



**‘Victims of Gendered Portrayals’: Female Characters in the Selected
Fiction of Arun Joshi**

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to read the female characters in the fiction of the Indian English novelist Arun Joshi as victims of gendered portrayals. The protagonists of Joshi's fiction are anti-heroes with questionable morals and characterized by a twisted idealism in whose wake of destruction the female characters simply by dint of their gender are almost always sidelined and victimized. A looming sense of doom preordains those seeking fulfillment in Joshi's dystopic world and as such the female characters, mostly relegated to traditional and stereotypical gender roles, have no say or choice in the unfurling of their destinies. They are simply a means to an end – for the protagonist to arrive at a certain stage in his life, and for the writer to depict the absurdity of materialistic existence which degrades the souls of the protagonists. This paper will examine the gender-biasedness in the depiction of the female characters in the three novels by Arun Joshi, namely, *The Last Labyrinth*, *The Foreigner* and, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* with a view to bring them to the foreground to highlight their suffering, limitations imposed by their gendered portrayals and suppressed voices. Such foregrounding of the female characters will also serve to expose the hypocrisies of male character portrayals in patriarchal texts as well as in their analyses and criticisms.

Keywords: Gender, Female, Patriarchy, Victim, Suppression.