certain mythical archetypes. There are many other archetypal patterns in these episodes. Usha Bande Ponts out that, The great Yogeshwar is "purana purusha" and the Nameless-one is symbolic of the Manu on the raft on the day of the "pralaya" saving the Vedas. The great yogeshwar is like Lord Krishna; who is as vast as the sky, and as tall as the mountains. The Nameless-one is like a Christ-figure (2003:136).¹¹

In the novel, the majority of the characters are not known by their personal names but by the positions they hold in the hierarchy of the rule. The city is governed by the anonymous Grand Master, who is 'the son and grandson of Grand Masters.' The palace is situated on the tallest of the seven hills. The Grand Master's ancestors have lived in this palace for seventy years and he is fond of his people; but it is not always so. The Grand Master loves the city as also have his ancestors done. He has set up a council of the friends of the people on the Advisory Council which has five members on it, such as the Palace Astrologer, the Minister for Trade, the Education Advisor, the Police Commissioner and the Master of Rallies. The Palace Astrologer and the Master of Rallies are rather unusual figures in an administrative set up. But Arun Joshi has done so in his design as a fantasist to expose the hollowness of rulers and administrators.

The Grand Master has become a king and all his actions are directed toward the achievement of this goal. The boatmen are poor but their numerical strength goes on increasing. The boatmen rebel against it. Much though the Astrologer wants them to act according to the Grand Master's benevolent rule, the boatmen do not get reconciled to it.

Arun Joshi goes on to tell us about certain important persons not only in the administration but also in people belonging both of brick-colony and the mud-colony. Dharmavira is a police officer working under the commissioner. It is he who has arrested the boatman and the clown. His father's younger brother is an astronomer, known simply as the professor. Bhumi Putra or Master Bhoma is a

boatman who has received training as a mathematician at the feet of the professor. When Master Bhoma is himself arrested, the Jeep taking him to the gold mines; dashes against a post. He goes to see the staff secretary at the Education Advisor's office.

Arun Joshi goes on to tell us about the council and councillors appointed during the Era of Ultimate Greatness. Many of the boatmen are rendered homeless when the Grand Master's wife wants the avenues leading from the palace to the river straightened to provide a scenic view of it. In The City and the River, Arun Joshi also portrays the discrepancies arising out of the caste hierarchy. The Grand Master belongs to the high caste people. Bhumi Putra or Master Bhoma belongs to the mud-hut. There is a kind of hatred lurking not only between the haves and have-nots but also between the high and the low castes. Varieties of political malpractices have been mentioned in the novel.

The city state in the novel runs with the help of the police and the military atrocities committed upon the innocent poor. To subjugate the poor rebellious boatmen, the Grand Master requires more guns. References to political malpractices are scattered throughout the novel. The third point in the charter refers to the persecution of the prisoners in the Gold Mines. The City and the River has a parable within a parable which is there in the narrative pattern.

One of the final episodes in the novel is the meeting of the Council of Ministers in which they unanimously appoint 'the Grand Master' as the king of the city. When the Nameless-one wants to know when this time comes the Hermit replies, "That you will know when the time of action arrives. The main thing is to prevent this endless repetition, this periodic disintegration. But to achieve that we need purity." We have to shed off "egoism, selfishness, and stupidity" (1694:262-263).¹²

The City and the River follows the technique of fantasy which E. M. Forster treats to be one of the aspects of the novel. Fantasy, says Forster, "implies the supernatural, but need not express it"(2003:149).¹³ There is deliberate mixture in The City and the River of the real and the imaginary. Arun Joshi takes his characters into no-man's land, the past as well as the future.

The city in which the action of the novel takes place is "a nowhere city." The river, the symbol of the continuity of life, is also nameless. The ageless yogeshwar has a disciple known as the Nameless-one. Bhumi Putra, a symbol of rebellion, means the son of the soil. The characters represent not only the types but also individuals. Among the existential tenets such as absurdity, anarchy, meaningless, alienation, and despair is the authenticity of the self. The characters in the novel either lack in the authenticity of the self or possess it to a great degree. The professor as a representative of the brick people, sacrifices himself to preserve the authenticity of his self.

The Grand Master is above all, "a master of ambiguity" (1994:197).¹⁴ His dreams of becoming a king get sometimes disturbing. He is not the lone figure suffering from this kind of crisis of identity and authenticity. The Rallies Master is a child of the boatmen. He is a good listener and people confide in him and out of his sixth sense can be read out secrets.

The professor is a star-watcher and a teacher of Master Bhoma. He feels that they have brought him 'complete freedom.' The professor is imprisoned in the Gold Mines where he dies. Bhumi Putra is a representative of the son of the soil. He is also a boatman who has received education and become a teacher.

Dharmavir is a police officer who in the beginning of the promulgation of the Era of Ultimate Greatness works very enthusiastically for the police force and the Grand Master. He is not only faithful to the Grand Master and the police commissioner but he also expresses his disagreement with the police commissioner when he goes to search the Grand Trader's premises and to arrest him; he finds nothing incriminating. The Grand Trader is a friend of Dharma's father-in-law and says that Dharma's wife Shailaja used to play on his knees and he being a son-in-law deserves to be treated well with gifts. Dharma fails to reconcile himself to the situation. Dharmavir is an anguished personality. Dharma is made in-charge of arresting the culprits who disobey the Era of Ultimate Greatness.

Later on, Dharma gets so depressed with the affairs of the state and the organised state terrorism that he collapses in his illness, and is treated at the Rose Garden. He is tortured to death in the organised attack on the Rose Garden.

The Minister for Trade is the Grand Master's cousin. He is one of the disciples of Yogeshwar. The Grand Master is disturbed by a strange kind of lurking fear in his heart which makes him obey the Grand Master and offer his allegiance to him. It has been hinted how the Minister's father was dead.

The Education Adviser is a high-caste man and a wearer of sacred thread. But he has discarded it and formed a shock Brigade which is controlled by his son who organises students as human dynamite. He is not happy with the police commissioner. The police commissioner belongs to the class of boatmen. In his heart of hearts he has sympathy with the boatmen. The professor goes to him to enquire about the disappearance of Master Bhoma. The police commissioner expresses his displeasure with the high-caste Education Adviser who begins the politics of cast antagonism.

Dharma's father is a profiteer. He suffers from a strange kind of disease. He feels like crying, yet cannot cry. Kumar writes about Dharma's father that his existence became one of zero. Even his physician advises him some spiritual medicine besides the physical, "These pills may do well or they may not. You should also do exercise. You should exercise your soul (1990:134).⁵

This is a fantasy novel. It has some hazy characterization. This is to say that most of the characters in it are flat ones and not round characters.

The questions posed in the novel are metaphysical in nature. The great Yogeshwar advises the Nameless-one to know, who he is. He also wants him to remember. What he is inside governed, what he reads outside. The great Yogeshwar impresses upon the Nameless-one of purifying himself of egoism, selfishness, and stupidity. Karmayoga and Nishkama Karmayoga are purifying all human being in the world. When one is away from egoism, selfishness and stupidity, he becomes purified a Nishkama Karmayogi. The spirit of the novel is fatalistic. In the city of the future as well,

the character types also remain unchanged.

The great Yogeshwar says that we need purity. Men are simply instruments of the great God in the highest heaven, who is the Master of the universe. All these are nothing other than notes of fatalism to which the narrative of the story also leads us. This is the far more optimistic novel than Joshi's earlier novels. This novel is also very close to Karmayoga.

Destruction and creation go side by side. In this cycle, the human nature also remains unchanged. Despite all, the existential message of *The City and the River* is deeply religious. Human beings are free to choose and it is this choice of theirs that makes them lead their existence in the world beset with paradoxical problems. This novel is deeply religious, so is very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

The city is the symbol of the king i.e. the government. The river is the symbol of the common people in the world. The city is called all cities. The River is called the mother of cities. The Grand Master rules the city by the River and is determined to become its unchallenged king. The novel is polysomic in nature. The first part of the novel is as the parable of the times. The second part of the novel discusses the localised circumstances that man creates for himself and ultimately gets entangled in. The third part of the novel discusses the social dimensions and analyses the thorough inability and limitless limitations of human beings. The fourth part of the novel puts up the findings together and makes necessary generalizations that are warranted. The main focus remains upon the impossibility of being and the being of impossibility. The novel is not only political but also religious, so the novel is very close to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

The plot of the novel revolves round the story of the city by the river which is ruled by the Grand Master who is visited by a dream in which he sees himself as the king of the city but surrounded by boatmen ready to attack him. The headman of the boat people, who is a woman, does not agree to abide by the new rules made for the city.

The professor knows that all the reports about the conspiracy are fake and decides to tell the truth to the people. The professor's death makes Bhoma very sad. The title of the novel symbolizes the juxtaposition of two opposite forces - one manmade and the other natural.

The palace of the Grand Master is situated on the Seven Hills which symbolizes the seven lands of knowledge described in the Upanishads. The fearful dream of the Grand Master implies the Grand Master's fear from the boatmen because dreams are, as Freud says, "The unconscious mind where in lurk and spoil basic impulses of the race and also thwarted personal desires"(2010:228).¹⁶ The unconscious mind's function is near to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

The river looks after her children and chooses persons to be her interpreters. The river is also symbolic of the Great Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh in the Indian religion. Like Brahma, she has created the city; like Vishnu, she provides sustenance to it; and like Shiva or Mahesh, she goes on taking the poison for the well being of the city; but when angry, she also destroys the city. The whole city is drowned in the fury of the river but as she is the

universal mother of the city, she knows that people will again come to her to live by her, and in due course there would be another Grand Master more tyrannous than the one whom she has recently killed. The River is the Great Trinity which is near to Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

The characters of the novel are symbolic. Yogeshwar means, god of the yogis. One becomes yogi when one has self control through meditation the purpose of which is to produce mystical experience and the union of the individual soul with the universal spirit. In the novel, Yogeshwara is really the god of the yogis, the Hermit, the professor, Bhumi Putra, the Little Star, and of course the boatmen.

Yogeshwara is sure about the possibility of man's freedom from the bondage of cycles. His parting words to the Nameless-one proclaim it, "The question is not of success or failure, the question is of trying. ... But purity can come only through sacrifice. That perhaps was the meaning of the boatmen's rebellion"(1994:263).¹⁷

This preaching obviously based on the Karmayoga of The Bhagavad Gita is the vision offered by the novel.

CONCLUSION:-

In this way we can say that Arun Joshi is one of the imminent Indian Novelist. He wrote five well known novels such as the Foreigner, The Strange case of Billy Biswas, The Apprentice, The Last Labyrinth and City and the River. He also wrote a collection of short stories named Survivor

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