HUMAN DILEMMA

The vacuum after the death of Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao witnessed the entry of young and energetic Indian-Anglican writers and novelists. This young generation of novelists, who came in the mid twentieth century, includes Manohar Malgonkar, Arun Joshi, Anita Desai, Salman Rushdie and Khuswant Singh. Late sixties have brought a new wave of change, globally and domestically, in many ways. After the end of the Second World War, the wound of the war was to be filled up. It took the forms of decolonisation, worldwide struggle for equality for the Blacks and women, Indian Independence and so on. But at the same time, it also brought with it various socio-cultural issues. They are depicted in the Subaltern and Post-colonial literatures. However, alienation and the quest for the identity in the midst of success and failure form the crime of literacy endeavour of the time.

The success and failure have many dimensions like the Industrialisation and the West-East socio-cultural relational dichotomy. As a result, the writers who emerged on the scene in the mid twentieth century had to face this struggle and were naturally bound to project the aforesaid issues in their works.
The literary journey from Charles Dickens period in British Literature to the arrival of the novelists of the late sixties and the seventies in Indian literature witnesses the issue pertaining to the self-identity search, thought about man and his sufferings, his way of life and at the best the means and method to overcome these problems. In this regard, one can compare the works of the mid sixties writers to the works of Camus, Sartre and Kafka.

The conflicts between alienated self and the socio-cultural forces are the postulates of Arun Joshi’s fictional creations. In all his novels, the protagonists are subjected to the extreme social, cultural and psychological pressures. Sociologically speaking, the “Cultural lag”, the inter-generational tensions and the changing ethos make increasing demand on the life of the individual. It results in emptiness, reflecting the chaotic conditions of “No Man’s land,” and rootlessness in life, pertinently haunts the psyche of men. The awareness of rootlessness and consequent anxiety form the basis of identity-crisis, which has been described as the keynote of: “Joshi’s existential vision of the plight and exploitation of the modern day man” (Bhatnagar 131). The protagonists discover the meaning and value of life by probing through the dark mossy labyrinths of the soul. This search of the identity is the central pillar of Arun Joshi’s novels.
The protagonists of Arun Joshi’s novels are perplexed and find themselves in the fast-moving world with no clear ambitions in mind. The economic suffering, the social pressure, the dissolutions of the old beliefs and dogmas and uncertain loyalties mercilessly degrade their lives and injure their psyches, resulting in cynical attitudes towards life and established social norms and ethics.

The alienations in the novels of Arun Joshi’s novel are because of the clash and conflict between the socio-cultural and psychological pressures. The alienation primarily arises because of social maladjustment and emotional insecurity. The alienated self, in search of identity, as the typical protagonist of Joshi’s earlier novels.

The identity motif functions more on the socio-psychic two-dimensional materialistic plane rather than on the three dimensional metaphysical worlds. This quest attains the spiritual dimension only at certain levels. “My novels are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and myself…..” (32), asserts Joshi. No doubt, it points to the influence of Camus and Sartre on him. Arun Joshi himself reveals that he did read Camus and Sartre and liked their works.

Arun Joshi has, in The Foreigner, very dexterously handled some thought-provoking, grave issues like rootlessness, detachment, frustration, quest for a better alternative, identity-crisis and self-
realization, highlighting our glorious cultural heritage and imperishable moral values. His reputation has been steadily rising since the publication of this very first novel.

“Humane technology” is a ray of hope in the darkness of modern world. While technological innovations have an important place in society, they also lead to a precarious life. There is a growing antagonism between man and technology. Arun Joshi illustrates that “total industrialization” and “total automation” (Ivasheva 32) result in the frustration that leads to various pathological states. This notion brings him closer to the Marxist perspective of alienation. However, he departs from the Marxist perspective because he argues that the triumph of things over people leads to spiritual alienation which results in the wholesale destruction of the personality. The literary technology adopted by Arun Joshi, “humane technology” is a kind of acupressure to smooth the pain and suffering, and is kind and friendly to the sufferer. The novels of Arun Joshi emphasis the urgent need of the “Humane Technology” to cure this sordid civilisation.

Arun Joshi’s first novel The Foreigner was first published in 1968. Arun Joshi has mentioned that he started writing the book when he was a student but finished it, after his completion of academics, in 1966. The author also regards it as full of autobiographical sketches. Therefore, an analysis of the novel needs to be made in the context of
the author’s life. *The Foreigner* epitomises the main traits of his obsessive preoccupations as a creative artist. The protagonist shares the individualistic temperament of his creator. Joshi has addressed himself to the human dilemmas in all their complexities. Essentially, the protagonist has become the mouthpiece of the creator’s perception of the realities and the vision. Arun Joshi has candidly accepted with reference to *The Foreigner*: “It is largely autographical. I am...a somewhat alienated man myself...Some parts of *The Foreigner*, my first book, were written when I was a student in America” (Purabi 4).

This makes the point more emphatic that in Joshi’s creative universe the creator and his creations are intricately linked with each other and that provides authenticity to his novels.

In all his novels, Arun Joshi attempts to deal with different facets of alienation: in relation to self, the society around and humanity at large. Sindi Oberoi in *The Foreigner* (1968) is a born Foreigner—a man alienated from the whole of humanity. The only son of an Indian father and an English mother, and born in Kenya, he is orphaned at an early age and grows into a youth without family ties and without a country. ‘My Foreignness lay within me,’ he confesses. Educated in England and the U.S.A., he sums up his life as: ‘twenty-five years largely wasted in search of wrong things in wrong places.’
He develops a philosophy of detachment, which is really a mask for his fear of committing himself, of getting involved too deeply with others. His love for an American girl, June Blyth, ends tragically both for the girl and for his best friend, Babu, primarily because Sindi (a short form of Surrinder which he, with unconscious irony, transliterates as “surrender”) is afraid of marriage and its demands, “of possessing anybody and...of being possessed.” He returns to India and joins an industrial concern but his rootlessness persists. Finally, when the numerous employees of his factory face ruin as a result of the exposure of the fraudulent boss, he discovers his latent humanitarianism, which compels him to save them by taking over the management.

This sudden transformation is unfortunately neither adequately motivated nor prepared for earlier. The ending thus appears to be botched up--a weakness not confined to this first novel alone, though Joshi’s presentation of his hero's alienation in search of the identity is evocative enough. However, for a detailed and close analysis, the theoretical background of the concepts of “Self” and “Identity” is likely to be useful.

The issue of “Self” or “Identity” has long been a matter of intellectual discourse philosophical, psychological, sociological and literary levels. Philosophically, “Self” is Atma, intricately joined with Parmatma in Hinduism as well as in Buddhist philosophy. In fact, the
whole discourse of the Hindu and Buddhist philosophies is the discourse on the “self” passing through the various transitory phases of the human life cycle. It has to pass through suffering and redemption to attain “Moksha”. The detailed account of the self and suffering enumerates several scientific causal factors in the Buddhist philosophy. In it, it is suggested that to be elevated and to have the “Madhayam Marga” should be adopted. Mahatma Buddha spent his life in search of the self and the identity of himself, leading to “Enlightenment” at ‘Nirvana’ (Death of the life).

Psychologically, Sigmund Freud has extensively analysed and written about the “Self”. He relates the self from infancy till late age in personality development. The self consists of the Id, Ego and Superego, manifested in the form of Consciousness, Sub consciousness and the Unconsciousness. However, the most important part of his analysis lies in the understanding of the fact that Consciousness, Sub consciousness and the Unconsciousness are placed in the environment context internal and external. The self does not grow in the vacuum; rather it grows in the materialistic realities. The psychological state of mind is always in conflict with the environment in which one grows. It implies that the estrangement or alienation takes place because of the identity and self-crisis and for which environmental set up is prima-facie responsible. The self has been manifested in the form of the
Personality, which is defined as the Constitute of all the behavioural traits of a man being.

The process of developing self-identity has three stages. First, we imagine how we appear to others to relatives, to friends or even the strangers on the street. Then we imagine how others perceive us; and finally, we develop some sort of feeling about ourselves. While doing so, one passes through the preparatory stage, play stage, role taking, and game stage where the self occupies a privileged, central position in a person’s world.

Thus it becomes amply clear that identity is very crucial to one’s survival, and in literature it has been termed as the Existential theory. Camus, Kafka, Sartre and various other like-minded authors have dealt with the issue in detail. The issues of identity-crisis and self in the novels of Arun Joshi are looked at from philosophical, psychological and sociological points of view.

Arun Joshi is indisputably one of the few front-ranking fictionists of today. He made his debut in Indian-English literature with his novel *The Foreigner* (1968). It has been hailed as one of the most compelling existential works of Indian English Fiction. With it began Arun Joshi’s journey into the dark, mysterious and uncharted hinterland of the soul to plumb some perennial problems of human existence.
The novel is thoroughly existentialist. It is about an individual’s loneliness and feelings of anguish emanating from his estrangement from the environment, tradition and his true self in search of the identity. As Madhusudan Prasad aptly remarks: “They are singularized by certain existentialist problems and the resultant anger, agony, psychic quest and the like” (52). In his novels, Joshi has very dexterously handled some serious, thought-provoking themes in an unpretentious manner, such as, rootlessness, detachment, quest for better alternatives in this ostentatious world and self-realization, highlighting our glorious cultural heritage and imperishable moral values. O. P. Bhatnagar also remarks: “A strange feeling of aloneness and aloofness…permeates the entire narrative and provides the necessary texture and structure to the novel” (14). It deals with the problems of involvement in and detachment from the world, and the lack of courage to face the bitter realities of life and eventual resolution of the problem as an illustration of the Karmik principle propounded by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

The formative part of the novel develops against the backdrop of the west, and the later part set in India brings in “acculturation” at the end. In response to Purabi Banerji’s enquires, Joshi acknowledges that the novel is a study in alienation, and is based on observation and
personal experience. He admits: “...it is largely autobiographical. I am a somewhat alienated man myself” (Purabi 207).

The Foreigner relates how Sindi Oberoi, an immigrant Indian, suffers in the course of his search for meaning and purpose of his life. Sindi’s alienation from the world is similar to the one that many existentialist heroes in the west suffer from. The novel is an enactment of the crisis of the present in the story of Sindi Oberoi. He is a perennial outsider, an uprooted young man living in the latter half of the twentieth century who belongs to no country, no people and finds himself an outsider in Kenya, Uganda, England, America and India. His rootlessness is rooted within his soul like an ancient curse and drives him from crisis to crisis. He has no roots, as he himself admits, I have no roots. Sindi is trapped in his loneliness, which is “accelerated by his withdrawal from the society around him.” He mulls over his foreignness which is almost Kierkegaardian: “I wondered in what way, if any, I belonged to the world that roared beneath my apartment window. Somebody had begotten me, without a purpose. Perhaps I felt like that because I was a foreigner in America. But then, what difference would it have made if had lived in Kenya or India or any other place for that matter. It seemed to me that I would still be a foreigner. My foreignness lay within me and I wouldn’t leave myself behind wherever I went…” (Joshi, The Foreigner 35).
As R.S. Pathak observes; “His alienation is of his soul and not of geography” (47). He leaves the impression of being an alien on all those whom he meets. June in one of her meetings with Sindi tells him: “I have a feeling you’d be a foreigner anywhere” (Joshi, The Foreigner 35). Even Shiela once tells him that “You are still a foreigner, you don’t belong here” (149). Sindi Oberoi ‘born of a Kenyan-Indian father and English mother’ is orphaned at the age of four when his parents met their end in an air crash near Cairo. He is brought up by his uncle who works as an emotional anchor, and “the thought that he (Sindi’s uncle) moved about in that small house on the outskirts of Nairobi gave me a feeling of having an anchor. After his death the security was destroyed” (Joshi, The Foreigner 65).

Deprived of parental love and affection in his very childhood, he becomes broken and anchorless. On being asked by Mr. Khemka as to how his parents died, he betrays Camus’ Meursault-like indifference, “For a hundredth time I related the story of these strangers whose only reality was a couple of wrinkled and cracked photographs” (Joshi, The Foreigner 12). Actually, he is incapable of any emotional involvement with his social milieu.

He is a born foreigner and is an alien everywhere physically as well as metaphorically. He is a foreigner everywhere, in Nairobi, in India and even in America, as he himself puts it: “And yet all shores
are alien when you do not belong anywhere” (Joshi, The Foreigner 92). Whosoever comes in contact with him notices this foreignness in him. Babu Rao Khemka’s sister, Shiela, says; “You are still a foreigner. You don’t belong here”. Mr. Khemka asks him; “Why are you so strange?” (104) June, in their very first encounter, says, “There is something strange about you they don’t feel like they are with a human being. May be it’s an Indian characteristic, but I have a feeling you’d be a foreigner anywhere” (145).

Sindi a person who does not know his birth, parents, relatives and friends. Such person has to suffer and to suffer with sociologically anomalous notions, psychologically abnormal personality and culturally pagan values, devoid of any lesson of morality and ethics. Though these are only the objective realities, yet the subjective conflict in search of identity could be verified on socio-psychological grounds. Devoid of socialising elements from his childhood, he confronts loneliness and frustration in life, that make him a purposeless human creature.

His state of mind is unpredictable because he is a cynical. It has been pointed out by different characters of the novel. Babu Rao Khemka, his friend and a student at Boston, wrote to his sister Sheila that Sindi is so terribly cynical, his flat mate Karl asks him if Sindi could laugh to the reply, to which Sindi responds: “yes, but only if he
is heavily drunk” (147). On the other hand, Shiela went to the extent of saying that he was the saddest man on the earth she had encountered in life. This reality is not contested by Sindi. Rather he confessed that he was. It shows that he was aware of his plight and knew the problem. His awareness of his identity or the identity-crisis brings Joshi closer to Camus and Sindi to Camus’ outsider.

Wherever he went, his rootlessness accompanied him: from Kenya to London and there to Boston and finally to New Delhi. It seemed that he was a man from no man’s land. His continuous drifting from place to place reminds only of the fact that he was doing consistent experimentation on himself to find the peace of mind but he was doomed to failure.

His luck gives him the opportunity to learn and to learn to survive and find the meaning of life to establish self-identity. As the story moves ahead, he gets a job in a bar where he meets Anna who leaves him. Then he meets Cathy and gets physically involved with her. But he refuses to marry her. Here again the survival was in the question and so was the identity. But he finds that these episodes only enrich his mind and states: “…the essence of my life lay in what I had learnt from Anna and Cathy” (Joshi, The Foreigner 178).

The humane technology, adopted by Arun Joshi, gives him further opportunity to enlighten himself. The discourse of be
friendliness by catholic priest in Scotland brings him closer to the mystic world of religion. It seems that he has started finding the meaning of life. On the very morning up in the mountains and he witnesses the arrival of first ray of the light, seemingly the light being the symbol of knowledge. In it he finds everything illusionary, leading to pain. Love also leads to possessiveness, greed and attachment and that is why he should be detached from those. The philosophy of detachment, constructed by him in modern perspective, is escapism. But he was unaware of it.

As the story moves one finds that the said philosophy of detachment was put to a severe test when Sindi falls in love with beautiful, young, sensual, affectionate June. They live and live for the time being as if to survive, because when June wants to marry Sindi, Sindi refuses arguing that both of them were alone and this loneliness was to be evaporated from within and this to convince June about the veracity of his notions. Sindi’s such views are associated with the issues of emotion and identity. Sindi was himself an emotionally sterile person, devoid of the self and the identity. It seems that Sindi was selfish and that his philosophy of detachment was merely a false construction to run away from the worldly responsibility towards June. One wonder: Is it the Cowardliness? Escapism? Or the fear of getting lost again in the wonderland or at best a man without vision and
identity? The question of identity is pertinent to the novels of Arun Joshi and so to Sindi. He could not overcome this problem. The subjective understanding of escapism lies in psychological meaning a character associates to it. A man with rootlessness can love for the time being to give meaning to life but the responsibility that lies ahead reminds him of the “house on the sand” and he is afraid of constructing the cohabitation to settle and to establish the identity. It is not that Sindi could not start a fresh life with a meaning and self-identity but the precedent experiences are obstacles to it. The past reminds him that he a looser and a looser have to collect strength from within to go for the battle to be victorious, but he could not because he was frustrated, and lacked self-confidence.

The climax of the novel comes at a juncture where June, deprived of love and marriage by Sindi, falls in love with Babu Rao Khemka. They get married. About free sex, Khemka and Sindi have discussion ‘Sindi finds it against the value and ethics but Khemka argues: “What the hell to do in America if not involved in free sex and partying with mystic, seductive young two leg ladies.” But this opinion of free sex is a false façade of Khemka. As the relation between June and Khemka grow, June accepts sleeping with Sindi in past and it is not digested by Khemka. He slaps June and recklessly drives onto the road to meet untimely death, which is suicide in reality.
After the death of Khemka, June finds herself to be pregnant and to save herself from social ostracism requests Sindi to become the father of the baby in the womb but Sindi refuses. The refusal of Sindi makes June go for abortion and during it, she dies. Sindi was in past deep love with June and he could have saved the life of both Khemka and June but now he is guilty of killing the duo. Pleasure without involvement and love without possessiveness is inaction and escapism. Sindi has committed a crime because of his false detachment. A man without identity, roots, values, ethics, emotions, love, cannot be expected to be redeemed. But the Bhagwad Gita and the Buddhist philosophy held that one has to redeem oneness on this earth only for one’s own action. He has to redeem himself.

Arun Joshi by his own inventions and discoveries makes Sindi realize his mistakes. Psychologically, the fear of guilt haunts till one strives for its redemption in action. The deaths of Babu Khemka and June remind him of his folly and false philosophy of detachment time and again. When the pain and sorrow penetrate deep and become unbearable, one has to swallow the medicine and the medicine for the Sindi is spiritual. He starts thinking that he was a man of extremes and lived in illusion. He feels the reality that June could have been his last partner and anchor to give a meaning to life, to find the self and to establish an identity. But the false concept of detachment, which was
like a blind blanket which covered him so far, kept him out of the light of the realities. If he had come to know the reality initially, he could not have lost June. This realization of the truth led to the evaporation of the false philosophy of detachment and he wants to be a man action. Buddha gained enlightenment in the India and Arjuna under the guidance of Krishna performed the righteous action in Bharat (India). The purposeless Sindi too has to become active and he comes back to India.

After coming to India, Sindi gets a God-sent opportunity to redeem himself. Mr. Khemka has been declared fraudulent by the Income Tax Department for evading the tax and sentenced to imprisonment. The business stars collapsing and the workers go on strike and starve. The workers persuade Sindi to lead the business, but Sindi refuses on the grounds of detachment and says to Sheila that he has nothing to do with the business.

This particular moment is crucial in many ways to understand the novel, novelist, protagonist and the theme of the novel, as well as the identity establishment. Muthu, a worker in the industry, who is illiterate, acts as Bhagwan Krishna to a Ph.D., Mechanical Engineer Sindi. Muthu advocates that the true detachment is not to remain isolated and aloof from the society and the fellows but to be involved in: Attached while being detached. Now Sindi understands the true
meaning of detachment and accepts the action as demanded by the workers of the industry and takes the charge of Mr. Khemka’s establishment.

Muthu and his problems bring about a major change in Sindi’s attitude towards life. Social conditions under which Muthu’s family and his other co-workers work typically reflect the modern day automation alienation and sufferings. It is “the accumulated despair of their weary lives” (Joshi, The Foreigner 189) that makes Sindi take over the management of the imprisoned Mr. Khemka’s business, an utterly challenging situation.

Given his early track record, it is a caprice in the personality of Sindi to meet life on its terms. Mingling with the workers gives a new meaning to the life of Sindi and he starts gaining the cooperation, love, respect and gradually everything that he missed so far in his life. He is now deeply conscious of his self and the orientation in life. He even gave a new name to himself; instead of Surendra, he calls himself “Surrender Oberoi”. He becomes a typical existential hero on the path to affirmation. The Indian soil gives him a meaning to life, attachment from self to the world. The journey from west to east reflects his spiritual quest. The long voyage is no more meaningless to him. Rather it helps him to recognise the purpose and meaning of life. Flashback of the novel reveals that the non-attachment can be acquired only in
stages – the concept very close to Sartrean realisation of humanity and responsibility making him the Karma yogi of the Bhagwad Gita.

At a deeper level, applying the psychological narration, The Foreigner can be viewed as an attempt to plumb man’s perennial dilemmas. In the novel, Sindi’s essential responses are projected in two situations: his relations to June in Boston and his contact with the Khemkas in Delhi.

In The Foreigner, Arun Joshi through Sindi depicts the keen awareness and deeper understanding of our times. He shows the presence of dissonance and despair in the refined sensibility because of the pursuit of material possessions, individual identity and non-involvement. The search for meaningful coexistence ends when one achieves the state of happy co-existence and harmony with the fellow beings. The protagonists suffer from a sense of anguish at the meaninglessness of human conditions. They have to confront the darkness of the soul which is the result of the industrialisation and mechanisation in our life. Sindi represents the solutions to the meaninglessness of life. He suggests that one can realise the essence of life by liberating the self from the clutches of cruel civilisation and by paying due attention to the calls of inner being. The establishing of identity of Sindi at the closing of the novel represents the only way of saving man from the purposelessness and degradation of the
contemporary meaningless world. As the urbanisation and industrialisation become more rapid, the issues of identity, self, values, ethics and belief, along with social responsibility, become more significant.

The identity conflict in *The Foreigner* unravels the facets of crisis in modern man’s life, chaos and confusion in the minds of the contemporary men and then correlates it to the human conditions using the humane technology, as pointed out by Rashmi Gaur. Thus Sindi represents the chronicle of the chaos as well as a mode of quest for the identity.

The identity which Sindi got at the end of the novel shows the only solution available to control the dehumanising impact of science and technology. It is to maintain an optimum balance between science and technology and ethics and values. Thus, impelled by his intrinsic nature, Sindi’s higher and enlightened self accepts involvement as the only sane option.

At times the identity of the Sindi can be compared to that of the Karna of the Mahabharata because both the characters suffer from the identity conflict and crisis but at many times the resemblance is quite contradictory as well. Sindi Oberoi’s life can be viewed as a yatra, a pilgrimage, long unpredictable journey of Buddha in search of truth and knowledge, to be enlightened in due course of time. Sindi after
going through a long conflict between the saint and the lusty beast in him finds a solution to his problem.

The identity conflict in the protagonist of *The Foreigner* is many folded. Though Sindi involves himself in an earnest quest for life-sustaining values, he is not able to overcome the miseries of past completely. He also knows that one ought to be held responsible for one’s actions...an intuitive realisation of the operation of the Law of Karma. Once Sindi realises that there is a chance to redeem the past, he detaches himself from his ego, transcends his self-absorption and recklessly involves himself in lives, other than his own. The close of the novel testifies to such an assumption, as reflected in his last meeting with Sheila. When she gets up and is at the point of leaving his office, Sindi requests her to stay on for some time: “If you can wait ten minutes, I will come with you…May be we could have tea at Wengers” (Joshi, *The Foreigner* 191). This invitation, coming as it does from a man who has very bitter memories of female relationships, is a significant pointer to the change in Sindi’s behaviour. His invitation to her for a cup of tea at Wengers should not be treated merely as an act of formality. Such courtesy speaks of the human involvement of Sindi which reflects his overcoming of the identity conflict. The ending note of the novel with the pronoun “We” reflects that whatever be the magnitude of the detachment, it is recoverable.
The credit of the novelist lies in the fact that the philosophical march in the novel in not devoid of the taste of aestheticism and through the mouth of Sindi the whole philosophy of the Vedanta, Karma, detachment and involvement concepts of Lord Krishna, flows like the perennial flowing river.

Sindi’s character enlightens the reader through his identity that the human life is full of suffering and misery caused by certain misconception of the world’s aspects but there is always a way to overcome the misery and suffering, be it by redemption or by repentance but one has to accept that one cannot escape from his sins or the past mistakes, and one has to surrender oneself to the supreme power. This makes the protagonist’s identity not a weak or loose character but worthy to be adored and feel inspired.

The title of the novel The Foreigner symbolises a symbolic interest in the larger interest and context of the human existence. The character of Sindi portrays the sense of metaphysical anguish at the meaninglessness of life. The unreality and transitoriness, associated with the word “Foreign” permeate the whole texture of the novel.

Arun Joshi’s novel can be compared with T.S. Eliot’s The Wasteland. But there are remarkable differences between the two as well. The characters of T. S. Eliot fails to resurrect themselves but Sindi’s identity depicts a remarkable and exemplary courage in his
capacity for regeneration when he is thrown into managing Khemka’s chaotic business. At dawn it starts raining: It was first of the monsoons, carrying a freshness and coolness that was welcome change from the humid heat of the previous day.

The shower represents fertility, reawakening, rebirth and his regeneration. That afternoon the sky is clear and he goes to the Muthu’s wretched dwelling place. The symbol of the clear sky suggests the emergence of new identity, light of knowledge that was to dawn upon Sindi. So, the new identity is going to be shaped. Sindi is out from the cave of the darkness and the whole world in the form of dawn’s rays is ready to embrace him, to welcome him and to say: “It is better to be late than never” (Joshi, The Foreigner 195).

Lastly what comes out from the conflicting nature of the protagonist of The Foreigner, Sindi Oberoi, is that the life rotates in the flashback style. If life is full of suffering the human nature is to overcome that. The Niskama Karma yogi in the form of Arjuna came in Mahabharata after the struggle, confusion, frustration and confession. Struggle, confusion, frustration and confession are the realities of human life. No one can escape them and all have to face them. The self on earth is meant to acquire an identity. At the same time, the identity conflict in The Foreigner through Sindi implies that
men are trapped in false beliefs and self-created agenda of life which evaporates with the passage of time.

To blame society for every misfortunate of life is escapism and the solution to such problems lies in the fact that if one cannot change the social order, it does not imply that the society is bad. Rather one needs to actively participate in the system to change it. One can’t change the system while remaining aloof to the system and society but by going within that only can help to take out the anomalies of the system and the society.

The identity of Sindi is not only the identity of a character of Arun Joshi’s The Foreigner; rather it is an identity of the millions of the young generation of the world, who have a lot of questions but no answer. It is the call of the world that when industrialisation and the urbanisation are at the highest peak, alienation is the natural result and if this alienation is allowed to continue, the whole system, be it the system of the West or of the East, will collapse and the anarchy and dehumanisation will prevail. The identity of Sindi is a warning to evolve a system to meet the need and challenges of the time. Sindi taking the charge of Mr. Khemka’s business symbolises the labour welfare and the induction of the Corporate Social Responsibility. This makes it more important today than it was ever before.
On social grounds, it reminds of the weakening social values and ethics, so much so that it put a threat to marriage as an institution. Love, emotions and familial values are basics of the society. In absence of these values, the society itself will collapse. What Sindi did was the outcome of social conditionality. That Sindi loves but cannot marry reflects the identity conflict and he is torn apart between West and East. But there can be justification for such abnormal psyche. The conflict could be between the values of the West and there of the East. But it is to be borne in mind that there could be differences in the values of the West and East but there are always some universal values which apply to all societies and nations.

The identity of the “The Foreigner,” Sindi, is crushed between the two cultures, but what he felt and needed was the amalgamation, not the acculturation. The culture-shock is the result of heavy industrialisation and to escape that a balance between the use of science and technology is required. Spirituality is the ultimate healer of the wound of the past and that is why Sindi could satisfy his quest for identity in the Land of Spirituality--India.

The events of life are uncontrollable and one gets easily trapped in them. The death of some close relatives and friends shatters the confidence but the resurrection and rebirth can fill the vacuum. The involvement without undue attachment is a key to affirmation. The
life’s bitter and sweet experience helps to achieve the affirmation. The affirmation by action is near to Karma yoga in spirituality. From Boston to Delhi has been a journey from alienation to arrival, from selfishness to sacrifice, and from being to becoming. It is a coming out from the “foreignness” and realising that there are other tasks to be done in future even if those are as meaningless as of the past.