

The Intersection of Detachment and Attachment in Arun Joshi's 'The Foreigner'

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Abstract

Human emotions are complicated, and this article, "The Foreigner" by Arun Joshi, "The Intersection of Detachment and Attachment," delves into that complexity in the context of cultural and family identity. The story digs into the lives of its protagonists, notably Sindi Oberoi, who, as a nonresident Indian (NRI), struggles with the disconnection from his Western existence and the commitment to his Indian heritage. This summary examines the narrative's treatment of distancing and bonding, providing context for the novel's wider explorations of cultural identity, family ties, and social transformations. Arun Joshi creates a story with resonant themes and uses powerful symbolism to show the reader these inner struggles.

Keywords: Detachment, Attachment, Cultural Identity, Family

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Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, renowned Indian author Arun Joshi contributed significantly to the development of Indian English writing with his insightful novels and short tales. One of his most well-known pieces, 'The Foreigner,' was released in 1968 and has since received widespread recognition for its examination of nuanced human emotions and the themes of alienation and belonging. Joshi's 'The Foreigner' is a moving story of Sindi Oberoi, a Non-Resident Indian (NRI), who struggles to reconcile his dual identities as an NRI living in the West and an Indian who longs to return home. This book offers a fascinating look into the lives of nonresident Indians (NRIs), reflecting the thoughts of many Indians who live abroad yet miss their families and culture.

Arun Joshi's narrative technique in 'The Foreigner' perfectly conveys the emotional upheaval that occurs when a person crosses two worlds, reflecting the universal struggles we all face with questions of who we are, where we come from, and

the ties we form with those closest to us across time and space. In this introductory piece, we begin our investigation of Joshi's 'The Foreigner,' focusing on the ways in which his skill as a writer brings to light the tension between emotional distance and personal connection. This paper will explore the novel's themes, symbols, and characters' inner lives in detail to provide light on the piece as a whole.

The Concept of Detachment and Attachment

Arun Joshi's "The Foreigner" revolves on the idea of detachment. The protagonist, an NRI (Non-Resident Indian) residing in the United States, names "detachment" as the emotional and psychological distance she feels from her homeland and family. Detachment in "The Foreigner" is a multidimensional term that represents Sindi's sense of alienation and estrangement as he struggles with his own identity and his position in the world. Sindi Oberoi's feeling of alienation stems from his loneliness, both in his new environment and in his own mind. In a nuanced way, Joshi depicts Sindi's internal conflict as he attempts to balance his Western upbringing with his Indian heritage. Sindi's alienation from India is shown in his difficulty to assimilate into Western culture while maintaining his Indian background, a predicament shared by many non-resident Indians.

Joshi uses a wide range of literary devices to illustrate Sindi's disconnection from the world. For example, he contrasts the barrenness of the American countryside with his bright and colourful recollections of India via the employment of striking images. Joshi also makes use of symbolism, as seen by Sindi's inability to adapt to Western cuisine or find solace in American culture. Sindi's emotional disconnection is reflected in the novel's structure, which shifts seamlessly between the past and the present. The alienation experienced by the protagonist in "The Foreigner" is used as a metaphor for the universal human experiences of discovering one's own identity, experiencing cultural struggle, and yearning for a place to call home. It highlights Sindi's existential crises and the need for affiliation and community in a world where such things are becoming rare.

Attachment is a central concept in "The Foreigner," a book by Arun Joshi, and it's crucial to comprehending Sindi Oberoi's arduous journey. Sindi's bond is complex since it includes feelings for both India and the place he now calls home. His need for family and heritage forms the basis of this relationship. Sindi has a deep longing for India, where he was born and raised. His recollections of his Indian homeland are filled with fond and nostalgic thoughts of his loved ones, as well as the sights, sounds, and flavours of his birthplace. His longing and nostalgia for India deepen as he struggles to let go of his roots in India while living in a strange country.

On the other hand, Sindi's desire for a better life is reflected in his obsession with the United States. His hope for material and social betterment drives his dedication to the American Dream. His work and monetary success are signs of his allegiance to the American way of life, which he has adopted in pursuit of his ideal. The relationship that Joshi depicts in Sindi is characterised by a dualism, a tug of war between two different spheres. The conflict he feels between his Indian roots and his American upbringing is a microcosm of the larger dialogue between cultural preservation and globalisation. Sindi's personality demonstrates the complexities of being an immigrant, where feelings of loyalty to both the home nation and the new one may coexist, but not always without tension.

In "The Foreigner," Arun Joshi uses the nuances of connection as a storytelling device to dig into questions of self-discovery, cultural adaptation, and communal support. The book provides a comprehensive look into the human condition by highlighting the ways in which the emotional weight and personal importance of attachment may serve to bind and free an individual.

The Intersection of Detachment and Attachment

Arun Joshi's book, "The Foreigner," focuses on the tension between emotional distance and emotional investment. Sindi Oberoi, the heroine, struggles throughout the story to understand the nuances of these feelings. His experience exemplifies the complicated dynamic between identifying with and breaking away from one's origins, which is particularly salient when considering the immigrant experience. Sindi's great estrangement from India is fundamental to his personality. He feels

disconnected and alienated from the world after abandoning his home, family, and cultural norms. The term alludes to the fact that he is emotionally and geographically removed from his homeland and, therefore, a "foreigner" there.

On the other hand, he has never lost his underlying connection to India. Memories, family connections, and the profound emotional resonance of his cultural heritage bind him to his country. This connection provides both solace and friction. As he struggles with the contradiction of feeling emotionally attached to a place he has left behind while yet experiencing a sense of separation, this paradox creates a sense of belonging. Sindi's existence, straddling the line between alienation and connection, is emblematic of the immigrant experience as a whole. The tension between leaving home for a better life and returning to the familiar comforts of your own place is brought into sharp relief at this crossroads. Sindi's character is brought to life by the conflict between alienation and connection, providing readers with a moving portrait of the diasporic experience.

Character Analysis

Arun Joshi's 'The Foreigner' depicts its characters as nuanced individuals who may represent both distancing and closeness. In particular, Sindi Oberoi and Pylee represent this contradiction. The novel's main character, Sindi Oberoi, represents dispassionate objectivity. He feels profoundly uprooted after relocating from India to the United States. He feels disconnected from India, his culture, and his family, all of whom stay back home. This chilly distancing of feelings is emblematic of the estrangement felt by many immigrants who leave their homelands in quest of a better life. As Sindi faces the difficulties of settling into a new culture, his distance from others emerges as a major issue in the book.

On the other side, Sindi's American friend Pylee stands for loyalty and commitment. Like herself, she is an Indian immigrant who holds on to her roots. Her devotion to Indian ceremonies and customs is palpable all through the narrative. She is determined to keep her ties to India and to establish a little of India in her new home. The importance of connection in helping immigrants maintain a feeling of continuity despite separation is brought home by Pylee's story. The immigrant experience is shown by the difference between Sindi's aloofness and Pylee's connection. It's a metaphor for the internal conflict many immigrants have as they strive to balance their feelings of loyalty to their homeland with the emotional distance required by their new life. Arun Joshi expertly utilises these people to examine the dynamic between isolation and connection in 'The Foreigner,' providing a nuanced portrait of the immigrant mentality.

Symbolism and Imagery

The author of 'The Foreigner,' Arun Joshi, makes extensive use of symbolism and imagery to help readers better grasp the novel's themes and central ideas. There are a number of significant symbols and imagery scattered throughout the narrative, all of which add to the novel's overall effect. The visual contrast between American and Indian landscapes serves as a crucial emblem throughout 'The Foreigner.' The protagonist, Sindi Oberoi, struggles with his feelings of isolation and otherness as an immigrant amid the wide American countryside. The austere, impersonal terrain is symbolic of Sindi's emotional isolation and acts as a recurrent theme that highlights the difficulties immigrants experience while settling in a new country.

The theme of birds and the picture of flying play significant roles as well. Freedom and the need to go away are symbolised by birds. Sindi's desire to gain acceptance and freedom from his foreign background is commonly represented by birds. Birds in flight are a metaphor for emotional distance and the desire to break free. Rain and storms, as well as other aspects of nature, are used figuratively to represent the characters' turbulent emotions. These aspects serve as a visible reflection of the characters' inner problems and emotional turmoil. To symbolise the masks people wear to hide their genuine emotions and weaknesses, Arun Joshi used the concept of masks throughout the work. The characters' masks symbolise the internal struggle between their allegiance to and alienation from their adopted home.

Arun Joshi uses these motifs and images in 'The Foreigner' to create a complex story about the immigrant experience, the search for one's own identity, and the emotional landscapes endured by the characters. They add to the novel's thematic richness and provide readers a visual and symbolic language that reverberates all through the narrative.

Impact on the Plot and Character Development

Detachment and attachment have significant effects on the story and the characters in "The Foreigner" by Arun Joshi. The novel's plot revolves on the protagonist and antagonist, both of whom are defined by their own internal conflicts, which in turn are influenced by their respective ties to the past and the present. These layered emotions significantly impact the development of the story and the characters. Sindi Oberoi is profoundly impacted by his ties to India and his estrangement from his new life in the United States. His growth as a character is driven by this conflicting set of feelings. Sindi's deep connection to India is seen in his sentimental feelings for his native country, its culture, and his desire to return to his origins. At the same time, his disconnection from his new environment in the United States causes him to feel lonely and out of place. The interesting character development emerges from his struggle with his own identity and the tension between his past and present.

The effects of connection and distancing on the novel's other characters, most notably Sindi's American wife Ellen, further emphasise its themes. Ellen's feelings for Sindi and her hope that he would feel the same way about her and their life in the United States shed light on the complexity of romantic relationships among immigrants. The emotional development of the characters is also essential to the storyline. The tale moves on because of the characters' developing attachments and separations. The story's problems, choices, and resolves all have emotional underpinnings. The narrative develops with tremendous emotional depth as Sindi deals with his identity problem, struggles to achieve the American Dream, and faces his aspirations and concerns.

The influence of connection and detachment on the growth of the characters and the advancement of the story in "The Foreigner" is complex and fascinating. This fascinating examination of the immigrant experience and the human mind is brought to life by Arun Joshi's deft handling of the narrative's emotional undercurrents.

Cultural and Societal Implications

Examining cultural and social repercussions is front and centre in "The Foreigner" by Arun Joshi. This story provides a comprehensive look at how the protagonists' cultural upbringing, social mores, and immigrant experience all interact to influence their lives. The protagonist Sindi Oberoi struggles to maintain his Indian heritage while maintaining his American lifestyle. As an immigrant, he must learn to balance the ideals and practises of his native country with those of the United States. This internal conflict exemplifies the difficulties that many immigrants confront as they attempt to maintain their cultural identity while also integrating into their new community.

The story Joshi tells emphasises the value of tradition and the challenges of change. The story shows via Sindi how it may be both a strength and a weakness to cling to one's cultural identity. The book implies that accepting one's ancestry while welcoming change is the key to assimilating successfully. The novel's themes have broader social consequences, especially when seen through the prism of cultural norms and standards. The American Dream is a key theme in the novel, representing the high standards held by Americans. The difficulties Sindi has in achieving her goal are emblematic of the plight of immigrants everywhere.

In their efforts to assimilate into their new communities, immigrants like Sindi often confront difficult choices that force them to reexamine their core beliefs and principles. The story emphasises the difficulties immigrants have while adjusting to a new society, including the conflict between personal goals and social norms. In "The Foreigner," Arun Joshi expertly depicts the nuanced interaction between cultural and social ramifications in the immigrant experience. The story provides unique insights into the difficulties of the immigrant identity via Sindi's journey, highlighting the significance of establishing a peaceful balance between cultural heritage and social assimilation.

Conclusion

Detachment and attachment meet at an interesting crossroads in "The Foreigner," a book by Arun Joshi. The book delves into the complex dynamics of these competing forces and their effect on the human psyche via Sindi Oberoi's life story. As the plot develops, it becomes clear that Sindi's experience is symbolic of the universal human struggle between the dual

forces of connection and distancing. The story emphasises the idea that detachment, although providing freedom from the restraints and expectations of the outside world, may also result in feelings of alienation and a loss of one's sense of self. Sindi's estrangement from his own culture and country is symbolic of the disconnection many immigrants feel after leaving their homes. Their feelings of stability and security have been shaken by this separation.

Attachment, on the other hand, whether to one's cultural background, one's family, or one's community, gives people a feeling of belonging and safety. Sindi's constant need for acceptance is shown by his devotion to both his Indian ancestry and the American Dream throughout the narrative. The complexity of the human situation is reflected in his efforts to reconcile his relationships and feelings of alienation. The narrative also shows how attachment and detachment are not opposites but may coexist if care is taken. A feeling of connection and significance may be found in the midst of attachment, as seen by Sindi's journey, yet times of detachment can lead to self-discovery and personal progress.

Finally, 'The Foreigner' by Arun Joshi expertly examines the meeting point of distancing and bonding via Sindi Oberoi's story. The story suggests that life is a constant balancing act between the desires for closeness and independence. Sindi's narrative is a mirror of our own complex struggles and the never-ending search for balance between conflicting influences.

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