Chapter - 4

Consciousness of Death in the Novels of Ajneya
Chapter - 4

Consciousness of Death in the Novels of Ajneya

Ajneya is an eminent novelist of the Hindi language. Like poetry, he has given a new and bold turn to fiction also. Chronologically speaking, Hindi literature could not achieve as desirable a growth in content and technique as the Western literature because of its being relatively new. This is, perhaps, the reason for not finding fictionists like Tolstoy, Mopansa, Dostovosky, Hardy and Dickens in Hindi. They could not take advantage of the developments in psychology also. It is necessary to override tradition for achieving unprecedented or revolutionary growth in fiction. Although, Jainendra Kumar and Ilachandra Joshi tried to break free of the tradition of Premchand-Era, they could not spread their feelings and views. Deficiencies of background were mainly responsible for this. Ajneya succeeded in spreading his timely and useful sensitivities under such deficient conditions. However, it is also a fact that readers of Hindi Literature were not familiar with those new sensitivities. But, by and by, this sensitivity became spontaneous and natural.

Ajneya’s novels reveal individualistic truth. Freud has divided the inherent tendencies of an individual into three main categories --- Ego (अंह), Fear (भय), and Sex (काम/सेक्स). A person does not get freedom from these instincts throughout his life. He has held Eros (रति) and Thanatos (मृत्युब्रोध) as the two faces of the same coin. ‘Consciousness-of-Death’, besides Love, has found projection as the basic instinct and inspirational energy in ‘Shekhar
Ek Jeevani’ (शेखर : एक जीवनी) and other novels. Clearly, ‘Death’ and ‘Contemplation-of-Death’ have found special elaboration in the novels of Ajneya.

4.1 Characteristics of Consciousness of Death and Ajneya’s Novels:

‘Contemplation of Death’ is found in all the three novels of Ajneya. All the nine characteristics or basic instincts are visible in the novels of Ajneya --- ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani (Part 1, 2)’ [शेखर : एक जीवनी (भाग 1,2)], ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ [नदी के दीप] and ‘Apne- Apne Ajanabi’ [अपने–अपने अजनबी]. These instincts are --- ‘(1) Death and Contemplation of Death (मृत्यु अथवा मृत्यु चिन्तन), (2) Deliberation on God (ईश्वर चिन्तन), (3) Humanistic Reality and Truth (मानव व्यावहार्य और सत्य), (4) Insignificance (निरस्तरता), (5) Feeling of Void or Emptiness (शून्य का एहसास), (6) Restlessness (Worry) (व्याप्तता अथवा चिन्ता), (7) Existence of the Other (Alienation) (‘पर’ का अस्तित्व परायण), (8) Circumstance (परिस्थिति) and (9) Time-boundedness (कालबद्धता).’ Ajneya’s novels can be evaluated on the basis of these characteristics.

4.1.1 Death and Contemplation of Death (मृत्यु अथवा चिन्तन):

‘Death’ has been presented as a matter of deliberation and a problem in all the three novels of Ajneya. So much so that ‘Consciousness of Death’ occupies the beginning of the novel --- “शेखर : एक जीवनी” (Shekhar : Ek Jeevani). Shekhar, the hero of the novel, is a revolutionary who has been sentenced to death by hanging. The changes that take place in the character of Shekhar on confronting death-sentence deserves observation. What is the importance of Shekhar’s thought? Introducing Shekhar, Ajneya has written --- “शेखर कोई बड़ा आदमी नहीं है, वह, अच्छा भी आदमी नहीं है। लेकिन वह मानवता के संचित अनुभव के प्रकाश में इमानदारी से अपने को पहचानने की कोशिश कर रहा है!” (Shekhar is not a well known person. Neither is he a good person. But, he is honestly trying to understand
himself in the light of accumulated experience of humanity.) It is clear from Ajneya’s statement that the hero of the novel is inquisitive and honest. He scans his life without any conflict. He wants to find out the utility of his bygone life by recapitulating the past. And he wonders that if success eluded him in completing any of his work, then what was the meaning of living such life. In other words, the first question that arises in the mind of Shekhar relates to the significance of life. An emotional and thoughtful person surely wants to see his life as a meaningful one.

Shekhar is a revolutionary who is sentenced to death by hanging. On hearing the sentence, he is not afraid but undertakes the review of his life. His reaction on hearing about ‘Phansi’ (फाँसी) i.e., ‘the act of hanging to death’ contains curiosities and not fear of death --- “फाँसी। जिस जीवन को उत्पन्न करने में हमारे संसार की सारी शक्तियाँ, हमारे विकास, हमारे विज्ञान, हमारी सभ्यता द्वारा निर्मित सारी क्षमताएँ या औजार असमर्थ हैं, उसी जीवन को जीने में, इसी का विनाश करने में, ऐसी भोली हदयहीनता-फाँसी!” [‘Phansi’ (i.e., ‘the act of hanging to death’) !] When the ‘Life’ which is incapable of creation by employing all our world’s powers, our development, our science, all the capabilities or tools of our civilisation, then what an innocent heartlessness - ‘Phansi’ in order to snatch a ‘Life’, to destroy it !] Death is not a fearful thing for Shekhar. Thinking of it makes him contented. He does say --- “जीवन-पथ के अंतिम पड़ाव का पायेय ही यही है, क्योंकि मुझे इससे और इस मात्र से, तून्नि मिलती है ......” [This is the provision for the last halt of the path of life because I get fulfilment from this, and this alone ......]

The aforesaid thought belongs to the mature life of Shekhar. Shekhar is trying to relive his life from childhood till date again. He has thought about ‘Death’ seriously. Death is only scary for ordinary people. It appears strange to Shekhar that “जिन्हें दुःख है, दर्द है, वे सदा मृत्यु मांगते रहते हैं, उसके लिए प्रार्थी होते हैं,
Those affected by grief and pain always seek, and become a candidate, for death but Death is a very frightful thing for them and they shiver on mere thought of it.] It appears to Shekhar that such people do not love life because they are afraid of death. He says, "जो मृत्यु से डरते हैं, वे जीवन से प्यार कर ही नहीं सकते; क्योंकि जीवन में उन्हें क्षण भर भी शांति नहीं मिल सकती..." [Those afraid of death cannot love life because they can never get peace even for a moment in their life.] It is, indeed, impossible to get peace for those who remain afflicted by the fear of Death throughout their life. Shekhar does accept that he did not get love and bliss in his life, but he is also not afraid of Death which for him is not a frightful event. For him, Death is "एक सिंहतिमत कर देने वाली घटना! एक हल न होनेवाली फहरली है!" [A tranquilizing event. A riddle that cannot be solved.]

One who loves life does not want to die. Shekhar also is no exception. He says, "मैं मरना नहीं चाहता। मैं दीवारों से कहता हूं, मैं हवा से कहता हूं, मैं सुननेवाली न सुनने हुई दु:खीन होता है। मैं मरना नहीं चाहता, मैं जीवन में प्यार करता हूं, मैं मरना नहीं चाहता हूं।" [I don’t want to die. I tell the walls, I tell the wind, I tell the listening neglect that doesn’t hear that I don’t want to die, I love life, I don’t want to die.]

This utterance of Shekhar makes it quite clear that ‘Contemplation of Death’ has the biggest influence in life. Death is a riddle which seems impossible to solve. ‘Contemplation of Death’ brings elegance to one’s life and affects his personality.

Ajneya’s second novel is “Nadi ke Dweep”. ‘Contemplation of Death’ is found indirectly in this novel. Rekha is prominent amongst the characters portrayed in the novel. Rekha’s grief, pain and agony has found a touching portrayal in this novel. It appears that Ajneya has to tried to present grief and
agony in the form of a philosophy in this novel. The novel has been started with the citation — “दुःख सबको माँजता है...” [Grief defines everyone...]. This experiences of grief and agony are the symptoms of ‘Consciousness of Death.’ Rekha who is tolerant of grief and paid accepts the importance of agony. She recites —

“तुमने एक ही बार बेदना में मुझे जना था, माँ
पर मैं बार-बार अपने को जनता हूँ
और मरता हूँ
और मरता हूँ
पुन: जनता हूँ और पुन: मरता हूँ
और फिर जनता हूँ
क्योंकि बेदना में मैं अपनी ही माँ हूँ।”

[O Mother! You suffered agony once only for giving me birth. But, I repeatedly give birth to myself. And I die. I am reborn again and I die again. And I take rebirth again because, in agony, I am my own mother!]

Ajneya’s third and last novel is — “अपने अपने अजनबी” (Apne Apne Ajanabi). This novel expresses ‘Contemplation of Death’ from beginning to end. Like ‘Shekhar Ek Jeevani’, ‘Apne Apne Ajanabi’ is also a reflection of mind that is invaded by the fear of Death. Ajneya has himself admitted this — “मूल समस्या तो चहरी है। अन्तर केवल यह है कि शेखर के सामने प्रश्न यह था कि मेरी मृत्यु की सिद्धि क्या है, यानी मैं मर जाता हूँ तो कुल मिलकर मेरे जीवन का क्या अर्थ हुआ? पर यहाँ यह है कि जीवन मात्र नहीं मृत्यु मात्र का स्थान है और यहाँ मैंने दो दृष्टियों को सामने लाने की कोशिश की है। एक को मोटे तौर पर पूर्व की कह सकते हैं और दूसरे को पश्चिम की!” [Basic problem is the same. The only difference is that the question before Shekhar was — What is achievement of my death i.e., if I die then what is the overall
meaning of my life? But here it is merely that life only occupies the place of Death in the map. And, here I have tried to project both the views. Roughly speaking, one can be call the East and the other West.] In this way, a leading problem of human life has been raised in ‘Apne Apne Ajanabi’ and that problem is situation of being Death-conscious or confrontation with Death “मृत्यु की सामने पाकर कैसे प्रयत्न भी अजनबी हो जाते हैं और अजनबी एक पहचाने हुए कैसे इस वर्ग स्थिति में मानव का सच्चा चरित्र उभरकर आता है— उसका प्रत्यय, उसका अद्भुत साहस और उसका बिन्दु अस्तित्व जो तो बैठे ही और उतने ही अप्रत्याशित ढंग से क्रियाशील हो उठते हैं तैसे उसकी निर्मत्त प्रवृत्तियाँ” [Confronting Death, how dear ones become strangers and strangers become acquainted. The real character of humans comes to the fore under this ultimate situation — his concept, his irresistible courage and his flawless and heavenly love also become unexpectedly active like his lower tendencies.] Ajneya has tried to present the Indian and Western views about Death through the medium of two female characters of this novel — Yoke and Selma. They find themselves trapped in a wooden house covered by heavy snow. Shadow of Death is hovering before both of them. Both of them are confronting Death but they react differently. Selma is old and affected by cancer and, therefore, is ready to embrace Death naturally. As against this, Yoke is young and does not want to die — as if she is dying alive. She gets frightened on finding Death before her. According to Ajneya, Selma’s viewpoint towards death can be roughly called Indian because acceptance of Death naturally is stressed in the Indian tradition. From the point of view of Existentialism this can be termed as ‘Religion-Oriented’ or ‘Theistical’ Existentialism. On the other hand Yoke’s viewpoint can be said to conform to the Western thoughts because she is an atheist and negates the existence of God. This can be called ‘Artistic’ or ‘Aesthetic’ Existentialism. Ajneya has put forward the conflict between Oriental and Western thought. Yoke’s state
of mind can be called Western which has taken birth in Europe from disintegration of Family and the World War. That is the reason for Yoke not getting the power to accept Death naturally. She gets agitated on finding Death before her. Fear of Death troubles her repeatedly. Her mental bewilderment is found introduced in the following lines — "कभी मेरा मन होता है कि चीख पड़ूँ, कि अपने बाल नोच लूँ, कि आइने के सामने खड़ी होकर अपने को मारँौँ, छोटी कैंची उठा कर अपने गालों में चुभा लूँ, ... और आइने के भी टूकड़े-टूकड़े कर लूँ।"[Sometimes I want to scream, to pluck my hair, to break turn the glass into fragments.] The reaction of Yoke on finding Death before her conforms to the Western thoughts. As against this Selma’s view-point relating to Death is so natural. Selma’s unattached attitude towards the world definitely conforms to the Indian thoughts. When Yoke observes Selma in the wooden house it appears to her that "उसमें किसी तरह का विरोध नहीं है — न मेरे प्रति, न मेरे हिंस्र भावों के प्रति, न मृत्यु के ही प्रति और यह मेरी समझ में नहीं आता, मुझे स्वीकार नहीं होता है। कैसे कोई जीता हुआ जीवित जीवित को दूर हो सकता है?"[There is no resistence of any sort in her --- neither towards me, nor towards my hostile feelings, not even towards Death and I cannot either understand or accept this. How can a living being be beyond the life instinct?]

Therefore, it can certainly be said that ‘Contemplation of Death’ and ‘Consciousness of Death’ occupy prominent place in all the three novels of Ajneya. ‘Contemplation of Death’ inherent in the novels of Ajneya is capable of criticism from both, Indian and Western, view-points. Indian thinking appears to have dominating influence on Shekhar’s thoughts about Death. Finding Death nearing him, Shekhar does not get scared. Instead, he wants to find the meaning of his life by reviewing his life! The desire to live one’s life in a meaningful manner comes withing the ambit of Indian thought. Ajneya
has engraved Death related Indian viewpoint in Apne Apne Ajanabi through the medium of Selma. Natural acceptance of Death by Selma is only illustrative of Indian view-point.

4.1.2 Deliberation on God (ईश्वर चिन्तन):

Deliberation on God is the second characteristic of ‘Consciousness of Death’. All the three novels of Ajneya are individualistic. God’s authority is not beyond mystery. Inquisitive characters like Shekhar and Yoke appear to be possessed by thoughts about God and the Universe. Characters of psychological novels are definitely emotional and inquisitive. They have faith on self experience and not on others’ experience. Shekhar and Yoke are representative characters of the new generation and are emotional and introvertive. How can they stay away from thoughts relating to God’s existence?

The first section of “शेखर : एक जीवनी (भाग-1)” [Shekhar : Ek Jeevani (Part - 1)] is “उषा और ईश्वर” [The Dawn and the God]. This section contains description of the curiosities that arise the mind of Shekhar, the child, with respect to the Creation and God. Shekhar sees clear differences between Human Society and the Nature. He sees that Man makes certain rules for his own use --- like, birth of child and his consequent baptism, his admission in a convent school etc. Shekhar does not find the system of imparting education to be right because if education is imparted in order to develop the intellect of the child, then Shekhar did not need it because “उसमें सहज बुद्धि की कमी नहीं थी। किन्तु उस बुद्धि की प्रवाह गति का निर्देश करने वाली शक्ति संसार में नहीं थी। वह बुद्धि उसकी थी, उसके उपयोग के लिए थी।” [Natural intellect was not deficient in him. But, the power of giving direction to the flowing speed of that intellect was not present in the world. That intellect was his and for his use]. Shekhar saw and tried to
understand himself a World that was different from the man modified Earth. His curious instinct calmed down a little. He saw that “उसके संसार के अलावा एक और संसार है, जिसमें पक्षी रहते हैं, जिसमें स्वच्छन्दता है, जिसमें विश्वास है, जिसमें स्नेह है, जिसमें सोचने को या खेलने की अवधि स्वतंत्रता है।”

[There is another World besides his World where birds live, where there is no restrain, where faith exists, where love resides, where unrestricted freedom to think and play is present.]

Curiosities relating to Creation and God take birth in his mind on looking at Nature or the Creation. He tries to understand the Nature. Shekhar, the child, readily understands the difference between man-made garden and the forest. He experiences attraction towards the forest — “कितना उन्मुक्त होगा वह स्थान जहाँ सब कुछ तो स्वतंत्र होगा ही, ये पीछे भी स्वच्छन्दता से उग-फूल-फल सकेगे ..... और तब उसकी क़ल्पना के स्वर्ग को एक मूर्ति आकार भी मिला, और एक नाम भी मिला जंगल .....”

[How liberated will be that place where not only will everything be independent but these plants will also sprout, flower and bear fruit without any restriction .... and then, his imaginative heaven found a solid form, and a name was also found --- ‘Jungle’ (the forest) ....] Shekhar is surprised on observing the man-made feeling of caste and community and one on hearing about a low caste girl named Phoolaan and her mother from his mother he questions her. When the mother tells him that Phoolaan and her mother belong to low caste, he secretly begins adoring Phoolaan and her mother. Only contempt for man-made feelings of caste and community is found in his mind.

Shekhar has already heard about God. He asks many questions about existence of God his sister Saraswati. In answer to his question, Saraswati says that Man’s spirit comes from God and returns back to God after his Death. He found it alright till this stage but when his sister, in reply to his question, said that the Germans’ spirit also went away to God and these wars are also
caused by God, disbelief took birth in his mind. He has heard that the Germans are very cruel, and yet, God has made them also! Question arose in his mind --- Is God doing all this rightly! If God does everything than the God is also responsible for the Death of Mama (i.e., maternal uncle). When Shekhar’s mother sometimes says that God will do everything right then he gets furious and wants to ask --- “क्या युद्ध अच्छा हुआ है? भूख अच्छी हुई है? मामा नहीं आये, वह अच्छा हुआ है? वह जो बोड़ा मर गया, अच्छा हुआ है? इतने लोग बीमार पड़े अच्छा हुआ? मरे, अच्छा हुआ है?” [Has the war been good, the hunger been good. Mama (i.e., maternal uncle) did not come and has that been good? The horse that died, was that good? So many people fell sick, has good happened? And died, has good happened?] His disbelief towards God starts increasing. The situation reached such a stage that his faith towards God came to an end. One day, Shekhar reaches a temple alongwith his father, brothers and sisters. There Shekhar’s father performed circumambulation of the temple alongwith his children, but Shekhar did not give them company. On being asked by the father, he clearly replied --- “मैं ईश्वर को नहीं मानता! मैं प्रार्थना भी नहीं मानता! भवानी झूठी है! ईश्वर झूठा है! ईश्वर नहीं है!” [I don’t believe God! I do not believe in prayer also! Bhavani (i.e., the Goddess) is a liar! God is a Liar! God does not exist.] Shekhar gets a beating that day. But, his curiosity remained intact. Now, the question emerged in his mind that wherefrom do the children come or what is the secret of Creation. Mother, and other, to Shekhar that the maid brings them, the doctor brings them. Shekhar could not believe this. Therefore, he asks his sister and cautions her not to speak lie whereupon Saraswati somehow tells him that they come out of the mother’s body. Beyond this, she assumes silence. Shekhar’s curiosity does not get pacified.

A matured form of this curiosity of Shekhar relating to God is found in the character Yoke of “अपने-अपने अजनबी” (Apne-Apne Ajanabi). Apne-Apne
Ajanabi is a novel written on the concept of ‘Consciousness of Death’. There is difference between Selma and Yoke’s points of view. The conflict between both of them relates to Death and God. Selma is a theist and Yoke is an atheist. While Selma sees both, God and Death, in a natural way, Yoke is an atheist and curious person because of which conflict between them is only natural. Christmas time is relevant in this novel. Discussions about God take place naturally on the eve of Christmas. God is a subject of disbelief and curiosity for Yoke but God exists for Selma and the question of disbelief does not arise for her.

The first indication of the conflict relating to God is found from the page dated 22nd December written in Yoke’s diary. Yoke finds the situation in the wooden house buried under snow intolerable. She lights fire with Selma which spreads a queer reddish light in the room. It appears to Yoke “कब्रगाह के अंदर आग का लाल प्रकाश—क्या यही नरक की आग है ? आज में एकाएक आमटी से यही पूछ बैठीं। मैंने कहा : लाल—लाल आग को देख कर लगता है कि शैतान अभी चिमनी के भीतर से उतर कर कब्र में आ जायेगा हमसे हिसाब करते”18 [The reddish light within the grave --- is this the hell’s fire ? Today, I suddenly asked Aunty this very question. I said : it appears on seeing the reddish fire that the devil will anytime come down the chimney to the grave for taking account from us.] Selma vehemently opposes this statement of Yoke “चिमनी से उतर कर शैतान नहीं आता, संत निकोलोस आता है – क्रिसमस को अब कितने दिन हैं ?”19 [Devil does not come down the chimney, Saint Nicholas comes --- How many days are left for Christmas ?] The feelings of disbelief and contempt towards God is clearly perceptible in the statement of Yoke. Yoke sarcastically comments that to live on the reliance of God is like covering God over oneself, while greeting Selma on the New Year Eve after midnight of 31st December ! Selma accepts this in a natural way and tells Yoke “देखो योके, मेरी आँखों में देखो। क्या तुम्हें नहीं दीखता कि भगवान के सिवा मेरे पास कुछ
Look Yoke, look into my eyes. Don’t you see that I have nothing but God to cover myself. The conversation between Yoke and Selma clearly brings to the fore multiplicity in views relating to God. Yoke wants to deny the existence of God, but Selma experience the existence of God all the time. For this reason, Selma is ready to welcome Death on the belief that Death is the gift of God. It is her opinion that “मौत ही तो इंश्वर का एक मात्र पहचाना जा सकने वाला रूप है। पूरे नकार का ज्ञान ही सच्चा इंश्वर-ज्ञान है।”[Death is the sole recognisable form of God. Knowledge of complete negation is the true realisation of God.] If the views of Selma are attentively looked into then her views coincide with the Indian thought relating to God and Death. Indian people’s mind generally accepts God in a natural way. This probably is the reason for Ajneya terming Selma’s views as Indian.

In essence, ‘Deliberation on God’ has come out as a principal subject in the novels of Ajneya. He has presented Indian and Western thinking relating to God in his novels. For ‘Shekhar’ the existence of God is a questiononable subject and gives rise to numerous curiosities. On reaching ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’, conflict between two mutually opposing views takes place and a never ending debate starts. ‘Deliberation on God’ is also found in Existentialism. God’s existence is rejected in Artistic Existentialism whereas God’s existence is accepted in Religious Existentialism.

Humanistic Reality and Truth (मानव सच्चार्थ और सत्य):

Humanistic Reality and Truth are also attached to ‘Consciousness of Death’. What, or whosoever, is born is certain to die --- this ultimate Reality and Truth is expounded in the novels of Ajneya. What can be a higher Truth than Death! Whatever Man does is dominantly effected by ‘Contemplation of Death’. Ajneya was a nomad. He had studied European Literature in sufficient
depth. He was certainly well acquainted from the viewpoint of Existentialism. His novels, though written on the background of Existentialism cannot be called Existentialistic because Ajneya had his own creative vision. It is possible that a few characteristics of Existentialism are found reflected in his novels. Though he already reverent towards the Indian viewpoint, tour of Europe magnified his faith on it.

The novel ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani’ starts with ‘Contemplation of Death’. Shekhar reviews his life before Death. The story of ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani (Part 1 and 2) is well planned. There are four chapters each in the two parts. In the first Part we find --- (1) उषा और ईश्वर [The Dawn and God], (2) बीज और अंडकुर [Seed and the Offshoot], (3) प्रकृति और पुरुष [Nature and the Man] and (4) पुरुष और परिस्थिति [Man and the Circumstances]. And, in the second Part are --- (1) पुरुष और परिस्थिति [Man and the Circumstances], (2) बंधन और जिज्ञासा [Bondage and Curiosity], (3) शाशि और शेखर [Shashi and Shekhar], and (4) धारे, रसिस्याँ, गुंज़र [Threads, Ropes, Knots]. Humanistic Reality and Truth experienced by Shekhar has been brought to light in these chapters. Introducing Shekhar in the ‘Preface’ to the novel Ajneya says that ‘he is very honest and curious’. The tendency to revolt is present in him right from the childhood. Be believes on ‘self-experience’ and not ‘others’ experience’. Although he is individualistic, the reflection of the individual’s struggle of his times is also visible in a natural way. Ajneya has himself written in the Preface --- “शेखर निस्सन्देह एक व्यक्ति का अभिव्यक्ति मनी दर्दावेज है, यद्यपि वह साथ ही उस व्यक्ति के युग-संघर्ष का प्रतिचित्रण भी है। इतना और ऐसा निजी वह नहीं है कि उसके दावे को आप ‘एक आदमी की निजी भाषा’ कहकर उड़ा सकें। मेरा आयाह है कि उसमें समाज और मेरा युग बोलता है” [Shekhar undoubtedly is an individual’s personal document in spite of his being an image of the struggles of his times. He is not so much personal

163
that his claim can be overlooked by someone terming it as ‘a person’s personal view’. I assert that Society and my Era speak out of him.]

The Reality of ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani’ is a Psychological Reality. Shekhar realistically analyses his inner world. Effect of Ego, Fear and Sex is particularly visible in the development of Shekhar’s personality. The ultimate Truth like Death has been uncovered alongside the analysis of Shekhar’s personality. Shekhar searches for the utility of life only on facing the nearing Death. In this way, ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani’ proves to be a novel of ‘Consciousness of Death’. Review of one’s life is also ‘Contemplation of Death’ because this review fills the human mind with grief and agony. This grief and agony is the ultimate Truth of life.

Narratives of grief are found in the very beginning of Ajneya’s second novel ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. The novel has been started with the Shelley’s verse:

```
"Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of misery
Or the mariner, worn and wan
Never thus could wander on ..."
```

Ajneya’s citation is also found whose beginning line is “दुःख सबको माँजता है ....” [Grief cleanses everyone]. This novel presents the tale of grief and agony from the beginning to the end.

Ordinary readers do not experience internal relation with the Humanistic Reality presented in ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. Here, every character is like an island whose world is completely unique. But, we should remember that the characters of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ do not come from any outside world but are the produce and result of this very Society and system. While discussing Humanistic Reality Ajneya has written --- “नदी के द्वीप’ समाज के जीवन का चित्र नहीं एक अंग के जीवन का
Nadi Ke Dweep’ is not a picture of Society’s life but a picture of one of its components; the characters are not ordinary beings but they belong to a particular class and that class is also a minority only. But, in my opinion, the testing question should be --- whether the picture presented is a straightforward picture of whatever class it may be? Do such people exist in that class, is their life like the one presented, are the feelings similar to the ones expressed? If yes, then the novel is truthful and authoritative and its characters are also real and truthful.] It is certain that ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ is a story of intense individualistic views and internal struggles. There are four main characters in this novel --- Bhuvan, Rekha, Gaura and Chandramadhav. All these characters have manifested with well built characters. All characters of this novel written in letter-style narrate their respective stories. Being individualistic, knowledge only about the internal struggles of these characters is available. Picturization of the Society is very deficient and appears to have been neglected considering the same as unnecessary. Traditional critics, therefore, find ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ a formidably individualistic novel. According to Ajneya, being individualistic can not considered as separation from the Society. He has written --- “उपन्यास अनिवार्यतया पूरे समाज का चित्र हो, यह मांग भिलकुल गलत है। उपन्यासों की परिभाषा के बारे में यह भ्रम (जो देश में या कम से कम हिन्दी में काफी फैली हुई मालूम है) साहित्य के सामाजिक तत्त्व को गलत समझने का परिणाम है। कह लीजिए कि पिछली या विकृत प्रतिवादिता का परिणाम है ‘छूट-सच’ का बाय्य पर निश्चित ‘नदी के दीप’ से बहुत बड़ा है, इसलिए उसके ‘नदी के दीप’ से महान रचना समझना सहीदर्शता
To demand that a novel should compulsorily picturise the whole Society is completely wrong. The error relating to the definition of novels (which appears to be widely spread in the country, or atleast in Hindi,) is the result of misunderstanding the social element in literature. It can also be said to be the result of proceeding, or distorted, Progressiveness. The outer layer of ‘Jhootha Sach’ is without doubt considerably larger than that of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ and, therefore, to recognise ‘Jhootha Sach’ as a greater creation than ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ cannot be a proof of humaneness.

All characters of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ are generally belong to middle-class and are in-service. All characters remain away from social activities in spite of their being affected by external circumstances. They are concerned with the problems of personal life. Even otherwise, people are becoming awfully individualistic after independence.

The number of characters in this individualistic character based novel is also small. The characters have been chosen from this very society. It can be said that there are two kinds of characters in this novel based on the characters’ difference in personality traits. First type of characters are very honest, but tendencies of selfishness and deception are found in the second type of characters. Dr Chandrakanta Mahadev Bandivadekar has also cited the two kinds of characters and praised characters belonging to the first type.

He has written --- “इस समाज से अंजेय ने अपने पात्रों को चुना है और इनमें भी महत्वपूर्ण दो स्तर हैं। एक भुवन, गौरा, रेखा का और दूसरा चंद्रमाधव, हेमेन्द्र का। पहले स्तर के व्यक्ति अपने वैचित्रिक जीवन में अपने प्रति ईमानदार हैं; उनमें अत्यन्त सत्य रहते है। वस्तुतः भौतिक समस्याओं की उपरता अधिकांशतः खत्म होने पर सांस्कृतिक धरातल पर समृद्ध व्यक्तित्वों की जो आदर्श परिकल्पना की जा सकती है, उसकी ये तीनों पात्र पूर्णतया उदाहरण करते हैं।" [Ajneya has selected his characters from this society and there are two levels amongst
them. One comprises Bhuvan, Gaura and Rekha and the other includes Chandramadhav and Hemendra. Individuals of the first level are honest towards their personal lives, internal and external truth prevails in them. In fact, these three characters fully exemplify the idealistic hypothesis that can be derived by personalities prosperous on the cultural platform on the subsidence of the wrath of most materialistic problems.

In our opinion, these three characters are symbolic of Humanistic Reality. Yes, these characters are alert, devoid of complexes and introvert besides also being extremely honest. All the three are literate, emotional, and interested in literature, art etc. Critics have called them more poetical characters. Carefully seen, ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ settles as a poetical novel. The mental disposition after an event takes place is the domain of poetry and the mental condition of the characters of this novel is also similar. All three of them settle as the characters of a poetical novel.

Bhuvan, Rekha and Gaura deeply experience grief and agony in life. They uncover the Truth that grief is a compulsion in human life. They do obtain the energy to naturally adapt themselves to grief. Rekha and Bhuvan are two prime characters of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. Abandoned by husband, Rekha does not appear to the nervous in any way, but she comes out as a woman harmonized by vigour and pride. Rekha does not merge her personality with Bhuvan in spite of her being ‘fulfilled’ and dedicated towards him. Bhuvan’s character appears to be weaker in comparison to that of Rekha. Rekha undergoes abortion because she had not demanded Bhuvan’s future. She had been shattered by this incident and it appears that Bhuvan had also become affected by her dejection. Rekha writes --- ॐ टूट गई हूँ, भुवन, मेरे जीवन, जैसे पहले कभी नहीं टूटी थी। लेकिन इतना कह दूँ- मुझे किसी बात का पछतावा नहीं है और इससे भी दस-
am shattered Bhuvan, my life, like never before. But, I must say at least that I have no repentence about anything and even if I am shattered worse by ten times more, I am not willingness to miss a moment of your company, a moment of our common experience .... My Lord, be kind enough and forgive me.] Shattering of Rekha like this, her experiencing grief and agony is surely synonymous to Death.

Freud has mentioned three important instincts of human beings --- Ego, Fear and Sex. For the revelation of Humanistic Reality and Truth, it is necessary that the human being be analysed in the light of these three instincts. Analysis of the sex instinct of Man is found in ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. The pain and agony experienced by the characters of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ can be dubbed as ‘self inflicted pain’ or ‘sexually induced pain’. Although fulfilment of unsatisfied sexual desire can give momentary pleasure, but later on this sexual satisfaction gives birth to mental conflict. Though the love of married woman Rekha towards Bhuvan and her being fulfilled from his side is unsocial, yet it appears to be humanistic and sensible. But, at last she only becomes a prey to mental conflict. On the other side, Bhuvan also becomes prey to mental conflict after Rekha’s ‘fulfilment’. His experience goes like thing --- “प्यार मिलता है, साथ भोगा हुआ क्लेश भी मिलता है, लेकिन व्या ऐसा नहीं है कि एक सीमा पार कर लेने के बाद वह अनुभूतियाँ मिलती नहीं अलग कर देती हैं – सदा के लिए और अंतिम रूप में।”27 [Love is received, misery that is experienced together is also received, but is it not that after crossing a limit these experiences do not unite but cause separation --- finally and once for all.] On seeing the condition of Bhuvan and Rekha, it can be said that at first their lust or sexual instinct wins and afterwords social conscience.
Another evidence of Rekha’s mental conflict is — her being forced to undergo mental struggle for a long time on account of Hemendra, Bhuvan and Dr Ramesh. Her defeat, in the end, gives rise to the feeling of sympathy in the minds of the readers. Defeated she says — “मैं भीतर से मर गई हूँ, भूतना!” [I have died from within, Bhuvan.]

The tendency of Rekha and Bhuvan to cause ‘self inflicted pain’ is spread throughout the work. This pain or grief also cleanses the personality.

Recognition of Humanistic Reality and Truth is accomplished in ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’ [अपने-अपने अजनबी]. This is a philosophical novel. Inquisitive human being tries to understand life and the world properly. The most mysterious thing for a inquisitive person is --- God, Creation and Death. If deliberation on God gives birth to mysteriousness in literature, then Death gives birth to fear and curiosity. Ajneya has portrayed these Humanistic Realities and Curiosities through the medium of Yoke and Selma. Selma adopts death naturally as God’s gift. But for Yoke, God and Death give birth to curiosity and fear. “ईश्वर-ईश्वर का नाम ले लेना तो बड़ा आसान है, लेकिन बड़ा मुश्किल भी है। और मौत और ईश्वर को हम अलग-अलग पहचान भी तो कभी-कभी ही सकते हैं। बल्कि मन से ईश्वर को तब तक पहचान ही नहीं सकते जब तक कि मृत्यु में उसे न पहचान ले।” 28 [To recite God-God is easy, but at the same time very difficult also. And, we can identify Death and God separately only sometimes. In fact, we cannot identify God from heart and mind until we identify Him in Death.] She experiences that Death is the ultimate Truth. Therefore, when Selma asks her that “यौंके तुम हर समय मृत्यु के बारे में ही क्यों सोचती रहती हो!” [Yoke, why do you keep thinking of Death all the time …] then she angrily replies --- “क्योंकि वही एकमात्र सच्चाई है— क्योंकि हम सबको मरना है!” 29 [Because that alone is the Truth --- because we all have to die.] The three principal instincts --- Ego, Sex and Fear --- appear in
humans only after birth. Fear is the all-pervading instinct from amongst these whose ultimate form is (Fear of) Death. Both the main characters of ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’, while keeping their differences in thinking intact, accept that Death is at the centre of their thoughts. That is also the life’s Truth. Ajneya has raised the question of Theism and Atheism in this novel in order to identify Reality. This is the everlasting query. No writer or philosopher can negate this question. Ajneya has accepted the influence of existentialism in a definite way because this philosophy became fully relevant to the mentality following second world war. Therefore, it was natural for Ajneya to adopt the influence of existentialism. Although western influence on Ajneya is certainly visible, Indian cultural thinking was also fully saturated in him. This is the reason of his repudiating Yoke’s European mentality through the medium of Selma in ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’. Selma does not have fear of Death. Another’s presence, so much so that even Death’s presence, is God’s presence for her. Experiences of life have only given rise to feeling of kindness towards others in her mind. She rejects Yoke’s ‘freedom to choose’ and considers it meaningless. The writer considers Selma’s thinking as Indian and that of Yoke as European.

Here, the question rises --- which is the Truth that Ajneya has expounded in ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’. In reply it can be said that Ajneya has sung praise of Life, and not Death, in ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’. Death is an everlasting Truth which cannot be won over by man. Therefore, one should ever try to lead his life in a meaningful manner. “मृत्यु की स्थापना में जीवन की प्रतिष्ठा, उसको उत्कट अनुभूति अज्ञेय का प्रतिपाद्य है। मृत्यु का संज्ञास, उसका आतंक वे नहीं मानते।”[Death’s relative establishment in life, its intense realisation is the enunciation of Ajneya. He does not believe in the horror of death or its terror.] Ajneya’s this viewpoint is definitely Indian.
4.1.4 Insignificance (निर्धकता):

Ajneya is a competent litterateur of Hindi. Thinking occupies prominent place in his literature because of his being an individualitic litterateur. Ajneya is basically a supporter of individual’s freedom. The individual’s mind is the subject of his curiosity. Establishment of individualism is his aim. This, probably, is the reason of his novels’ characters being educated and emotional. Practical all main characters of his novels want to lead a meaningful life. Life is like an experiment for them. The influence of existentialism born out of the culmination of world war can be observed on Ajneya. The ‘moment’ has got a special importance in Existentialism. Man is always troubled by worries related to Death. Therefore, every moment of life is important for him. The individual experiences ‘Insignificace’ on non-accomplishment of his desired work.

Characters of all the three novels of Ajneya often experience ‘Insignificance’. Query about the meaning of life arises in the minds of all main characters. ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani’ is Ajneya’s first novel. Many critics of Hindi believe this to be a self-oriented novel. Nanda Dulare Bajpai leads these critics. The hero of the novel, Shekhar is a revolutionary who has been sentenced to Death by hanging. On the last night of his life he wants to review his life and tries to find out the works he had successful accomplished and if he has not been successful in accomplishing any work then what had been the meaning of his living? “... उस जीवन का मोल क्या है, अर्थ क्या है, सिद्ध क्या है – व्यक्ति के लिए, समाज के लिए, मानव के लिए? .... इस जीवनास्तु की अनासक्त निर्मितिक के और यातना की सर्वभौमिक दृष्टि के आगे मेरा जीवन धीरे-धीरे खुलने लगा, एक निजू और अप्रासंगिक विसंगति के रूप में नहीं एक घटना के रूप में, एक सामाजिक तथ्य के रूप में”31 [... What is the price of that life, its meaning, its achievement --- for the individual, for the society, for humanity? ..... My life slowly started unfolding upon this curiosity’s
unattached cruelty and upon all-piercing insight into torture, not in the form of an individualistic and irrelevant contradiction but as an incident in the form of a social truth.] This statement of Ajneya proves that the hero of the novel, Shekhar tries to find meaningfulness in his life.

Life is meaningful or meaningless --- for analysing this review of the bygone life becomes necessary and the individual does not undertake this review for examining his life’s completeness or incompleteness, but only for observing the past and its experiences — “शायद, जीवन-पथ के अंतिम पड़ाव का पाथेय ही यही है, क्योंकि मुझे इससे और इस मात्र से, तुम्हें मिलती है......”32 [Perhaps, this is the provision for the last halt of the path of life because I find fulfilment from this, and this alone.....] It is clear that Shekhar has reached that turning of life where difference between happiness and grief practically comes to an end. Only a sense of agony is born irrespective of the past. This feeling of agony is desirable for Shekhar because “वेदना में एक शक्ति है जो दृष्टि देती है। जो यातना में है, वह दृष्टा हो सकता है”33 [There is a power in agony that imparts vision. He who is tormented can be a seer.]

‘Insignificance’ has been considered as a characteristic of Existentialism or ‘Consciousness of Death’. Picturization of this ‘Insignificance-Consciousness’ becomes visible in Western literature that evolved after the first world war, but new values have also been explored in place of ‘Insignificance’ or despair in Ajneya’s novel, ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’. In support of this, a critic writes — “मूल्यहीनता के इस युग में जहाँ आदमी संश्लेष चरित्र होने के लिए विकस्त है, अज्ञेय मूल्यों की खोज करना चाहते हैं और वे नए मूल्य होंगे जागरूकता, स्थितिभार और ईमानदारी। इनके बल पर ही आदिम मूल्यों प्रेम, घृणा आदि की चर्चात्मकता संभव होगी।...... शेखर अपने चित्र मानवीय अनुभवों के प्रकाश में खुद को पहचानने की ईमानदार कोशिश कर रहा है”34 [When man is helplessly forced to possess a synthesised character
in this era of worthlessness, Ajneya wants to explore values and those new
values will be --- vigilance, independence and honesty. Significance of
primitive values of love, hate etc will be possible on their strength. ..... Shekhar
is honestly trying to realise himself in the light of his accumulated humanistic
experiences.]

In the context of the above statement, it can be said that Shekhar has
tried to realise himself in the light of his accumulated humanistic experiences,
but we have also consider the ‘insignificant’ situations through which Shekhar
has passed. The individual experiences ‘Insignificance’ only under socio-
psychological situations. Man repeatedly tries to do something significant in
life and gets defeated. There to kinds of ‘Insignificance’ can be observed on
the mental plane --- (a) at socio-psychological level and (b) at philosophical
level. Shekhar has experienced ‘Insignificance’ on both the levels. The
‘Insignificance’ experienced by him on the social and psychological level is
visible in ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani’. He experiences that the man cannot easily
free himself from tradition. Common man gets satisfied on the experience of
others. Shekhar tries to realise the situation but social and psychological
situations do dishearten him. He certainly experiences ‘Insignificance’ also.
This becomes clear from an example --- the adolescent Shekhar gets influenced
by Mahatma Gandhi and patriotism. One day, another adolescent boy asks his
name in English. He was trying to show off that he knew English. Shekhar’s
pride came to the fore and he did not give any reply. On seeing this, his father
became very angry. He told Shekhar’s mother that our sons are all fools. The
father’s statement compels Shekhar to think. It appears to him that freedom is
not to be found anywhere --- “नहीं, कहीं नहीं है वह अवाघ, कहीं नहीं है, छटकारा, कहीं
नहीं है मुक्ति! न बुद्धिमत्ता में; न बेवकूफ़ी में; न एकान्त में, न साथ में; न कविता में; न नाटक में;
Even though feeling of ‘Insignificance’ may emerge from these lines, but Shekhar who is influenced by the Indian thought, continues to make efforts to be optimistic even in desperate or ‘insignificant’ situations. He clearly says —

"I am so much surrounded by sufferings that pleasure has turned stranger to me. But, when I see the picture of two entangled bodies on the dark sky-screen through the eyes of imagination, then some wordless voice within the core of my heart, as if startled, realises itself — you have also known pleasure sometime!" This viewpoint can definitely be said to be ‘positive’.

The philosophical level of ‘Insignificance’ is basically founded on social and psychological situation. On observing his social situation, Shekhar gets immersed in thought and for a short time believes his life to be ‘insignificant’ — “क्या है मेरे जीवन की सिद्धि ? क्या है इसकी संपूर्ति ? सब छूट ..... शून्य, शून्य, शून्य | बल्कि शून्य से भी कम एक ऋण, जिसे मैं मूंगी समझे बैठा हूँ!" [What is the achievement of my life? What is its fulfilment? Everything false ..... zero, zero, zero. Contrarily, a liability even less than zero which I have mistaken as an asset.] A man can have similar experience many times in his life. But, Shekhar soon controls himself and struggles with such unfavourable circumstances. Shekhar loves
life, and not death. Therefore, he says — "मैं मरना नहीं चाहता। मैं दीवारों से कहता हूँ, मैं सींखों से कहता हूँ, मैं हवा से कहता हूँ, मैं सुननेवालों न सुनती हुई इदमहीन उपेक्षा से कहता हूँ, मैं मरना नहीं चाहता, मैं जीवन को यार करता हूँ, मैं मरना नहीं चाहता!"[I don’t want to die. I tell the walls, I tell the bars, I tell the wind, I tell the listening neglect that doesn’t hear that I don’t want to die, I love life, I don’t want to die.] On observing this achievement of Shekhar, it can be said that Shekhar does experience agony because of this realisation of ‘insignificance’, but he also knows that "बेदना में एक शक्ति है जो दूषित नहीं है।" [There is a power in agony that imparts vision.] This view of Shekhar certainly highlights the Indian viewpoint.

The heroine of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’, Rekha, also experiences ‘Insignificance’. But, Indian tradition stresses on the transformation of such situations into favourable ones or their adoption in a natural way. According to one critic, Rekha does experience despondency under unfavourable circumstances — “‘नदी के द्वीप’ की रेखा अपने व्यक्तित्व की उत्तेजनाओं के कारण जीवनगत निर्धक्कता का अनुभव करती है। वह जीवन में कहीं पहुँचना ही नहीं चाहती और न ही उसे कहीं पहुँचने का लोभ है। ...... वह जानती है निर्धक्कता का कहीं कोई निदान नहीं।”[Rekha of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ experiences insignificance of life due to aggression related to her personality. She neither wants to reach anywhere in her life and does she have any temptation to reach anywhere.... She knows that there is no cure of ‘insignificance’ anywhere.] To us, Rekha reminds us of Mrinal of ‘Tyagapatra’ [त्यागपत्र]. Mrinal finds a kind of pleasure in inflicting pain on herself. As against this, Rekha wants to get ‘fulfilled’ by engaging in sexual conduct with Bhuvan. In our opinion, this concept of Rekha’s ‘fulfilment is influenced by Western thinking.

There is an influence of western momentaryism on Rekha’s character.
According to this philosophy flow of time is a sum of moments and, therefore, every moment of life is important. Normally, the momentaryists life the present only. For them, only the present is true, rest all is false. Many moments come in Rekha’s life, but she gives special importance to the moments of physical contact with Bhuvan. She believes herself to be ‘fulfilled’ in those very moments. It is for this reason that she tells Bhuvan on the roof of the mountain --- “आई एम फुलफिल्ड ! अब अगर मैं मर जाऊँगी तो परमात्मा के – प्रकृति के– प्रति यह आक्रोश लेकर नहीं जाऊँगी कि मैंने कोई फुलफिलमेंट नहीं जाना – कुछ भाव लेकर ही जाऊँगी – परमात्मा के प्रति और भुवन, सुमारे प्रति” 39 [I am fulfilled ! Now, even if I die, I will not carry this acrimony towards God or Nature that I did not know any ‘fulfilment’, but I shall carry gratitude towards God, and Bhuvan, towards you.] The sound that emerges from this statement of Rekha is that the moment of physical contact with Bhuvan finds a special importance in her life. She experiences happiness on the recollection of that moment. This happiness proves that --- “व्यक्ति अपनी सुविधाओं के अनुरूप अपने लिए सिद्धांतों और दर्शनों का निरूपण करता है और फिर उन्हीं की केंद्रित में अपने व्यक्तित्व को समेट कर बैठा जाता है, लेकिन इसका मतलब यह कदापि नहीं होता कि अपने उस एकांतिक, कृत्तित और व्यस्त स्वार्थों से सुकृत दर्शन को वह रोष समाज पर आदर्श और पठनीय बनाकर थोपने का प्रयत्न करे। ...... ‘नदी के दीप’ के पात्रों एवं कथा में उस प्रकृति को स्पष्ट देखा जा सकता है” 40 [The individual portrays principles and philosophies in accordance with their suitability to his own conveniences and then envelopes his personality within that slough. But, this does not mean, in any way, that he try to impose that exclusive, blunt, occupied and prejudiced philosophy on the society terming it as ideal and readable. ...... That characteristic is clearly visible in the characters of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’.] This is the mental effort of Rekha, the heroine of ‘a heart-rending love story’ i.e., ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’, to convert her ‘insignificance’ into ‘significance’.

176
Consciousness of ‘insignificance’ has been presented in an artistic form in the novel ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’ which portrays confrontation with death. The reciprocal conflict and tension between the Indian and Western viewpoints about life in relation to death has been depicted in this novel. Ajneya has himself accepted this. The influence of West is comparatively prominent in his novels than in his poetries. Amongst Selma and Yoke, the Indian thinking is found substantially in the character of Selma. Selma possesses faith, trust and unbreakable patience and she also has the power to accept death as a wish of God. She cannot be said to be free of the fear of death, but at the same time she is also not as weak as to keep on thinking of death all the time. Yoke’s viewpoint is completely different from Selma’s. She gets completely disheartened find death near her and under difficult circumstances and experiences ‘insignificance’. She experiences solitude in spite of living with Selma. How can the unattached feeling of old and cancer-afflicted Selma be found in young Yoke. Yoke, who denied God and Death, had faith only on the ‘moment’. But, having been buried under snow covered wooden house for an uncertain time, it appears to Yoke that the wooden house is a grave and time has stopped here. This situation makes one desperate and insignificant. [*मैं जहाँ हूँ क्या सूर्य वहाँ सचमुच नहीं है ? क्या काल वहाँ सचमुच नहीं है ? क्या दूरे से ऐसा न कह सकता ही मेरी यहाँ की समस्या नहीं है ? मैं मानो एक काल-निर्माणक्षण में दूरी हुई हूँ वह क्षण काल की लड़ी में से दूर कर कहीं छिड़क गया है और इस तरह अन्तहीन हो गया है– अन्तहीन और निर्मक्षण!*] [Is the sun really not there where I am ? Is time truely not there ? Is this not my problem here that I cannot say so with conviction ? As if I am hanging in a moment of indifferent time which has scattered away somewhere from the chain of time and has become endless in this way — endless and insignificant !]
It is not only Yoke who experiences ‘insignificance’, but Selma who is representative of Indian viewpoint also experiences it. She is aware of imminent death because of old age and disease. She likes to be busy in her daily routine instead of worrying about the death. But, she becomes conscious of the presence of ‘insignificance’ somewhere within her unconscious mind. Many similar opportunities are met in ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’. Particularly in the diary of 7th January, the flow of events described by Yoke visibly brings out Selma’s feeling of ‘insignificance’. Yoke gets angry on seeing Selma lying like a dead person and she unsuccessfully tries to strangle Selma. Selma sees this in her semi-bewildered state and her resulting reaction reveals her despondency and feeling of ‘insignificance’. “वुड़िया एक टक मुझे देख रही थी। उसने जरा भी हिले-पुले बिना कहा : ‘मेरा तो खुद कई बार मन हुआ कि तुम से कहूँ मेरा गला घोंट दो– कहने का साहस नहीं हुआ। लेकिन तुम रुक क्यों गयी?’” [The old woman was staring at me. Without any movement, she said: ‘I myself wanted to request you many a times to strangle me but I could not muster enough courage to say so. But, why did you stop?’] As such, Selma sometimes experiences ‘insignificance’, but her feeling is not as intense as Yoke’s consciousness of ‘insignificance’ or despair. Time and age give Selma the strength to naturally accept death, but young Yoke gets completely disappointed on confronting difficult and intricate situation and life appears ‘insignificant’ to her. Realisation of this ‘insignificance’ by Yoke is certainly influenced by the western viewpoint.

4.1.5 Feeling of Void or Emptiness (शून्य का एहसास):

‘Feeling of Void’ is one of the characteristics of ‘Consciousness of Death’. The dictionary meaning of ‘Void’ is — the sense of emptiness or nothingness. This is the meaning given in prominent dictionaries of the Hindi
language. Man experiences ‘void’ when he finds everything useless and meaningless. There remains no difference between existence and non-existence. A philosophical meaning of the term ‘void’ or ‘emptiness’ is also found. "शून्यवादी का अर्थ नासिक, बौद्ध आदि भी होता है" ['Nihilist' also means atheist, Buddhist etc.] The words ‘Void’ or ‘Emptiness’ may be taken to mean --- to become indifferent towards the world --- in the context of ‘Consciousness of Death’.

Many different situations may arise in the life of a man. They can be happy or unhappy situations for the ordinary man. The ordinary man feels happiness or fulfilment on getting desirable things and he may feel despondent or ‘empty’ on not getting his desirable things. This experience of ‘emptiness’ comes out in a more heart-touching manner in Ajneya’s novels. Personality analysis has been done minutely in all the three novels of Ajneya because he was basically a poet. Irrespective of whether the character is Shekhar, Bhuvan or Rekha, all have analysed their lives and experiences honestly and unhesistantly on the basis of values. They look out for meaningfulness and sometimes they also experinece that life is meaningless i.e., devoid of any meaning. They begin experiencing ‘emptiness’ alongwith this feeling of meaninglessness. It is true that Ajneya’s critics have bitterly criticised him considering this honesty of his characters as their weakness. But, his critics forget that frustration, suffocation etc are the mental stages of a man. Anyone can get affected by such a mental state on confronting adverse circumstances. ‘लेकिन अज्ञेय को उनकी कुंठा के आधार पर मापा गया और यह भुला दिया गया कि कुंठा का भी रचनात्मक प्रयोग होता है, खासकर से साहित्य में। अज्ञेय ने ‘शेखर’ के माध्यम से कुंठाओं पर विजय प्राप्त करने की कोशिश की अन्यथा वह कब का आत्महत्या कर चुका होता है" [But, Ajneya has been evaluated on the basis of frustration overlooking the fact that]
even frustration can form part of a constructive experiment, particularly in literature. Ajneya has tried to win over frustration through the medium of Shekhar who would have otherwise committed suicide long ago.] This frustration, meaninglessness and emptiness has found picturisation in Ajneya’s novels and this has also been analysed sincerely. Ajneya has only done a constructive experiment of frustration and ‘feeling of void’. Such feelings of frustration and emptiness can be ordinarily found in novels protraying individualistic truth. Shekhar, hero of the novel ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’ reviews his life tries to find out the meaning of living his life! He analyses the various incidents of his life irrespective of whether they are encouraging or discouraging! Such events also take place in the life of a man which give rise to pain and grief. Gradually, he learns to tolerate that grief. It is generally seen that painful events of childhood do not give rise to pain subsequently, but remain only as memory on the mental plane of an individual. Although such events of the childhood may result in changes in the nature of the individual, feelings like anger, hate, and malice do not generally arise in his mind. Shekhar, who declares himself a revolutionary, accept the need of indifference or intellectual hate --- "क्रांतिकारी की बनावट में एक विराट, व्यापक प्रेम की सामाजिक तो आवश्यक है ही; साथ ही उसमें एक और वस्तु नितांत आवश्यक, अनिवार्य है— घूणा की क्षमता; एक कभी न मरनेवाली, जला डालनेवाली, घोर मारक, किन्तु इतना सब होते हुए भी एक तत्स्थ सात्तिक घूणा की क्षमता, यानी ऐसी घूणा जिसका अनुभव हम अपने सचेतन मस्तिष्क से करते हैं, ऐसी नहीं जो कि हमें भस्म कर डालती है और पागल करके अपना दास बना लेती है।" [Though the strength of a colossal and pervasive feeling of love is necessary for the formation of a revolutionary, an additional quality is very necessary and essential --- the ability to hate, a never dying, scorching, extremely deadly but, inspite of all this, an indifferent and righteous ability to hate i.e., a kind of
hate which is experienced by us through our conscious mind, not such as can reduce us to ashes and enslave us by turning us insane.]

Shekhar definitely experiences the ‘feeling of void’ sometime when he reviews his life. Emptiness is experienced also due to recalling success or failure of spirits of life and then his mind gets agitated --- “क्या है मेरे इस जीवन की सिद्धि क्या है? इसकी सम्पूर्ति? सब झूठ-शून्य, शून्य, शून्य! बल्कि शून्य से भी कम, एक ऋण, जिसे मैं नूजी समझ बैठा हूँ”\(^{46}\) [What is the achievement of my life? What is its fulfilment? Everything false .... zero, zero, zero. Contrarily, a liability even less than zero which I have mistaken as an asset.] This emptiness experienced by Shekhar is not permanent. It is only a part of his thinking, his achievement. Every moment that was won is important for him. The truth experienced by him is his objective. The ‘feeling of void’ raises many questions in his mind and finds that “मैं नया हूँ अपूर्व हूँ। मेरे जीवन का एक क्षण भी पहले कभी नहीं हुआ। मैं एक नयी उस्तू हूँ, एक नई प्रतिज्ञा हूँ, जिसे भविष्य पूरा करेगा, एक शिक्षा हूँ जो भविष्य के लिए रह जायेगी”\(^{47}\) [I am new and unique. Even a moment of my life has never occurred before. I am a new thing, a new pledge which will be fulfilled by future. I am an education that will remain for future.] It is clear that the ‘feeling of void’ born out of love is the foremost achievement of Shekhar’s life. This type of achievements can also be seen in other contexts --- where temporal failure can make Shekhar feel imperfection or emptiness for a moment. Shekhar soon gets ready to work with a new zeal and vigour. Shekhar had tried to create literature, but success eluded him. He experienced emptiness and everything proved meaningless when his first effort at literary composition ended and the work was eaten up by termites in the dustbin --- “साहित्य का निर्माण मानो जीवित मृत्यु का आह्वान है। साहित्यकार को निर्माण करके और लाभ भी तो क्या, रचित तो होने का मुख भी नहीं मिलता, क्योंकि काम पूरा होते ही वह देखता है, ‘अरे, यह तो वह नहीं है जो मैं चनाना
Creation of literature is like invocation of a living death. And, what a benefit to the litterateur for his creation. Even the pleasure of being the creator is not received because on finishing the work he finds, ‘Hey, this is not what I had wanted to create.’] Although Shekhar got disappointed temporally in pursuit of creating literature but, very soon, he succeeded in attaining victory over his failure because “उसका निश्चय था कि कभी अवसर पाकर वह किसी विराद काव्य चेष्टा से अपनी खोई हुई इज़हार दुबारा पायेगा।” [He was determined that on getting an opportunity at some other time he will regain his lost pride by a gigantic poetic effort.]

The characters of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’, particularly Bhuvan and Rekha, also experience the ‘feeling of void’. They do try to overcome despondency experienced by them because of this feeling of emptiness. Rekha’s character is most remarkable from this angle. Rekha attracts everyone’s attention in the form of a tragic character. She is a fiercely emotional and intelligent woman. She has the strength of women’s liberation, the challenge of selection and acceptance of responsibility in her. As such, her tragedy impresses the reader.

According to one critic, this kind of character is in line with the present times.“तीत्र संवेदनशील, बुद्धि मान और चित्रन शील समृद्ध व्यक्तित्व का तिल-तिल कर टूटने के लिए विवश गहन ट्रेज़ीक बोध देती है और मृत्यु में अंत होनेवाली ट्रेज़ीज़ी से यह ट्रेज़ीज़ी अधिक विषादमय है और आधुनिक युग के अधिक अनुकूल भी है।”[Helplessness for bit-by-bit demolition of a personality which is fiercely emotional, intelligent and thoughtfully prosperous gives rise to a deep feeling of tragedy that is gloomier than the tragedy which ends in death and the same is also more in conformity with the modern era.] This dispondency is definitely the creation of modern life.

‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’ can be called a novel of confrontation with death. This novel’s character, Selma is capable of embracing death in a natural way.
Her character can be said to have been influenced by religious existentialism. She has unshakable faith in God and death is not a subject of special worry for her. But, Yoke’s character is the opposite of Selma’s. The influence of artistic existentialism can be observed in her character. She is an aetheist because of which she does not have the strength to face death naturally. Selma keeps on asking her “तुम हर समय मृत्यु के बारे में ही क्यों सोचती रहती हो?” [Why do you keep on thinking about death all the time ?]

Yoke feels emptiness many a times under adverse circumstances. She experiences this emptiness only on separation from her lover, Paul --- “पॉल जो कहा करता है कि तुम दुनिया के किसी भी देश में होते तो मैं तुम्हें खोज निकालता -- लाखों, करोड़ों में तुरंत पहचान लेता ..... वह दूसरी टोली के साथ दूसरे पहाड़ पर गया था और बर्फ से उतरते आते हुए नीचे मिलने की बात थी। ढाई महीने - तीन महीने! ..... पॉल बूढ़ निकालेगा - पर किसको? मुझको, या मेरी ...." [Paul who often says that ‘I would find you out even if you are in any country of the world ---- would instantly recognise you amongst lakhs and crores of people.....’, he has gone on the other mountain with the second team and was scheduled to meet below while coming down from ice. Two and half, or three months !.... Paul will certainly find out --- but whom ? Me, or my .....] Yoke realises that her liberation from this wooden grave was not possible then. Paul will not be able to liberate her in a living state. This realisation fill the heart and mind of Yoke with emptiness. As such, she is unable to give company to aunt Selma. The feeling of void makes her immovable.

Yoke worries all the time about death in that house made of wood and this worry makes her sad. When Selma requests her to sing on the eve of christmas, then she finds herself incapable of singing. When Selma tells her that on that day God would be descending in their room, she opposes her
statement within her mind because she feels that only death could arrive in that grave that day, and not God. This possibility of the arrival of death fills Yoke’s mind with gloom and she experiences a void, “

My singing is wrong, as the descension of God is also wrong. If something has descended, it is death and that death is not such that it be welcomed with singing. Riding on my shoulders, it is strangulating my throat.”

While Yoke feels that death is ‘strangulating her throat’, the strength of embracing death in a natural way is present in the old woman, Selma. She does not experience the feeling of void in her mind in spite of facing approaching death or hearing Yoke’s words and sense of opposition towards anyone also does not arise in her mind. Yoke feels that “

There is no resistance of any sort in her --- neither towards me, nor towards my hostile feelings, not even towards Death and I cannot either understand or accept this. How can a living being be beyond the life instinct? Although we can be unattached to everything, but how can we be unattached to life?

The difference between the realisations of Yoke and Selma is clearly visible. Young and atheist Yoke gets completely dejected on finding death before her. Fear of death starts troubling her and she finds a void all around her. But, Selma is a theist, old and afflicted by cancer. Life has taught her a lot. She can be indifferent towards death also. A kind of harmony between life and death is observed in her. Hence, she appears more like an Indian.
4.1.6 Restlessness (Worry) (व्यक्ति अथवा चिंता):

"अभिधानिक दृष्टि से अगर देखा जाए तो 'व्यक्ति' भाववाचक संज्ञा रूप है, जिसकी व्युक्ति 'व्यक्ति' विशेषण शब्द में 'ता' प्रत्यय जोड़ने से हुई है। व्यक्ति शब्द का अर्थ है -- (1) चबुराया हुआ, व्यक्त, परेशान (2) डरा हुआ, भयभीत (3) काम में फंसा हुआ।" [Nomenclaturewise seen, the word 'Restlessness' is of the form of an abstract noun which has been formed by adding the suffix 'taa' to the adjective word 'vyagra'. The word 'vyagra' means --- (1) nervous, panicky, upset, harassed (2) frightened, scared (3) entrapped in work, busy.] As such the meaning of its abstract noun 'vyagrata' (व्यक्ति) will be --- restlessnesss, worry, scare, fright etc. A man experiences restlessness on encountering unfavourable circumstances or on being surrounded by problems. A person gets worried on the possibility of any adversity or damage. This type of restlessness can be called a symptom of 'consciousness of death.'

Special mention can be made of the restlessness of Shekhar, the hero of 'Shekhar: Ek Jeevani', Rekha and Bhuvan of 'Nadi Ke Dweep' and Yoke of 'Apne-Apne Ajanabi' in this context. Man has to face different kind of circumstances during his lifetime. What can happen, and when, in human life cannot be said. Therefore, a kind of doubt continues to remain in the human mind. This doubt repeatedly troubles the individual.

Shekhar recalls the past events of his life in 'Shekhar: Ek Jeevani'. For him, life is an experiment. Inquisitive and freedom loving Shekhar has faith only on his own experience because of which he tries to examine another person or thing that comes in his contact. But, his curiosity does not get easily satisfied and this turns into an unanswered question because of which his restlessness and harassment gets aggravated. Restlessness or harassment of Shekhar is visibly brought out at many places in 'Shekhar: Ek Jeevani'.

185
Different forms of restlessness or worry are observed in Shekhar’s life. We can see the restlessness of Shekhar, the child, in the first part of ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’. This restlessness is natural to a child. An inquisitive child wants to understand the essence of every thing or event. His restlessness or harassment gets aggravated when his inquisitiveness is unable to calm down. Shekhar is often considered as the image of Ajneya. Therefore, the self-realisation of Ajneya can also be considered as the self-realisation of Shekhar. Ajneya has also accepted this fact — "[I have selected the place of events in the initial parts of ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’ from my own life in order to truthfully portray child mentality then the life and experience of gradually growing Shekhar has strayed away from the field.] It appears that not only the places of events, but the sequence of events also finds similarity, more or less, with the sequence of events of Ajneya’s life. Ajneya has assimilated experiences and values free of tradition in ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’, and therefore, Ajneya has been abundantly opposed for presenting new values and experiences.

Clearly, Ajneya and his duplicate Shekhar had to face mental and literary worries. ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevan’ has been a novel promoting new values from beginning to end. Shekhar’s harassment and restlessness are the culmination of revolt declared by him with respect to society and social values. The feeling of curiosity arises in the mind of Shekhar on seeing different things and encountering different situations. But, every question’s answer is not to be found easily."
When the curiosities of the hero, Shekhar, who is inquisitive and who likes mental analysis by birth, do not get fully satisfied, then they slowly take the form of complexity in his mind. Shekhar inscribes very minutely the strokes and counter-strokes of feelings and passion arising out of Mother’s affection, love towards sister, physical attraction towards friends and girls of his age, love, sex etc in his young mind. Gradually, the instinct of revolt increases in him.] This revolt is towards the prevalent system. This revolt can be seen in his era. All new thinkers have ever been opposing the prevalent system. “विद्रोह अन्त्य है, नित्य है, क्योंकि उसके उपकरणों में प्रेम के बाद सबसे बड़ा और सबसे अमोघ अस्त्र है यही बौद्धिक घृणा।”\textsuperscript{56} Revolt is infinite, immortal, because this mental hate is the biggest and most infallible weapon after love amongst its equipment.\textsuperscript{57} [Sometimes I myself realise that my mind’s numerous pieces are intensely at war for gaining control over my consciousness. And, it also happens that sometimes one’s influence is more while at another time another’s influence is more and, as a result of this, an unfavourable incoherence affects my works.] Shekhar feels sometimes that he has gone mad because of this incoherence.
The restlessness of Rekha, the main character of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ is particularly worth observing from this viewpoint. Rekha is extremely restless because of the strokes and counterstrokes experienced in her life. She is harassed by social incoherence. She wants to lead an individualistic life different from social norms while living within the society, but without announcing her intention to do so. This is the reason why, unlike Mrinal of ‘Tyagapatra’, she does not desire to give birth to an illicit child consequent upon her getting pregnant because of her union with Bhuvan. Therefore, Veena Bhalla says — "मृणाल का कोयलेवाले की अवैध संतान को स्वीकार करना उसका सामाजिक संदर्भ है। जबकि रेखा का गर्भपात का निर्णय वैधक है। वह बौद्धिक स्तर पर तो भूवन से जुड़ने रहना चाहती है, लेकिन जहाँ उसे सामाजिक रूप देने का प्रयास है, उसे वह नकारती है। रेखा के संदर्भ में यह परिस्थिति वैधक स्तर पर उभरती है, उत: इसका समाधान सामाजिक परिस्थितियों में नहीं खोजा गया। इन उपन्यासों में पात्र बौद्धिक स्तर पर जीवन की एक्सर्किस स्थिति से उबरने की अपेक्षा जुड़ने रहना चाहते हैं।"[The acceptance of coalman’s illicit child is her social context. Whereas, Rekha’s decision to undergo abortion is individualistic. She wants to remain attached to Bhuvan on the intellectual plane, but when it comes to giving that relationship a social form, she negates it. In the context of Rekha, this situation arises on the level of the individual, and therefore, its solution has not been searched within social situations. The characters, in these novels, like to remain linked to absurd situations of life intellectually rather than getting liberated therefrom.] The restlessness and agitation of Bhuvan is also notable from amongst other characters of this novel.

Yoke of ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’ experiences restlessness and agitation on finding death near her. Selma is old and is also afflicted with cancer. She has three sons. In spite of that she live alone in that icy region. Perhaps, she wants to embrace death in that uninhabited area. According to zoologists,
elephant and monkey also, on facing death, get separated from their herd and enter unpopulated area of the forest to embrace death there in solitude. Yoke suddenly comes to Selma’s residence. That kind of situation is totally new for her. She gets more agitated than Selma. The difference between the mentalities of the two gets illuminated in the following lines ---

“योके बाड़कर दूसरे कमरे में गयी - लेकिन देखती पार करते ही ठीक गई। श्रीमती एकेलोफ (सेल्मा) खिड़की के पास घुमने टेककर बैठी थीं। उनकी पीठ योके की ओर थी। रुमाल से ढका हुआ सिर तनिक सा ठुकरा हुआ था, जिससे योके ने अनुमान किया कि वह प्रार्थना कर रही होंगी। वह दबे पैर लोटकर जाने ही वाली थी कि श्रीमती एकेलोफ ने खड़े होते हुए कहा, ‘क्यों योके तुम डर तो नहीं गई?’ योकेकी प्रश्न अच्छा नहीं लगा। उसने कुछ रुकते से कहा, ‘किससे ?’

"[Yoke went running to the other room --- but stopped hesitatingly on crossing the doorsill. Smt Akayloaf (Selma) sat kneeling near the window. Her back was facing Yoke. Her head, covered with scarf, was slightly bent down which made Yoke guess that she was praying. She was on the verge of returning quietly that Smt Akayloaf asked while rising up ‘Didn’t you get frightened Yoke ?’ Yoke did not like the question. She said somewhat curtly, ‘From whom ?’] Yoke’s question --- ‘From whom ?’ --- certainly reveals her agitation and fear only. As opposed to Yoke, Selma does not get particularly agitated on facing the nearing death. Yoke is unable to understand that --- "कैसे कोई जीता हुआ प्राणी जिजीविषा से परे हो सकता है ?" [How can a living being be beyond the life instinct?] This duel between Selma and Yoke is the conflict between tradition and modernity. Yoke, the statue of modernity, appears to be particularly affected by ‘consciousness of death’.  

4.1.7 Existence of the Other (Alienation) (‘पर’ का अस्तित्व, परायापन ):

“पर’ शब्द का अभिधानिक अर्थ है - (विशेष के रूप में) -1. अपने को छोड़ अन्य, गैर, दूसरा, 2. पराया, 3. भिन्न, जुदा, 4. पीछे का, 5. दूर, अलग, तदस्थ, 6. सबके ऊपर, 7. प्रवृत्ता
IN, W, "W I"60 [Nomenclaturewise, the meaning of word ‘Par’ is — (in the form of an adjective) — 1. Someone other than oneself, stranger, other, 2. alien, 3. dissimilar, separate, 4. following/preceeding, 5. distant, apart, neutral, 6. above all, 7. engaged (in the form of an indeclinable) — 1. after, behind/afterwords, 2. however, but, however (in the form of a noun) — birds’ wing, feather, aspect.] ‘Astitwa’ (अस्तित्व) means --- presence (विद्यमानता), to be/happen (होना), authority (सत्ता), existence (अवस्थिति), being (भाव). Accordingly, ‘par ka astitwa’ (पर का अस्तित्व) means --- ‘existence of another’ (दूसरे की अवस्थिति) or the ‘presence of another’ (दूसरे का होना) etc. In english, it can be called ‘alienation’ which means --- unfamiliarity (अजनबीपन), loneliness (अकेलापन), isolation (अलगाव) etc. The new realisation of existence in the form of unfamiliarity, loneliness, or isolation that came to Hindi literature in the modern era can be said to be the contribution of western existentialism.

According to existentialistic critics wherever the individual find himself lonely or unfamiliar, ‘alienation’ exists there. He finds himself lonely and unfamiliar with his own self and also ‘alienated’ from the society. In the modern scientific age, an individual loses his individuality in groups.

Shekhar is a born revolutionary in ‘Shekhar : Ek Jeevani’. He doesn’t want to lose his individuality in any group. He reviews his past life after hearing about his sentence of death by hanging. He evaluates his past life. This evaluation is an evaluation of successes. After recalling past times, Shekhar experiences a sort of pleasure because his past life had been a treasure of self-experiences --- ‘ज्यों-ज्यों में अपने जीवन की कहानी को सोचता हूँ, उसकी एक-एक बात को नाप-तौल कर उसकी विवेचना पर एक विद्वेशी के जीवन में उसके महत्व पर विचार करता हूँ, त्यों-त्यों उसके प्रति मेरा आदर-भाव बढ़ता जाता है। इस जीवन में भी कुछ है। एक उत्साह, एक
As I recall the story of my life, deliberate on the importance of that life on the basis of weighing and evaluating everything thereof, so does my respect towards that life increase. There is something in this life. A warmth, an ascending shine which, if not the power to revolt, is definitely the ability to worship the power of revolution.

Experience of ‘Alienation’ or ‘loneliness’ has awakened the mental world of Shekhar. On observing the unrestrained Nature he felt that it offered succour in his loneliness --- “शेखर ने देखा, उसके संसार के अलावा एक और संसार है, जिसमें पक्षी रहते हैं, जिसमें स्वच्छ-दत्ता है, जिसमें विश्वास है, जिसमें स्नेह है, जिसमें सोचने की या खेलने की अभाव स्वतंत्रता है— और वह संसार उसके लिए एक स्वर्ग, एक अत्यंत वांछित स्वप्न हो गया, उसकी कुल चंद्रणाओं से उन्मुक्ति का द्वार, उसके अंकलेपन में उसका सहारा!” [There is another World besides his World where birds live, where there is no restrain, where faith exists, where love resides, where unrestricted freedom to think and play is present --- and that world became a heaven for him, a most desirable dream, the door to his liberation from all sufferrings, a succour in his loneliness.] It is clear that Shekhar had been trying to get liberated from loneliness. This can only be called the constructive form of his character.

‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ is ‘a painful love-story’ according to Ajneya. Most of the characters of this novel which is written in a letter style are individualistic. They present their views very honestly in an artistic way. They find themselves lonely in spite of living within the society. As such, the title ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ is surely appropriate. Rekha is the leading character of this novel. Life has not given her anything but pain and grief, but the heat of these agonies have only brightened her mind. Bhuvan believes that Rekha “एक स्वाधीन व्यक्तित्व प्रतिभा के सहज तेज से नहीं, दुःख की आंच से निखरा है। दुःख तोड़ता भी है जब नहीं तोड़ता या तोड़ सकता
An independent personality is brightened by grief's heat and not by the natural glow of talent. Grief shatters, and when it cannot shatter, or does not shatter, it liberates the individual. Rekha likes Bhuvan and starts loving him because of overflowing emotions and also establishes physical contact with him. But, even then her 'alienation' or 'loneliness' does not find an end. She denies giving a social colour to her relations with Bhuvan. She does not want that someone sings any elegy after her death. Therefore, she recites the following lines of Christina Rossetti before Bhuvan:

When I am dead, my dearest
sing no sad songs for me.

No one accompanies anyone at the last time of life.

The peak form of 'loneliness' is witnessed in Yoke, the character of 'Apne-Apne Ajanabi'. A person finds himself lonely in spite of living within the periphery of the society. Not only this, the society accepts only those who sing its praise. Yoke becomes completely lonely after the death of Selma. She begins smelling death all around her. She begins fearing lonely life and remembers the monk who was residing at the monastery and about whom she was informed—"जिससे साधना के लिए अपने को एकांत कोठरी में बंद कर लिया था; लेकिन एक दिन एकाएक मानो जाग कर अपने अकेलेपन को पहचान कर और अपने-आप से डर कर अपनी कोठरी से सुरूंग खोदना आरंभ कर दिया था। सारा जीवन सुरूंग खोदते जब अंत में एक दिन उसे खुली-सी जगह मिलती जान पड़ी और वह उस में सिर डालकर ऊपर उठा— तो पहुँचा केवल उसी मठ की एक दूसरी एकांत गुफा में जो कि उसी प्रकार बंद थी जिस प्रकार उसकी अपनी कोठरी! अंतर केवल इतना था कि इस दूसरी कोठरी में एक पुराना लोटा और एक ठंडी भी पड़ी हुई थी— किसी दूसरे साधक की जो उस एकांत में मर गया था।" [... who had closeted himself for practising meditation, but one day, as if awakened, got frightened by his own self on realising his loneliness whereupon who started digging a...]

192
tunnel from his cell. After digging for a long time which appeared to be lifetime, when it appeared that he was nearing an opening and climbed headwards into it then he reached only another cell of the same monastary which was as closed as his own cell! The only difference was that in this cell there was an old vessel used for storing water and a skeleton also that belonged to some other monk who had died in that loneliness.] Yoke's story does not end here. Yoke is rescued from that loneliness by German forces who force her to become a prostitute by raping her. The society that was the German forces do not allow Yoke, the individual, to live alone. Societies suppress the desire of the individual in this manner and force him to follow their directives. So, at last, Yoke gets the sympathy of the readers.

4.1.8 Circumstance (परिस्थिति):

The meaning of the word 'Paristhiti' (परिस्थिति) is --- the situation all around or nearby an action. Circumstances have a great hand in bringing changes in individual, society and literature. Man is the slave of circumstances. He can behave in an animal like manner if the circumstances are unfavourable. Similarly, he can be God-like if the circumstances are favourable.

Circumstances play a major role in the growth of character in so far as the characters of Ajneya's novels are concerned. His novels' characters wander in their mental plane. Circumstances force them to think and give rise to instincts like curiosity, fear, sex, ego etc in their minds. Death or death like situations are found in plenty in Ajneya's novels. Therefore, death is a prominent subject of thought or problem for the characters of his novels.

Main problem of 'Shekhar: Ek Jeevani' is undoubtedly death. Shekhar, the revolutionary, has been sentenced to death by hanging. Naturally, therefore, he gets afflicted by the 'consciousness of death' under such formidable
circumstances. On finding death approaching him, he revaluates his life to find out the value and meaning of his past life! “मेरी विषयता मानो भावानुभावों के घेरे से बाहर निकलकर एक समस्या रूप में मेरे सामने आयी— अगर यही मेरे जीवन का अंत है, तो उस जीवन का मोल क्या है, अर्थ क्या है, सिद्धि क्या है— व्यक्ति के लिए, समाज के लिए, मानव के लिए? इस जिज्ञासा की अनासक्त निर्मिता के और यातना की सर्वभौमी दृष्टि के आगे मेरा जीवन धीरे-धीरे खुलने लगा, एक निज़ू और अप्रासंगिक विसंगति के रूप में नहीं एक घटना के रूप में।”

[My state came out, as if from the circle of experienced feelings, as a problem before me --- if this is the end of my life, then what is the price of that life, its meaning, its achievement --- for the individual, for the society, for humanity? ..... My life slowly started unfolding upon this curiosity’s unattached cruelty and upon all-piercing insight into torture, not in the form of an individualistic and irrelevant contradiction but as an incident, in the form of a social truth.] All folds of the life of Shekhar, who is afflicted by the ‘consciousness of death’, open up one by one. He speaks about the story of his life very cruelly. The story described by Shekhar can be amazing to the critics. Shekhar’s experiences and thoughts, being new, may appear strange to them. Therefore, the critics should understand the value of subjectivity expressed by Ajneya through the medium of Shekhar. Without this correct evaluation of Ajneya’s work is not possible. Accordingly, a critic has written --- “किसी कृति की आलोचना करते समय निरंतर ध्यान रखा जाना आवश्यक है कि कृतिकार का दृष्टिकोण क्या है? वह कितना ‘सिगनिफिकेंट’ या अर्थग़ार्मी है? समकालीन स्थितियों में उसकी प्रासंगिकता क्या है? इन सवालों का जवाब दिये बिना यदि आलोचक अपने दृष्टिकोण को लेखक पर भोपता है तो उसकी आलोचना पूर्वाग्रह-प्रस्त होगी!”

[While criticising any work, the questions which should be continuously and necessarily kept in mind is --- What is the viewpoint of the creator? How significant of meaningful is that viewpoint? What is its relevance in contemporary situations? If the critic imposes his
own viewpoint on the writer without answering these questions, then his criticism will be prejudiced. The effect of circumstances on Shekhar is clear. Let us consider ‘consciousness of death’ or ‘deliberation on God’. Death is a certainty in human life. According to the Indian tradition, stress is laid on acceptance of death in a natural way. The sentence of death by hanging awarded because of Shekhar being a revolutionary, though a death prior to the completion of his work, is surely natural for a revolutionary. Sacrificing life by a revolutionary, and search for the meaning of life by an inquisitive and introvert person on facing imminent death, will be considered very natural for such persons. Shekhar is both, a revolutionary as well as an inquisitive person. As such, the influence of circumstances in the development of Shekhar’s character or his ‘deliberation on God’ is certainly acceptable. Shekhar’s viewpoint cannot be termed prohibitive.

Freud has mentioned three primary instincts of man --- ego, fear and sex. Shekhar experiences these instincts in the context of his life. There are many instances in ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’ (Part-1) which do prove this statement. The fear instinct out of the above three primary instincts is illustrated in the following example.

Shekhar, the child, gets frightened on seeing an artificially preserved tiger in the museum. The tiger’s dreadful teeth, tongue and reddish eyes became the reason of his fright. Shekhar’s father brought a similar tiger to his home in order to remove the fear of Shekhar. Shekhar’s experience in this connection was penned down by Ajneya in the following way --- “एक बार बैसा ही बाघ उसके घर लाकर रखा गया। बहुत मुसँकल से अपने भाइयों की देखा-देखी वह उसके पास भी गया, उसकी पीठ पर भी बैठा और उसे निर्जीव पाकर साहस करके उसके मुँह में हाथ भी डालकर देखा। तब डर एकाएक उड़ गया, तब शिशु ने चाकू लेकर उस खाल को फाड़ डाला, उसके भीतर के
Once a similar tiger was placed at his home. Imitating his brothers, and with great hesitation, he also went near it, sat on its back and finding it lifeless also inserted his hand in its mouth. Then, his fear suddenly flew away. Then, the child tore down its skin with a knife scattering hither-thither its inner hay and straw and started laughing. ... The child came to know that fear is caused by getting frightened. World’s all dreadful things are only a lifeless skin filled with hay and straw and it is foolishness to get frightened by them.] Other examples of this type can also be produced which can satisfy the curiosities of Shekhar relating to ego, fear and sex. These are different kinds of situations. These circumstances fill the mind of Shekhar with curiosities and also help in finding their solutions.

Circumstances have also played a very great role in the mental state and changes brought about in the personalities of the main characters of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. All four main characters of the novel appear to be philosophical. These are circumstances which bring about basic changes in their characters. Of the four characters of the novel, Rekha impresses most. She becomes a victim of social order and circumstances. Circumstances bring radical changes in the life and thinking of Rekha. She experiences grief and deep anguish. Circumstances only force her to take several unfavourable decisions in her life: As if, her life is a verse full of agony. ‘Grieved cleanses everyone’ [दुःख सबको मात्रा है] --- the cited lines at the very beginning of the novel prove very useful in the context of Rekha. “रेखा एक द्वीप है जिसके चारों ओर नदी का प्रवाह है, उसमें ओर द्वीप है, कहीं कोई सीमात्त नहीं है किसी से संपर्क नहीं, केवल नदी के माध्यम से, नदी जो मां है, धारिती है, तारिती है” [Rekha is an ‘island’ around which flows the
Circumstances have had a great hand in the building of Rekha’s character. Formidable and unfavourable circumstances fill Rekha’s life with grief making her awakened and individualistic. By the time the end of the novel is reached, she turns into a frustrated, victimized and talkative lonely character.

Bhuvan’s advent in the life of Rekha is only a special circumstance. First, she gets impressed by Bhuvan, and then infatuated. She is alone after separation from Hemendra. It appears to her that her soul has got frustrated by the absence of love. Without this love the life cannot be ‘fulfilled’. This is the reason why her infatuation with Bhuvan leads to her conjugation with him. After getting ‘fulfilled’ by Bhuvan, she becomes compassionate towards her past life. She feels as if love is everything. ... But, this disposition does not subsist for a long time. She again experiences deeply deep pain and anguish. This pain and agony is also the characteristic of ‘consciousness of death’. Her pain an agony keeps on increasing and she does not want to keep Bhuvan attached to her inspite of her loving him. She herself looses the opportunity to become the mother of Bhuvan’s child. Probably, she only wants to keep loving Bhuvan, but does not desire to keep Bhuvan bound to herself. She feels more lonely after undergoing abortion. But, she wants to live engrossed in the moments of Bhuvan’s company. Therefore, she says, “मैं टूट गयी हूं, भुवन, मेरे जीवन, जैसी पहले कभी कभी नहीं टूटी थी। लेकिन इतना कह हूं, मुझे किसी बात का पछतावा नहीं है और इससे भी दस गुनी बुरी तरह टूट जाएंगे तब भी तुम्हारे साथ के एक क्षण को, हमारी साझी अनुभूति के स्पन्दन को भी छोड़ देने को मैं राजी नहीं हूं।” [I am shattered Bhuvan,
my life, like never before. But, I must say atleast that I have no repentence about anything and even if I am shattered worse by ten times more, I am not willing to miss a moment of your company, the vibrations of our common experience .... My Lord, be kind enough and forgive me.] The influence of social and individual circumstances on this mentality of Rekha cannot be denied.

Circumstances also play a prominent role in ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’, the last novel of Ajneya. Main characters of this novel are two women --- Selma and Yoke. Both of them are affected by the ‘consciousness of death’. The novelist has shown both of them surrounded by formidable circumstances. Such complex circumstances have engrossed their lives which force them to embrace death, whether they wish to do so or not. By putting the two women under most difficult and formidable circumstances, attempt has been made to show that --- “मृत्यु को सामने पाकर कैसे प्रियजन भी अजनबी हो जाते हैं और अजनबी एक पहचाने हुए कैसे इस चरम स्थिति में मानव का सच्चा चरित्र उभरकर आता है — उसका प्रत्यय, उसका अदभुत साहस और उसका विमल अनौलिक प्रेम भी वैसे ही और उतने ही अप्रत्याशित ढंग से क्रियाशील हो उठते हैं जैसे उसकी निम्नतर प्रवृत्तियाँ।” [Confronting Death, how dear ones become strangers and strangers become acquainted. The real character of humans comes to the fore under this ultimate situation --- his concept, his irresistible courage and his flawless and heavenly love also become unexpectedly active like his lower tendencies.]

Both the women, Selma and Yoke, confront death in the wooden house buried under snow-mountain in this novel, but their reactions are different. Selma is old, very weak and is also afflicted by cancer. On the other hand, Yoke is young and has been accidentally entrapped under such circumstances. It should be noted that picturization of this kind of formidable circumstances
are not entirely new to ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’. Similar formidable circumstances portraying reversal of time have been shown in many famous books of the world. Following works can be cites as examples thereof. Jean Paul Sartre’s famous play ‘In Camera’, another of his creation entitled ‘No Exit’ and Pristelle’s play ‘Time and ...’ are worth mentioning in this respect. In all these works, the characters have been made to face similar formidable circumstances and their mental state and ‘consciousness of death’ is effectively depicted. But, this does not mean that Ajneya’s work is an imitation or translation of any foreign work. ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’ is Ajneya’s original work in which he has presented two women’s different view-points in respect of ‘death’ by putting them in a formidable situation.

In ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’, Selma’s viewpoint relating to death can be called to be in accordance with the Indian thinking. She is able to embrace death in a natural and simple way. On the other hand, Yoke gets intolerant on finding death before her. She becomes lonely after the death of Selma. German forces liberate her, but rape her and thereby force her to live the life of a prostitute. She gets bored with life, but is also alert about her existence. Then, she opts ‘not to be’ in preference over ‘to be’ and atlast commits suicide by consuming poison. As such, it is clear that formidable circumstance also amount to a prominent reason for ‘deliberation on death’.

4.1.9 Timeboundedness (कालबहुता) :

"कालबहुता" दो शब्दों के योग से बना है— ‘काल’ तथा ‘बहुता’। काल का मुख्य आधिकारिक अर्थ है— समय, वक्त, तथा ‘बहुता’ (संज्ञा) का अर्थ है— बंधा हुआ, जो मुक्त न हो, निर्धारित आदि। [The word ‘कालबहुता’ (timeboundedness) has been derived from the union of two words --- 'काल' (time) and 'बहुता' (boundedness). Nomenclaturewise, the principal meaning of ‘काल’ (kaal) is --- ‘समय, वक्ता’]
(Time) and 'बद्धता' (baddhata) (the noun) means — बंधात हुआ (bound), जो मुक्ति हो (that which is not free), निर्धारित (fixed/determined) etc.] There ‘kaalbaddhata’ or ‘timeboundedness’ can be taken to mean --- fixed or determined, or time that is bound in limits. ‘Timeboundedness’ has got special importance in existentialism. Man’s conception of time-movement is dependent on his personal experience. Ordinarily, the time of man’s life that has elapsed is called ‘past’, the time that is currently being lived is accepted as the ‘present’ and the time that is yet to follow according to his imagination is his ‘future’.

‘Time’ has got special importance in existentialism. The man wants to experience and live every moment of life. Truth is realised only at a unique moment and that moment becomes unparalleled. Ajneya also accepts this ---

"आज के विविक्त इस क्षण को
पूरा हम जी लें, पी चेहरे, आत्मसात कर लें"?!?

[This isolated moment of today
Let us fully live it, drink it, assimilate it.]

This peculiar experience of the ‘moment’ is visible in the three novels of Ajneya, particularly in ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’ and ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. It is true that the experience of the ‘moment’ is completely individualistic.

Shekhar tries to relive his life in ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’. He often recalls certain specific times of his life and he wants to relive those special moments. Many such incidents occur in his life which nourish and make strong his world of experience. Those moments hold special importance in his life. Shekhar recalls many such moments in this novel. Particularly worth citing are the following ---

1) Shekhar has climbed on the letter-box. He begins feeling that ‘he is an Emporer. He is riding on his winning horse, and challenging the world.
It is then that the postman asks him to come down. His ego gets hurt. He also takes revenge in his own way — falls on the postman’s fingers while getting down, crushes them and runs away...’ — this is the satisfaction of his ego.

(2) Shekhar treats his sister, Saraswati, as his Guru (teacher/guide). Shekhar requires answer to his query regarding the source from where a child is born. After great effort, he asks Saraswati one day — ‘How do the children come?’ Somewhat evasively, Saraswati says, ‘Why doesn’t God send them?’ ‘Don’t lie, sister!’ Saraswati said somehow, ‘They come out from the mother’s body.’ ‘Where from? How?’ ‘I do not know,’ Saying so Saraswati laid down covering her face and head. Shekhar felt afterwards — Saraswati did not lie to him. Otherwise, she would not have been so ashamed. There is a special importance of these moments, the experience of these moments, in the life of Shekhar and he does accept it.

"नित्यता क्षणों की हैं, पर क्षण, क्षण-भंगुर हैं। मैं भी हूँ, मृदुत्त जो कुछ नूतनता है, उसे मुझे इसी क्षण में कह दालना है, क्योंकि वह भविष्य की वस्तु है, मैं उसे कहे विना रूक नहीं सकता और सोचने का समय नहीं। क्षण का असिम्बल कितना?” [Eternity belongs to moments, but the moment is only momentary. I also exist and whatever is new in me must be expressed by me this very moment, because that belongs to the future. I cannot stop from expressing it, for there is no time to think --- afterall what is the existence of a moment?] It is very clear that the moment holds special importance for Shekhar.

Special importance of the moment is also visible in Rekha’s life in ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. Ajneya has named ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ as a love-story full of tragedy. On a careful reading of the novel, it appears that this statement of
Ajneya refers to Rekha’s life. She gets only agonies from her life. She does not get her desirable pleasure from life. The advent of Bhuvan is a specially remarkable incident of her life. She also mates with Bhuvan. In her own language, she gets ‘fulfilled’ but does not give birth to a child. She does not want to keep Bhuvan bound in attachment towards her. She wants to spend her remaining life in the memory of the solitary moment of her conjugation with Bhuvan. As if, anguish is like a penance for Rekha. Frustration, tensions and dispersion hold prominence in her life. These are the peculiarities of the middle class. Ajneya has also accepted this — “आज का कवि (रचनाकार) मुख्यः मध्यवर्ग से आता है और मुख्यः मध्यवर्ग का ही जीवन चित्रित करता है, इसी वर्ग में जीत-जीत सबसे अधिक क्रियाशील हैं और इसलिए इसी वर्ग में कुटुंबकं सबसे स्पष्ट लक्ष्य होती है। कुटुंब कहाँ हो सकता है जहाँ किसी नियम के कारण प्रवृत्ति और आचरण में विरोध की गांठ पड़ जाए.”

[Today’s poet (author) comes mainly from the middle class and portray the life mainly of the middle class. Inhibitions are most active in this very class, and therefore, frustrations are clearly visible in this class. Frustration can exist only where, because of some prohibition, conflict between instinct and conduct creates complexity.] Although this statement of Ajneya has been expressed in the context of poetry, it also applies in context of his novels because psychological novels like ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ etc come close to poetry.

The characters of psychological novels are usually emotional and educated. For them, man’s life is momentary --- therefore, every moment has a special importance in their lives. The magnitude of every moment’s importance can be particularly observed in the novel ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’.

Many critics of Hindi regard ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’ as a novel of ‘confrontation with death’. Amongst them, Dr Nanada Kumar Rai [Ajneya Ki Aupanyasik Sanchetna अजनय की औपन्यासिक संचेतना]], Acharya Durga Shankar
Mishra [Apne-Apne Ajnabi - Ek Adhyayan (अपने-अपने अजनबी-एक अध्ययन)] and Ram Kamal Rai [Ajneya — Srijan Ki Samagrata (अज्ञेय—सृजन की समग्रता)] are worth mentioning. They are of the opinion that the possibility of one’s own death exists in the unconscious mind of man but he ordinarily likes to live free of apprehension about death. The moment possibility of death appears to be turning true for the man, basic change in his viewpoint is very natural. This is the situation of ‘confrontation with death’. The author has tried to describe the peculiarities of behaviour of a man, on confronting death, through the medium of two women characters.

Man’s life is bound between two ends of birth and death. He is continually moving towards death throughout his life. Man has already defined past, present and future. Man has defined Time in accordance with the mutually following sequence of light and darkness in which the sun plays a leading role. After all, it is sun that is at the root of day and night, or light and darkness. This is the reason why Yoke believes the sun to be the supportive base of human life and has called man a ‘sun-worshipper’. According to Yoke, we derive our life from the sun. The sun controls every action and movement witnessed in our lives. As such, the Sun is the synonym of God for man. And therefore, where there is no Sun, there is no time also. In this way, the division of time has been shown as dependent on the Sun in ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’.

Sun dependent time division has also taught man to measure a moment. One can divide his life in periods not only of years, days or hours, but also in seconds or moments.

Selma and Yoke, both, are living in time. Selma’s viewpoint matches the Indian thought according to many critics. For the simple-hearted Selma, every day is important, there is a sort of magic in every day so that one should
live considering every day as the gift of God. She opines — “साल का कोई भी दिन किसी दूसरे दिन से किस बात में कम है। बल्कि मैं तो सोच सकती हूँ कि कोई भी दिन साल का दिन क्यों है — दिन ही में क्या कम जाता है?” [In what respect is a day of the year less than any other day! But, I can think that why is any day a day of the year --- is there less magic in a day?] Not only this, this sun dependent division of time appears unprecedented to Selma, mysterious and blissful, and therefore she says, “खुली निखरी हुई, सिंगध, हँसती धूप — में बाहर उसकी कल्पना करती हूँ। तो वह मेरे भीतर खिल आती है और में सोच सकती हूँ कि में उसे औरों को दे सकती हूँ।” [Elegantly spread, glossy, laughing sunshine --- when I imagine it outside, it spreads within me and I can think that I can give that to others.]

Opposite of Selma, Yoke is a young European woman who loves freedom. She is trapped inside the wooden house buried under snow. That is not a new thing for Selma, but for Yoke this incident has arrived with its accompanying terror. Definite possibility of suddenly approaching death badly terrifies her. Everything begins appearing meaningless to her — “एक अन्तर्हीन, परिवर्तन हीन धुंधली रोशनी, जो न दिन की है न रात की है न संध्या के किसी क्षण की है — एक अपार्थिव रोशनी जो कि शायद रोशनी भी नहीं है, इतना ही है कि उसे अंधकार नहीं कहा जा सकता। हमेशा सुनती आयी हूँ कि कब में बड़ा अंधेरा होता, लेकिन यहाँ उसकी अस्पष्टता और विविधता है। शायद यही वास्तव में मृत्यु होती है, जिसमें कुछ भी होता नहीं, सब कुछ होते-होते रह जाता है।” [An endless hazy light which is changeless, which neither belongs to the day, nor to the night, and not even to any moment of the evening --- an unearthly light which is, probably, not even light, only so much as cannot be called darkness. I have always heard that there is great darkness in a grave, but here is variety and incompleteness in it. Perhaps, this is death in reality, in which nothing happens, everything stops short of happening.]
Now, division of time starts appearing meaningless for Yoke. In addition, fear of death also starts troubling her. Therefore, she says — “मैं मानो एक काल-निरपेक्ष क्षण में टूटी हुई हूँ - वह क्षण काल की लड़ी में से दूर रहकर कहीं छिटक गया है और इस तरह अंतिम हो गया है— अंतिम और अर्थहीन।” [I exist as if hanging out in a time-indifferent moment — that moment has strayed away from the chain of time and has thus become endless — endless and meaningless.]

4.2 Other Characteristics of Consciousness of Death in Ajneya’s Novels:

All the characteristics of ‘consciousness of death’ are readily found in the novels of Ajneya. In addition to the nine basic instincts, other characteristics of instincts are also sighted in his novels. A brief description of such instincts is presented hereafter.

4.2.1 Terror (संत्रास):

“संत्रास’ का अभिव्यक्तिक अर्थ है — ‘भय, आतंक, अहिंत की संभावना से उत्पन्न भय’” [Nomenclaturewise, the word ‘Santras’ (संत्रास) means — ‘Fear (भय), Terror (आतंक), Fear born out of the possibility of harm occurring अहिंत की संभावना से उत्पन्न भय’]] Right from primitive times to this day, Man usually gets terrified on realising the possibility of a harm occurring. If wild animals, natural calamities etc were the cause of terror in primitive times, then communal riots, world war, earthquakes etc are today’s cause of terror for the mankin. At the root of terror is the fear of death. People cannot get easily liberated from the fear of death or ‘consciousness of death’. Even litterateurs are unable to free themselves of worries related to death. Terror and ‘consciousness of death’ are portrayed more in individualistic novels as compared to social novels. Terror is necessarily observed visibly in the novels of Ajneya. Characters like Shekhar, Rekha, Selma and Yoke are the victims of terror. From amongst them, Shekhar, Rekha and Selma have learnt a lot from their struggles and
eventful lives because of which they experience terror only internally. As against this, Yoke is a young woman who does not have that much experience of life because of which she gets frightened on finding death staring at her. Everything appears false to the terrified Yoke — “लेकिन सब झूठ है—कुछ नहीं बचता— हम नहीं बचते, बचने को रहे भी, यह भी नहीं कह सकते! मृत्यु—मृत्यु—मृत्यु उसी की एक मात्र प्रतीक्षा, ऊपर बर्फ़ हो या न हो—” [But, everything is false --- nothing remains --- we do not remain, or whether we live to remain cannot also be said! Death-death-death, only waiting for it, whether there is ice above or not ---]

4.2.2 Loneliness, Strangeness (अकेलापन, अजनबीयन):

‘Loneliness’ (अकेलापन) means --- ‘the experience of there being no company’ (साथ किसी के न होने का अनुभव). Similarly, ‘Strangeness’ (अजनबीयन) means ‘realisation of unfamiliarity’ (अपरिचित बोध) (Apairicata baaQa). These are also the symptoms of ‘consciousness of death’. On facing death, or a death like situation, a person begins feeling even himself as a stranger. In such a situation, the person starts examining himself and finds himself totally lonely. Shekhar tries to recognise himself by reliving his past life on nearing the end of his life. In the same way, the life of Rekha, the main character of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ is only a grief-stricken story. She wants to give a meaning to her life by living in memory of that special intimate moment spent in the company of Bhuvan. The influence of existentialistic thought is clearly seen in this concept of Rekha. An existentialist believes that life’s significance is established by different unique actions executed at special moments.

‘How over beloved ones also become strangers on facing death’—has been shown in ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’. Here, strangeness has been experienced particularly by Yoke. She has a somewhat peculiar feeling after being buried under snow in a house made of wood. She also finds her companion, Selma,
also mysterious. She wonders as to how a woman can remain unattached even
after finding death confronting her. Poor Yoke has to undergo unspecified
strange situations in that wooden enclosure. Everything appeared to be
mysterious to the atheist Yoke. In the last times of life, she feels that everything
continued to remain only mysterious --- “अजनबी चेहरे, अजनबी आवाजें, अजनबी
mुद्राएं और वह अजनबीपन केवल एक दूसरे को दूर रखकर उससे बचने का ही नहीं है, बलि
एक-दूसरे से संपर्क स्थापित करने की असमर्थता का भी है— जातियों और संस्कारों का अजनबीपन,
जीवन के मूल्यों का अजनबीपन।”

Strange faces, strange sounds, strange poses
and that strangeness is not only of saving oneself by keeping one-another
away, but also of inability to establish contact with each other --- strangeness
of castes and traditions, strangeness of life’s values.

4.2.3 Irrelevance (विसंगति):

“‘संगति का अभिधानिक अर्थ है—मिलने का क्रिया, मेल, संग, प्रसंग, मैथुन, संबंध, ज्ञान,
आगे पीछे कहें जाने वाले बाक्यों आदि का मिलना।’

[Nomenclaturewise ‘Sangati’ (संगति) means --- the act of meeting (मिलने की क्रिया), agreement (मेल), company
(संग), context (प्रसंग), coition (मैथुन), relation (संबंध), knowledge (ज्ञान), the union
of preceeding and following sentences (आगे पीछे कहें जाने वाले बाक्यों आदि का
मिलना).] ‘Visangati’ (विसंगति) is derived by prefixing ‘vee’ (वि) before the word
‘sangati’ (संगति) and then it means --- ‘the lack of context (प्रसंग), relevance
(संगति), agreement (मेल) etc. Insecurity, conventions etc that are found spread
in the society are the causes of irrelevance. ‘Irrelevance’ has been accepted as
a widely prevalent proverb in the post independence Hindi literature. Vinoo
Bhalla has written that “‘विसंगति’ कामु के ‘अब्सर्ड’ (Absurd) का हिन्दी रूपांतर है?

[‘Visangati’ is the Hindi translation of Kamu’s ‘Absurd’].

‘Irrelevance’ is found displayed in Ajneya’s novels. Shekhar of ‘Shekhar
: Ek Jeevani’ reviews his past life. Social irrelevances like conventionalism,
dependence on others, blind faith etc have turned the child Shekhar into a revolutionary. Fear, sex and ego had been experienced by him in adolescence itself. Social and family restrictions had made Shekhar lonely. The revolutionary child, Shekhar, had only contempt and hate towards prohibitions. Social conventions and fatalistic views appeared irrelevant to Shekhar. Prevalent system of eduction, society’s viewpoint relating to sexual behaviour appeared irrelevant and intolerable to him. Ajneya, as well as Shekhar, found walking the trodden path a danger to existence. Therefore, Brahma Dev Mishra writes --- "लोक पर चलना अज्ञेय के मत से दयाव का पर्याय है, उस सामाजिक परंपरा का निर्यंत्रण है जो व्यक्ति को लोक पर चलाने में ही अपने अस्तित्व की सुरक्षा मानता है। व्यक्ति का अस्तित्व भी कुछ होता है, उस पर कराई ध्यान नहीं देता। व्यक्ति को विद्रोह के लिए उकसाता है।" [According to Ajneya’s thinking, walking the trodden path is equivalent to exerting pressure, the control of that social tradition which believes in maintaining the security of its existence by making a person follow the trodden path. The existence of individual is also something on which no attention is paid. Provokes the individual to revolt.] For this reason, Shekhar is unable to tolerate these irrelevances and revolts.

Similar irrelevant situations fill the mind of Rekha of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep.’ with insecurity. Traditional critics have considered her to be a woman who is cut off from her husband and family environment and who attempts to prove her mental distortions correct by resorting to logic. But, in reality, Rekha expresses revolt against the hollow and false conventions of the society. Nemi Chand Jain has also supported this revolt of Rekha --- ‘नदी के ढीप’ स्त्री पुरुषों के विषय में समाज की खोखली मिथ्या मान्यताओं के प्रति व्यक्ति के तीखे विद्रोह को व्यक्त करता है। हमारे समाज में व्यक्ति के प्रेम की, स्त्री पुरुष के संबंध की कोई भी गति, कोई भी सच्चाई प्रबल परिणामि अनिवार्य रूप से तथागत सामाजिक मान्यताओं से टकराती है और विरोध उत्पनन करती
Such a love between man and woman has been depicted in ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ as explicitly does not distort the character in spite of being unsocial but provides totality and balance to it. ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ expresses sharp revolt of the individual towards the hollow and false beliefs of the society with respect to men and women. In our society, the individual’s love, any result of man-woman relationship, any of their densely forceful forms necessarily create conflict and opposition towards the concerned social beliefs. Conflict with social beliefs turns the life of Rekha irrelevant and she gets frustrated.

Disagreeable situation turns pitiable the existence of the foremost heroine of ‘Apne-Apne Ajanabi’. Unwanted and terrific incident takes place in the life of Yoke, the young woman who takes pleasant dreams — when she gets buried under snow, alongwith Selma, in the wooden house. The suddenness of the incidence opens up Yoke. Selma’s state is completely different from that of Yoke. Life has taught her a lot. A revolutionary change comes instantly in the life of Yoke and she begins experiencing meaninglessness. German forces rape Yoke who believes in the ‘freedom of choice’ like the existentialists and thereby force her to become a prostitute. Rekha, now, begins hating life and ultimately commits suicide by consuming poison. Although she declares before dying that she had chosen death for herself, that she had utilized the ‘freedom of choice’ by doing so, the ordinary reader finds this declaration as grossly meaningless.

4.2.4 Independence of the Individual (व्यक्ति-स्वातंत्र्य)

Existentialistic thinkers also accept this in the form of ‘freedom of choice’. According to Sartra man gets this ‘freedom of choice’ by birth, but man has to select any one from two or more alternatives. Of course, man does not have the right of not exercising his choice. As against this interpretation
of the ‘freedom of the individual’, or ‘freedom of choice’, Hindi’s famous litterateur, Jainendra Kumar, does not accept independence a value separated from life but an intrinsic value of life. His opinion is — स्वतंत्रता मेरे निकट एक मूल्य है। उपयोग से अलग उसका विचार अवस्थाहो सकता है यानी स्वतंत्रता मानव का अधिकार है, इसे कहने में मुझे विशेष आशय प्राप्त नहीं होता। [Independence is a value for me. Thinking of it as distinct from usage can be unrealistic i.e., independence is the right of a human being and by no particular purpose is served by saying so by me.] Clearly, Indian critics have remained neutral towards independence of the individual.

The characters of Ajneya’s novels are fully alive to their existence and rights. Shekhar, who is awarded the sentence of death by hanging, is worried about his existence, but he does not have the experience. He has faith on self-experience. His curiosity gets satisfied when he himself examines any person or subject. Discipline of the parents is unable to keep him away from independent thinking.

Rekha of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ and Yoke of ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’ appear alive to their rights. ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ is said to be a ‘painful love-story’. This statement applies fully to Rekha. She also becomes victim of agony and self-torture voluntarily like Mrinal of Jainendra Kumar’s ‘Tyagapatra’. The ordinary reader may find the character of Rekha somewhat peculiar --- the relationship with Bhuvan, establishment of physical contact with him, the declaration of being ‘fulfilled’ by her union with Bhuvan, getting aborted in spite of that etc are her peculiarities which even Bhuvan fails to comprehend. This uniqueness of Rekha has been presented by Brahma Dev Mishra in the following words which is representative of Rekha’s independent thinking --- रेखा के समर्पण को जीभ और जांघ के भूगोल तक सीमित करना और रेखा में पोलिश्ट प्लांटेण्स’ देखना अप्रासंगिक ही
of Rekha to the locations of tongue and the thigh and finding ‘polished flirtness’ her can only be said to be out of context. Rekha’s surrender does not hold any repentence or anguish behind it. There is the appearance of deep satisfaction on whose support life is possible. This surrender of Rekha, devoid of emotional excess, is representative of her faith towards the man of her choice.] Rekha did not take this decision under pressure from anyone.

Yoke of ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’ is the supporter of ‘independence of the individual’. It appears that Ajneya has taken ample help from artistic existentialism. Like the existentialists, Yoke also believes that man is free to do anything after taking birth. Yoke also believes that man has the right to chose out of more than one alternatives. But, the anomaly of artistic existentialism is that one has to compulsory make his choice, he doesn’t have the right to deny making a choice. Therfore, some critics consider the declared ‘freedom of choice’ of existentialists as meaningless.

Yoke is an cautious woman. She believes that man has the right of choice. He choses wilfully --- not under pressure from someone. The readers see Yoke as a prostitute in the last chapter of the novel. German forces had compelled her to become a prostitute. She decided to commit suicide when she was forced to become a prostitute aginst her wish. She tells Jagannath before her death that she had chosen death wilfully and not because of the desire or dictate of God --- “मैंने चुन लिया। मैंने स्वतंत्रता चुन लिया। मैं बहुत खुश हूँ। मैंने कभी कुछ नहीं चुना। जब से मुझे यद है कभी कुछ चुनने का मौका मुझे नहीं मिला। लेकिन अब मैंने चुन लिया। जो चाहा वही चुन लिया। मैं खुश हूँ।”85 I have chosen. I have chosen
freedom. I am very happy. I had never chosen anything. As far as I remember, I did not get the opportunity to chose anything. But, now I have chosen. Chosen what I desired. I am happy.] Even though this statement of Yoke may appear meaningless to the critics, but the simple faith and confidence with which Yoke expressed her thinking, evokes sympathy in the minds of the readers. This climax of faith and confidence can only be considered as devotion.

4.3 Conclusion:

The inspirative source of Ajneya’s novels is only ‘consciousness of death’. Right from ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’ to the last novel ‘Apne-Apne Ajnabi’, his novels are the result of ‘deliberation on death’. If Shekhar tries to review and re-evaluate his past life on receiving the sentence of death by hanging in order to his life’s meaning, then this certainly is the result of ‘consciousness of death’. Shekhar wants to weigh his life in term of values. The characteristics of ‘consciousness of death’ are observed in an artistic form in ‘Shekhar: Ek Jeevani’. Features of ‘consciousness of death’ are also found in ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’. Ajneya has himself named ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’ as a ‘a painful love-story’. The leading heroine of ‘Nadi Ke Dweep’, Rekha, has always confronted grief and agony in her life. Emotional and cautious Rekha loses Bhuvan even after loving and possessing him and ultimately embraces grief and agony. The character of Rekha brings Mrinal to our memory --- a woman who is the heroine of Jainendra Kumar’s novel ‘Tyagapatra’ and who experiences a kind of pleasure in inflicting pain on herself. Rekha also admits that ‘grief cleanses the life’. The experiences of grief and agony are definitely the symptoms of ‘consciousness of death’.

Ajneya’s last novel, ‘Apne Apne Ajnabi’ is also the result of ‘consciousness of death’. In one way, this novel is a ‘philosophy in psychology’.
In this novel, two women of mutually conflicting views have been put under complex situations in order to analyse their thinking about death. Out of these two, Selma is an old lady who believes in God and who is ready to accept death naturally and simply. As against this, Yoke is a young women who is an atheist and is unable to accept death naturally. Ajneya has presented to mutually conflicting beliefs through the medium of these two characters. This novel gives rise to many questions relating to death. Learned people consider this as a conflict between Indian and European thought.

Ajneya has definitely conducted a new experiment in the field of novels and has thereby presented Indian and Foreign viewpoints before the readers.

Index of Reference Books
2. ibid, page 3
3. ibid, page 4
4. ibid, page 114
5. ibid, page 114
6. ibid, page 114
7. ibid, page 114
10. Apne-Apne Ajnabi - (Back Cover)
12. ibid, page 35
13. Shekhar: Ek Jeevani (Part-1), page 42/43
14. ibid, page 47
15. ibid, page 48
16. ibid, page 74
17. ibid, page 77
18. Apne-Apne-Ajnabi, P. 23
19. Ibid, P. 23
20. Ibid, P. 39
21. Ibid, P. 49
23. Atmaparak, P. 64
24. Ibid, P. 75
27. Ibid, P. 286
28. Apne-Apne-Ajnabi, PP. 48-49
29. Ibid, P. 24
30. Ajneya: Srijan Ki Samagrata, Ramkamal Rai, P. 173
31. Shekhar: Ek Jiwanee (1) Introduction
32. Ibid, P. 4
33. Ibid, Introduction
34. Ajneya Aur Unka Upanyas Sansar, Brahmadev Misra, PP. 30-31
35. Shekhar: Ek Jivanee (1) P. 104
36. Ibid, P. 115
37. Ibid, P. 114
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Hindi Upanyas Aur Astitwavad, Veenu Bhalla, P. 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Nodi ke Dweep, P. 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Nadi ke Dweep Ki rachna Prakriya, Debesh Thakur, PP. 68-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Apne-Apne-Ajnavee, P. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Ibid, PP. 52-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Sankshipt Hindi Shabd-Sagar, P. 927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Ajneya Aur Unka Upanyas Sansar, Brahmadev Misra, P. 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Shekhar : Ek Jivanee (1), P. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Ibid, P. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Ibid, P. 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ibid, P. 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Kathakar Ajneya, P. 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Apne-Apne-Ajnabi, P. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Ibid, P. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Ibid, P. 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Sankshipt Hindi Shabd-Sagar, P. 912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Shekhar : Ek Jivanee (1) Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Ajneya, Pravakar Machve, P. 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Shekhar : Ek Jivanee (1) P. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Ibid, P. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Hindi Upanyas Aur Astitwavad, P. 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Apne-Apne-Ajnabi, P. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Sankshipt Hindi Shabd-Sagar, PP. 583-584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Shekhar : Ek Jivanee (1) P. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Ibid, P. 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Apne-Apne-Ajnabi, PP. 99-100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
64. Shekhar: Ek Jiwanee (1) Introduction
65. Ajneya Aur Unka Upanyas Samsar, P. 13
66. Shekhar: Ek Jivanee (1) P. 37-38
67. Nadi Ke Dweep, P. 197
68. Ibid, P. 237
69. Apne-Apne-Ajnabi, back cover page
70. Sankashipt Hindi Shad-Sagar, PP. 196-197
71. Indradhanu Rounde Huwe, P.44
72. Shekhar: Ek Jivanee, P. 25
73. Likhi Kagad Kore, P. 84
74. Apne-Apne Ajnabi, P. 36
75. Ibid, P.15
76. Jnan Shabd-Kosh, P. 796
77. Apne-Apne Ajnabi, P. 58
78. Ibid, P. 104
79. Sanskshipt Hindi Shabd-Sagar, P. 937
80. Hindi Upanyas Aur Astitwavad, P. 54
81. Ajneya Aur Unka Upanyas Sansar, P. 41
82. Adhura Sakshatkar, P. 23
83. Alochana (Volume 15)
84. Ajneya Aur Unka Upanyas Sansar, P> 100
85. Apne-Apne Ajnabi, P. 109

***