Chapter 1
Introduction

Man feels an ontological insecurity, perplexity and frustration in this age of apparently never-ending inventions and discoveries. Angst and loneliness have become the contemporary discourse. Scientific and technological developments have bestowed on mankind new standards of living and newer ways of communication, but have not mitigated human misery. Knowledge has spread, but it has not abolished war or abated fear; nor has it made all men equal. Instead, men find themselves more isolated, anxious and uneasy than ever. Cyber technology has not been able to gauge the accelerating distance between human minds or the growing sense of frustration tormenting human psyche.

Technological revolution has so metamorphosed our lives that one is always in a flux. The rapidly changing value systems accruing from globalisation and consumerism make tremendous demands on the individual and he feels doomed, fidgety and always in a race. Present becomes outdated quickly and what is modern gives way to postmodern. The hiatus between his aspirations and achievements crumples human spirit. As Paul Burton points out, “never before were so many people plunged in so much uncertainty, so much perplexity and unsettlement.”

The old chains that curtailed human freedom like slavery and exploitation of the working class have been replaced by newer ones. Modern society tries to smother individuality and the sensitive individual becomes alienated. Estranged from within and with others the problem-filled, lonely, disoriented man looms large in contemporary society. “While in the past only intellectuals, artists, misfits and deviants tended to be strangers and loners, the ordinary man, the regular guy seems bound to become one” now. Man lives lonely even in crowds. Even the vocabulary is dominated by words that characterise the distance between minds and generations, estrangement, indifference and apathy.

Modern man has become a synonym for all the maladies of today: frustration, despair, ennui, isolation, rootlessness etc, all of which can be identified under the
umbrella term alienation which is closely related to and which envelops most of them. In fact it has become the catchword summarizing salient features of life in contemporary societies. At present the concept of alienation and its synonyms have become a pervasive theme in all social sciences. Robert Nisbet comments: "Investigations of the 'unattached,' the 'marginal,' the 'obsessive,' the 'normless' and the 'isolated' individual, all testify to the central place occupied by the hypothesis of alienation in contemporary social life."

Alienation is a multidimensional phenomenon related to different contexts and disciplines, each contributing to its meaning. As Frank Johnson opines, "In its use as a general concept, scientific term, popular expression, and cultural motif, alienation has acquired a semantic richness (and confusion) attained by few words of corresponding significance in contemporary parlance."

The English term alienation as well as its French and German equivalents alienation and entfremdung have traditionally had a number of well-established meanings. Entfremdung occurs in Middle High German Literature and alienation goes back through Middle English and Old English to classical Latin. The term alienation is derived from the Latin noun alienatio which takes its meaning from the verb alienare which means to make something another's, to snatch, to avoid etc. The root of alienare contains another word alienus which comes from the word alicius which means 'other' as adjective and 'someone else's' as noun. The Latin word alienatio had all the three major meanings that alienation had in Medieval English and alienation has in Modern French: 1) transfer of property rights, 2) insanity, and 3) aversion, dislike, withdrawing of the feeling of goodwill and fellowship. The corresponding German words are EntaumBerung and entfremdung both originally interchangeable to mean alienation, but entfremdung is now prevalent.

As a philosophical term entfremdung is said to have been first used by the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart. In modern times Wilhelm Von Humboldt employed it in a fragment published posthumously. Its phenomenal career started a few years later with Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (1807). As for self-alienation
there are two terms **selbstentfremdung** apparently first used by Schelling in 1827 while **selbstentäuBerung** preceded it by Novalis in 1798. While discussing cosmic alienation Martin Buber uses **verfremdung**, which is best known for Brecht's expression of theatrical alienation effect or **verfremdungseffekt** or **v-effekt**.

Some critics try to replace **alienation** with other terms. Joachim Israel proposed **reification** but it is far from the whole story of alienation. **Anomie** and **anomia** are also used: **anomia** for self-alienation and **anomie** for alienation from society.

Although the conceptual history of alienation is at least two centuries old it has acquired popularity only after the Second World War. Marx had interpreted **entfremdung** and **enttausserung** in his *Philosophical Manuscript* in 1844 (published posthumously in 1932) but he denounced it as philosophical nonsense in 1848 in *The Communist Manifesto*. In 1932 Martin Buber presented alienation as main subject in one of his books but could not "trigger any widespread discussion of alienation." During the same period Brecht introduced a **verfremdungseffekt** to express a feeling of alienation between a drama and its audience. In his opinion a dramatist should not create an illusion of emotional oneness but must remind the viewers that they are watching a drama in a theatre. The publication of Albert Camus' *La Stranger* and its English translation *The Stranger* shot the word to fame. Eric Fromm popularised the term through *Escape from Freedom* (1941). The discovery of the *Philosophical Manuscripts* of young Marx reasoned the prestigious ascent of the word. Marx was influenced by Hegel who used the term in association with work-alienation. The word which had thus a long, uneventful history till the 1940s became the keyword in theology, philosophy, sociology, psychology, literary and art criticism in the postwar era. The word now refers to different senses of alienation depending upon the observer's point of view. Generally, for a theologian alienation from God is the most important and basic: for the philosopher, world alienation: for the social critic, social or political or work alienation and for the psychologist, self-alienation. But "stripped to its essence, the word signifies separation (or distance) between two entities." Equally seminal is the connotation of anguish or tension accompanying such severance.
Though "often considered to be the price man has to pay for modern technical progress, for industrialization, standardization and automation" it would be "a major blunder to regard alienation as characteristically a phenomenon of modern society alone" because estrangement and separation have been experienced by man right from his origin though it is intensified in the modern era. Ephesians 4:18 reminds how man “alienated himself from the life of God” through his Fall. In Genesis Cain is considered the archetype of social alienation. Hence the notion is as old as recorded time. In its panorama of disorder and change history offers plentiful evidence that men in times past also felt no small uncertainty about themselves and their identities suffered no little anguish of gloom, despair and feelings of detachment from each other. Thus according to critics, theologians, philosophers and scientists alienation seems to be “as old as man or atleast as old as a primeval fall whether this fall is seen from a religious point of view as fall from innocence and divine grace or from a psychological and sociological point of view as a leap (or crawl) into life as a thinking and social being.” Medieval schoolmen were deeply troubled by man’s alienation from God and Romantic scholar’s creativity was aroused by man’s estrangement from nature. Now the concern is with man and his relations with himself and others.

The concept of alienation has enjoyed seminal place in Christian theology and has consequently influenced Western culture. The first book of The Bible, Genesis, is the story of creation, affinity, transgression and estrangement. Original sin and its consequence have driven man from his native world of bliss (Eden) to the anxiety, labour and sorrow of the world. Man always strives for a reunion with his creator but is engaged in “institutionalizing hatred and indulged in massive destruction.” Calvin repeatedly identifies sin with alienation from God. To Eric Fromm “the concept of alienation is, in nontheistic language, the equivalent of what in theistic language would be called ‘sin.’” Theological alienation directed attention to man’s separation from fellow beings and institutions like church and also to man’s inner existence leading later psychologists and sociologists dealing with man’s relations with his fellow beings.
What we vaguely describe as modern alienation began in the mid eighteenth century especially under Rousseau. He associated man’s loneliness and despair to his relationship with Nature rather than with God. The civilized man, in the process of socialization, under the need of social necessities becomes detached from basic human nature. Hegel also considers alienation indispensable for the development of culture. Apart from the early essays where he gives a few ideas on alienation, his mature philosophic views are expanded in his Phenomenology. He observes that man becomes alienated when he fails to fully identify with the social substance which is the true objectification of the human spirit.

Karl Marx influenced by this aspect of Hegel refers to ‘Alienated Labour’ in his Early Manuscripts. His version was to conceptualize alienation as “a state produced by the savages of a particular economic system - viz, capitalism - which separate the products of his labour from the process of work, from the fellowship of his mankind, and ultimately, from himself.” To him economic alienation is the basic alienation which has to be removed inorder to get rid of political alienation. Political alienation arises when an individual does not experience a feeling of solidarity in his relation to a state which does not care about individuals’ existence. To the young Marx the eradication of private property would end all alienation. According to him when a worker loses his right on the product of his labour he becomes psychologically alienated. He further says that self-alienation originates when a relation between a production and a worker does not exist. Thus alienated labour alienates man from himself and other men making him spiritually and physically dehumanized.

Melvin Seeman argues that the modern soldier is equally separated from the means of violence, the scientist from the means of enquiry and the social servant from the means of administration as Marx’s worker. According to him there are five basic ways in which the concept of alienation has been used from the social and psychological point of view: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement. Powerlessness can be conceived as “the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot
determine the occurrence of the outcomes, of reinforcements, he seeks." The second variant of alienation is involved in Karl Mannheim’s description of the increase of ‘functional rationality’ and the concomitant decline of ‘substantial rationality.’ Mannheim argues that as society increasingly organizes its members with reference to the most efficient realization of ends (that is, as functional reality increases), there is a parallel decline in the “capacity to act intelligently in a given situation on the basis of one’s own insight into the interrelation of events” (Karl Mannheim, “Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction,” qtd. in Seeman 786). The third variant normlessness is derived from Durkheim’s description of anomie. In the traditional usage anomie refers to a collapse of values and norms regulating individual conduct. In the modern era, technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, is preferred resulting in anomie. The fourth type refers to the “descriptions of the intellectual role, where writers refer to the detachment of the intellectual from popular cultural standards” (Seeman 788). The most extended treatment of the last version of alienation is found in Eric Fromm: “By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself” (The Sane Society 120).

Fromm analyses the condition of the alienated individual with philosophical, social and psychological insight. Influenced by the Manuscripts of Marx he popularised alienation in America mainly through his Marx’s Concept of Man, Escape from Freedom and The Sane Society. According to him the cerebrating man is the alienated one. Man’s intellectual achievements have alienated him from the rest of the universe with which he had enjoyed a rapport. The subsequent “lopsided social developments, collapse of ethical and religious values and the modern cut-throat competition, increasing individuation and isolation have contributed to his feeling orphaned in the world.”

When Fromm comments on alienation in society, he thinks of a structure of society in which man becomes alienated in many ways. He feels that sociological
alienation is due to the modern faulty socio-economic structure. Further he opines that when the work of a man is determined by others it becomes alienated from the working person and he ceases to be himself.

Man's alienation from other men is the fundamental factor of Fromm's concept of alienation. Alienation between persons arises when mutual relations are not developed. The necessity to be related with other living beings is the imperative need on which human sanity depends. Fromm further opines: “To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death” (Escape from Freedom 19). According to him in the personality of modern man, a void covers his mind, life and consciousness. The modern man living to the expectations of others sells himself like a commodity without identity. This automization of the individual has increased the helplessness and insecurity of the average man. Thus the development of the personality and the factors responsible for alienation are characterised by the social conditions. Mental health of an individual, according to Fromm, is characterised by his ability to love and create, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside ourselves, that is by the development of objectivity and reason. In his opinion self-alienation is the most important type of alienation. It is the absence of self-awareness. He considers self-alienation as the condition when one becomes estranged from himself. Such a person does not experience himself as the centre of his world but “his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys or whom he may never worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any person” (The Sane Society 120).

After Fromm many psychoanalysts have analysed ‘self-alienation’ and most of them belong to the Horney School. Despite ambiguities in their use of the concept of alienation both Fromm and Karen Horney regard alienation as an experience in contemporary life. They agree with R.D. Laing that “individual deviations and madness are directly related to the impact of a disorganised society on the indi-
According to Horney that man is self-alienated whose spontaneous individual self has been stunted, warped or choked. Horney defines self-alienation as the remoteness from one's own feelings, wishes, beliefs and energies. "It is the loss of the feeling of being an active determining force in his own life." Horney thinks that man has two selves, the Ideal or Actual-self and the Real-self. The Actual-self is an all inclusive term for everything that a person is at a given time and the Real-self is the 'original' force toward individual growth and fulfilment, with which we may again achieve full identification when freed of the crippling shackles of neurosis. When man is alienated from Real-self he gets alienated from the internal power source which is the centre of his development. Self-alienation arises when there exists a gap between his idealized image and his real-self. Another characteristic that is often regarded as peculiar to self-alienation is a numbness to emotional experience, an uncertainty as to what one is, what one loves, hates, desires, hopes, fears, resents, believes. Thus losing his individuality, his relation to himself becomes impersonal. Self-sufficiency and privacy will be his needs.

Horney's comments on feminine psychology are also pertinent. There are conditions in the domestic and professional lives of people which are engineered by unconscious arrangement, so that the subject is overworked or has to make undue sacrifices for the sake of the family. After marriage women sacrifice a considerable part of their personal development willingly or otherwise. A wife "will despair because of her abundant love while at the same time she will feel most intensely and see most clearly the lack of love in her partner." Commenting on the consequences of lack of relationship between individuals in modern society Horney says that neuroses are generated by disturbances in human relationships. Increasing insecurity, lack of economic independence, emptiness in life and at work make woman unhappy and sometimes a neurotic. Some neurotic women feel unhappy and insecure in the absence of love and care.

Laing also stresses the need for healthy relations between persons for the growth of an individual. Each and every person is at the same time separate from his
fellows and related to them. “Our relatedness to others is an essential aspect of our being, as is our separateness, but any particular person is not a necessary part of our being.” According to Laing an ontologically secure person with a firm sense of his presence in this world as a real, alive and whole person will be able to encounter all kinds of social or biological hazards. He uses the term schizoid to refer to the condition where “there is a rent in his relations with this world” and “a disruption of his relations with himself.” The problem can be avoided only by establishing trusting, loving bonds between persons.

From time immemorial man’s “original self” has been squeezed and distorted by moral and intellectual pressures of the family, tribe, society and religion. This “thingification” of the personality leads to withering away of human potentialities. Many consider self-alienation as the primary from which emanate all other alienations. According to some analysts self-alienation starts in early childhood where there is a lack of physical or emotional intimacy or where the parents are over anxious or over ambitious. It is significant that Freud uses the term Entfremdung when he discusses the double-consciousness and the split-personality. False-self and fragmentation of self are considered key dimensions of alienation. According to him the result of the conflict between two selves—true self and the social self—is neurosis. Adorno equated alienation to schizophrenia. Both alienation and schizoid refer to separation and tension. In “alienated states defined as (manifest) schizoid personality . . . there is a high degree of consciousness concerning estrangement from self and others which is accompanied by copious anxiety and withdrawal.” Second species of schizoid does not manifest such separation in his social performance.

In Sociology the term alienation is used in reference to man’s profession and his relation with others. The loneliness arising out of lack of significant relation with others in sociological view is called social-isolation. In social reference “the meaning of social-alienation is the decay of creative, meaningful relations between man and man and it is the separation of a man living in the society from the culture
of his society, its principles and values.” There are two kinds of loneliness, voluntary and involuntary. In the first case man becomes a recluse by choice while in the second man feels an unnatural difference in the presence of others. In the opinion of Richard Schacht an individual who tries unsuccessfully to establish meaningful contact with others is “in a different situation from one who chooses to live alone in order to achieve some special purpose” (Alienation 157).

Identity, like alienation, is an inherently psychosocial concept. It represents a sense of ongoing continuity of one’s meaning to others as well as to the self. Preoccupation with one’s identity or failure to achieve it is a kind of alienation. According to Donald Oken “alienation is a product of identity, as well as a sign of its disturbance.” A firm sense of one’s identity provides both a compass to determine one’s course in life and the ballast to keep one steady.

The state of alienation can be applied to specific individual as well as to group of individuals. Group alienation is a variety of social-alienation where the members of some population groups--racial, ethnic or religious minorities--experience social-alienation. Blacks and Jews feel it very intensely. A high degree of group alienation can be matched by an even higher degree of intragroup community spirit. Thus alienated subcultures, like ethnic and racial minorities, also paradoxically provide identity. But “the alienated subculture arises out of the sense of difference, non belonging and alienation of its members, and only secondarily leads to identity via the shared (negative) group identity.”

Youth culture is actually a subculture. Feurlicht divides the alienation of the young after World War II into seven groups: 1) The indifferent, skeptical, uncommitted, materialistic, ego-centric, 2) highly intellectual, well-to-do with contempt towards society and politics with no deep human ties, 3) the low-class uneducated street group, 4) the non-violent hippies finding solace in drugs, 5) runaways who end up as failures, 6) students hostile to society and establishment, 7) the ‘blue generation’ children of well to do parents taking part in demonstration. To this another can be added, the most modern who alienate themselves from fellows.
and affiliate themselves to computer—computers addicts. Their indifference to social values and the rejection of them result in normlessness.

The biggest ailment of today is not any contagious disease, but the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for and deserted by all. Prisons and boarding homes are breeding centres of alienation. Though not listed in treatises on the alienated, the term is also applied to the ‘unwanted,’ ‘surplus’ population without whom society can survive, like the old and the mentally handicapped. Old age, the age of loss and farewell, can be considered the most poignant period of alienation. Far removed from the technologies outside, the old people feel like strangers in a world where once they felt at home.

It is strange indeed that man “this zoon politikon, this product and producer of society outside of which he cannot exist, can be alienated from society.” Social-alienation ensues from a feeling of dissatisfaction with an individual’s work and environment. When a person considers work only as a means of livelihood and not as a vocation he becomes a victim of alienation. Workers become alienated from work when they feel powerless to control their work. This powerlessness is felt in the socio-political relations. A powerless man considers modern problems unavoidable. His unquestioned acceptance of this world governed by a few powerful people engenders political alienation. According to Thompson and Horton political alienation is a reaction to one’s realization of his “relative inability to influence or to control one’s social destiny.” Mc Dill, Edward and Ridley Jeane while referring to political alienation write, “political alienation involves...apathy as a response to political powerlessness (and) also a general distrust of political leaders who are the wielders of this power.”

Alienation from the world or otherwise known as cosmic alienation has been experienced by many illustrious men including philosophers. But the term world and its equivalents French monde, Spanish mundo and German welt also mean “society,” “the others” or “the influential people.” Hence alienation from the world can be alienation from society or others. There are religions and philosophers which
consider man as stranger in this world since he is not created for this world. Russel calls this world 'alien' and 'inhuman.' Whenever an individual feels how small and powerless he is in the world, how insensitive nature is to man's fate, there is world alienation. Feurlicht suggests pantheism, organized religion, love, creativity and satisfaction in work as antidotes to world alienation.31

The deepest problems of modern life emanate from the "the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence"32 amidst overwhelming social forces and the technique of life. With changes in family structure especially the decline of the large kinship group as an operating unity, the nuclear family tends to atomise the individual freeing him from old bonds. Alienation thus represents the mood of our age and it goes beyond class, sex, caste, age or economic system. C. Wright Mills has declared it as "a major theme of the human condition in the contemporary epoch and of all studies worthy of the name."33 Hence it has become the dominant theme in modern literature also especially in connection with the growth of superficiality and depthlessness in interpersonal relations. A galaxy of alienated characters ranging from neglected children to sexual perverts, each suffering from his own problems and each trying to reach out parade before us.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries outsiders, rebels, internally torn (zerissen) and doubles (Doppelganger) began populating literature. The traditional style for the alienated romantic was established by Byron through his own life as well as his poetry through the Byronic hero, alone against the world. Modern literature has variously delineated alienated individuals. Much of twentieth century American and European novels are populated by them. It has been dealt with in great detail in existentialist literature and in absurd drama. The alienated hero has become the protagonist of Eugene O'Neill, William Faulkner, Edward Albee, Arthur Miller and others. Albert Camus' The Stranger, Frank Kafka's The Trial and T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land are all attempts at delineating the frustration and alienation of modern man. Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot is called a "landmark of alienation" and Camus' The Stranger "the most vivid symbol of social alienation."34
Literature cannot remain divorced from society. The art of the novel transports us to the private inner world of the alienated. In some novels the alienated protagonist who refuses to move with the crowd becomes its critic. Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* repeats the first rebel Lucifer when he says “I will not serve that in which I no longer believe” (291) and he “does not fear to be alone. He sees himself alone, quite alone” (292).

In Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* we see alienation leading to loss of self, disintegration and death. Gregor the dutiful son who gives up hopes for personal happiness and romance in order to serve, also remains hideously alone. He feels himself to be a vermin: “Having lived like a vermin, having felt himself weak and crushable as an insect, he now becomes in fact what he was in spirit, a creature without a self…” (299). Kafka’s Joseph K, the protagonist of *The Trial* and Camus’ Mersault of *The Stranger* are generally mentioned as the best and most popular representations of alienated man in the contemporary world. Inspite of apparent happiness and friendliness Joseph K. is “at the same time a regular member of society and a victim of social alienation.”35 Mersault has been accused not only of self-alienation but also of alienation from the world. He is termed a stranger to society not only because of his unconventional ideas about love, marriage etc. but also of his unwillingness to play society’s roles.

In Saul Bellow and Bernard Malamud the protagonist transcends his condition of loneliness and estrangement through the healing message of love to effect a tenuous but real reconciliation. Negro literature is embedded with alienation: the alienation of the negroes which began right from his transportation from native Africa to the alien shores of America where he became a nonentity. What he needs is not merely economic or social emancipation but psychic emancipation as well.

Despite geographical distance and cultural difference there remains “a fundamental similarity in the human experiences of different people at a particular phase of history.”36 Angst, alienation, communication gap, insecurity and futility have crept into the Indian psyche also though not on the western proportion.
Alienation as a concept existed in India from time immemorial. Three kinds of alienation were known— from self, from society and from God. The first two have been perceived as a result of estrangement from God and hence considered only secondary. In India, devotion to God, a panacea for all, pacified the turbulent minds from spontaneous exploding to literary creativity. Hence the anguish and the pain in the works of the West were conspicuous by their absence. But in contemporary Indian society, because of the social changes that marked Indian society at large, one finds alienated characters emerging, sometimes through their meaningful silences or through their fury. In ancient India, man had a feeling of belongingness to a culture, society and family which is disappearing in modern life. Growth of industrialisation and the consequent migration to the cities for economic and educational reasons have altered the lifestyles of people. Not only does the city weaken the traditional kinship groups but it also tends to atomize the individual by freeing him from old bonds. Hence as Meenakshi Mukherjee has opined alienation and the search for one's identity have become "common and recurrent" themes in Indian literature.

Art transmutes the varied experiences of life. Of all the various forms of art, the novel is regarded as "the most effective medium of embodying and recreating the complex and varied experiences of man in modern age." India has also witnessed many a traumatic change and literature, particularly novel, has mirrored not only the changing faces but also the geography of the minds with its contours. Indian Literature in English has matured itself from its infancy of nationalism and pan-Indianness and has attained international acclaim. The problems confronting modern man have been dealt with seriously by Indian writers as well though the method and style vary. The historical, sociological and political background play seminal role in Indian Literature in English. Using an 'alien' medium it depicts the growing tug between the lure of modernity and the deep-rooted culture of India, and the plight of the culturally and geographically displaced people. It has also dealt effectively with family relationship, especially man-woman relationship because of the great cultural, sociological and psychological significance given to family.
Almost all countries that have experienced colonisation have undergone traumatic severing of selves. The juxtaposition of two diametrically opposite cultures, the oriental and the occidental, have produced many a magnificent work. The cultural alienation and the loss of identity confronted by the expatriates and immigrants are presented with deep insight by expatriate writers. Expatriate writers live on the margin of two societies and their quest for a home is “not a quest for spatial identity but a search for roots.”

His stay as a ‘marginal’ on the basis of his colour, race and colonial history aggravates his trauma. The expatriate writers have manipulated the hiatus between the home and their world. Expatriate writing “in its theory and practice is the work of the exile who has experienced unsettlement at the existential, political and metaphysical levels.”

Alienation is not merely a postcolonial experience in India though confrontation with an exotic culture has augmented it. Even in the pre-independent era the symptoms of alienation had started appearing in the Indian literary scenario. D.F. Karaka’s There Lay the City (1942) has dealt with the theme of alienation where the narrator returning to India from Europe for the third time isolates himself from the people. Of the big three, R.K. Narayan has emphasised the loneliness of man in its varied forms. Most of his novels “in varying degrees convey the sense of unhappy frustration.”

Swami and Friends pictures the rising gap between Swaminathan and his father. Vendor of Sweets more poignantly delineates the estrangement between Jagan and his western-educated, western-married son. The novel also highlights the social ostracism confronted by Jagan. Thus traces of the dilemma of alienation have crept into the writings of earlier Indian English writers also though not as acutely as it appears in the later novelists. The reason for estrangement in their novels was mainly socio-political resulting from the encounter between two different cultures rather than personal. But in The Serpent and the Rope Raja Rao deals with the spiritual aspect also through Ramaswamy who experiences a void within until he comes back to his origins.

The theme of alienation in all its magnitude has been taken up by Manohar
Malgolkar. The Combat of Shadows is a powerful study of a young Eurasian woman Ruby who lingers between two worlds, Indian and the West, without belonging to either. Through her Malgolkar presents “the awareness of rootlessness, of not belonging, of not being wanted, even being despised” (103). Her English lover Henry Winton also suffers from loneliness and marital alienation though it is not as devastating as hers. Balachandra Rajan has also taken up the predicament of alienated individuals. Krishnan in The Dark Dancer is alienated from his surroundings when he comes back after his stay in Cambridge. Without an identity or a sense of being rooted, he feels a complete outsider. The tug between the ties of tradition and the alienation of the exile drags him through a psychological crisis. Too Long in the West again tells the story of an American returned Nalini who has joined the lost generation, out of place everywhere and acceptable nowhere.

An undiluted treatment of the theme of alienation can be discerned in the novels of Arun Joshi. His novels unravel the facets of crisis experienced by modern man who suffers from physical, spiritual and mental nowhereness. With his debut The Foreigner he began “his odyssey into the dark, mysterious and uncharted hinterland of the soul to plumb some perennial problems of human existence.”42 The novel traces the journey of the self of Sindi Oberoi, a perennial outsider, who belongs to no country, no people. Orphaned childhood generates in him a sense of emotional insecurity that colours his attitude to life: “My foreignness lay within me and I couldn’t leave myself behind wherever I went.” (61). Hence he fails to adjust and build up emotional rapport with others. But his detachment is only a facade, a defence mechanism to avoid pain and suffering and learns that our aloneness must be resolved from within. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas presents the problem of a perceptive young man of the westernised Indian society that has lost its spiritual anchorage. The new tragic hero is not confronting outside force, but himself. Marital estrangement between Billy and Meera is also highlighted. Far from the dream of its makers, post-independent India presents a different picture where self-interest, deception, travel, manipulation and corruption have a heyday. Ratham Rathor, of The
Apprentice, through his unscrupulous career advancement estranges himself from his own self as well as his colleagues. The anguish of a man left alone without the solace of familiar ties and the emptiness and darkness enveloping him are beautifully presented. The Last Labyrinth provides fresh perspectives on man’s loneliness and anguish in the face of a crisis and his indefatigable search for a way out. Marital disharmony between Som Bhaskar and Geeta is also being dealt with. With a knowledge of psychology Joshi delves deep into the psychic hinterlands of those who “grope through the maze, through the cunning passages and contrived corridors of contemporary world for light and direction.” In the ephemeral and uncertain world, withdrawal and evasion of responsibility will not solve one’s problems; only involvement without selfish desire can be of help.

The women in India empowered with education do not lag behind men in portraying alienated characters, especially alienated women. Indian women’s contribution to English literature is no more marginal and has become dialectic on both quantitative and qualitative grounds. They are both articulate and innovative and have attained national and international acclaim. They show remarkable insight into the dilemma of modern woman, working or housewife, in a traditional society where “dual morality is the accepted form.”

Every writing is influenced by its social, religious and cultural milieu. A creative writer has “the perception and analytic mind of a sociologist who provides an exact record of human life, society and social system.” The writings of women can be studied as sociolects depicting the Indian female psyche in its interaction with the male and the gradual emergence of the postcolonial, postmodern woman from the patterns and trappings of a patriarchal society in accordance with global change and necessity. Hence it is pertinent to be equipped with an understanding of Indian womanhood while analysing Indian women writers and characters. Indian womanhood has to be explored, experienced and understood in all its vicissitudes, multiplicities, contradictions and complexities. It is as divergent as the country itself and has undergone dramatic and drastic changes from era to era.
The patriarchal Indian society badges woman as the harbinger of culture but refuses to accept her as an individual with personal aspiration. In India, the land where dissimilar elements like technology and astrology are yoked together, deification of mother goes hand in hand with debasing of woman. The Indian woman eulogised as the embodiment of suffering and sacrifice had an enviable status during the Vedic times.

The idea of all-encompassing motherhood as the highest principle, firmly accepted in the Vedic times, was transmitted to all later periods and has “throughout all ages formed the basis of the exceptional degree of reverence paid in India to the Mother.”\textsuperscript{46} The Vedas enlighten that nowhere in the actual life of Vedic days can any trace of subjection or seclusion of women be found: neither in its religious teachings nor in its philosophy. A wife was her husband’s sahadharmini, friend and comrade. Yet during the Brahminical times wife degradation and mother worship progressed hand in hand and thence forward throughout the following centuries. Manu Smriti which codified the different spheres of man and woman further clipped her wings by making her dependent on men throughout her life. The harsh and soulless restrictions of Brahminism found refuge in Budhism which granted woman the right to join monastic orders. Yet Budhism and Jainism which sprang up challenging Brahminical religion were based on avoiding materialism of which women were a part.

The concept of womanhood in India has also been besieged by alien onslaught on life and thought. “Historical and sociological aspects seemed to have contributed their share in keeping the woman behind curtains.”\textsuperscript{47} Mohammedan invasion of the eleventh century propagated polygamy and veiling of woman. Though Koran gives property protection and social privilege to women, in practice they are negated and the most abominable system of divorce, namely talak, belittle women.

No matter how conflicting the influence, Indian woman benefitted on the whole by contact with the western woman. Thanks to educational programmes and reform movements brought by the missionaries and Indian leaders like Raja Ram Mohan
Roy, the Indian woman was liberated from the shackles of illiteracy and ignorance. The words of Malan Devi who was involved in the Bodh Gaya Land Struggle echo this sentiment: “Earlier we had tongues but could not speak, we had feet but could not walk. Now we have got the strength to speak and to work.”

The call for Swaraj further tapped the hitherto untapped strength of these women. Yet “the glorification of indigenous traditions... impacted negatively upon Indian woman after independence.” Inspite of constitutional equality, modernisation and the accelerating number of working women, the inner imagery of man and woman is replete with traditional norms and values. Sita and Savitri are still the role models because as Chaman Nahal has opined, “one cannot escape the myths - the conditioning myths with which one has grown up.”

The institution of family has undergone rapid changes in the modern, fast moving world around. With the advent of feminism a new set of paradigms like modernity, self-assertion and economic independence has stepped in. Yet trapped in the clutches of the cultural ethos, the Indian woman hesitates to be too assertive. More polymorphic than the isomorphic western society “the fulfilment of oneself... has always been alien to the Indian tradition especially when it is achieved at the cost of duty to the family.” Modern career woman’s failure to come up to the expectations of the male ego in her different roles brings in domestic conflicts. The disintegration of joint-families, which of course with its own drawbacks often provided many a mediator at such crises, creates a gap.

Urbanization, collapse of old family bonds and lack of emotional support add to the tensions of a woman. The pursuit of a career, being economically independent, does not mitigate her problem: riding two horses at a time. Since the Indian mind is still unwilling to alter the paradigms a wide hiatus prevails between her dreams and desires and the expectations of the society. Her crusade of opposing against traditional taboos and conventions often isolates and alienates her.

Woman as an “individual with throbbing pulse, feelings and aspirations, involved in the vortex of life that is complicated, demanding and exhausting” makes her
appearance in the novels by Indian women. Their instinctive perception, insight and emotional involvement into the woman’s problems have given a distinctive dimension to the works of writers like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantaya Sahgal, Anita Desai, Rama Mehta, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, Jaishree Misra and many others. Their works have delved deep into the emotional world of women and have both contemporaneity as well as universality because they limn contemporary Indian society in flux as well as ever relevant human values.

The history of Indian English women novelists begins with the latter half of the nineteenth century with the posthumous publication of Toru Dutt’s unfinished novel Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden in 1878. Among other early novels are Raj Lakshmi Debi’s The Hindu Wife or The Enchanted Fruit (1876), Krupabai Sathianadhan’s Kamala; A Story of Hindu Life (1894) and Saguna; A Story of Native Christian Life (1895), Swarnakumari Debi’s An Unfinished Song (1913) and The Fatal Garland (1915). Cornalia Sorabji and Iqbalunisa Hussain also belong to this early phase of women novelists whose novels were touched with sadness and the characters often mute and meek.

The post-Independence period has witnessed a sizeable group of women writers sensitive to the national as well as feminine problems. The major concerns of the women novelists of the West such as free love, personal happiness and equality do not have the same significance in the Indian milieu. The Indian woman’s socio-intellectual independence being tied up with the cultural heritage of India, a major concern of their novels has been her customs, traditions and the clash between the past and the present. Family situation as a theme has a long tradition in the fictional world of Indian writers. The conflict between personal liberty and the demands and responsibilities of family, the institution of the joint-family and the much discussed East-West theme have also been dealt with dexterously. Attia Hosain’s Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961) based on the theme of politics and a woman’s struggle for independence and Santha Rama Rao’s Remember the House (1956) on the impact of East-West encounter are worth mentioning.
Though the Indianess of Ruth Prawer Jhabwala is a much debated topic, the depth with which she has pictured "the chameleon like\(^{53}\) Delhi, her little bit of ivory, has made her at once an “insider and an outsider.”\(^{54}\) While *To Whom She Will* and *The Nature of Passion* deal with romantic love, *Esmond in India* deals with the inter-continental marriage between Esmond and Gulab which fails to bridge the cultural barrier between them. *A Backward Glance, New Dominion* and the Booker Prize winner *Heat and Dust* are about the various experiences of English women in India.

With the changing social and political conditions there is a shift in the thematics also. A variety of themes have come to display. The historical phenomenon of the juxtaposition of two diametrically opposite cultures, cultural alienation, the problem of the cultural transplant’s search for identity, female marginality, psychic and spiritual despair and broken marital relations are some of the problems touched upon.

Nayantara Sahgal, regarded as an exponent of the political novel, deals not only with what happens in the corridors of power but also reveals the plight of modern woman. In the opinion of Meera Bai, “the cultural and traditional upheaval India has been facing is nowhere revealed more emphatically than as in the context of marriage and man-woman relationship.”\(^{55}\) Husband-wife alienation ensuing from lack of communication and temperamental incompatibility form the theme of Sahgal’s *Storm in Chandigarh*. All the married couples in the novel have strained relations and hanker for extramarital love. Vishal Dubey is constantly reminded of the long brooding silences during his marriage because “alone with him she (Leela) had little to share” (72). Saroj’s attempts to hold a relationship based on love, honour and companionship fail because Inder is too fickle-minded to ignore her premarital intimacy with a friend which he now blows to unlimited sizes creating an iron curtain between them. The growing discontent between Mara and Jit “was something he decided, to do with the chemistry of their two characters, an insoluble difference, nothing that could be sorted out, even with patience” (107). *A Situation in New Delhi*
also deals with marital friction in the life of Usman and Nadira. The table between their beds “had come up by itself like other barriers between him and Nadira” (84). Smrit in The Day in Shadow fails to lead a satisfactory life with Som who stands for material prosperity. Emotional estrangement leads to physical withdrawal also which ultimately leads to divorce. Ideological polarities separate Sonali from her lover Ravi in Rich Like Us. The readiness with which he sacrifices his ideals to suit the demands of the dictatorial regime of the Emergency period startles and alienates Sonali. Thus Sahgal’s women are mostly educated, aspiring individuals trapped within the confines of loveless marriages in a conservative society.

Kamala Markandaya’s novels focus on the changing socio-economic scene. Depiction of rootlessness and alienation forms a major thematic concern of her novels. They strongly indicate the message that if one has roots one survives and if they are injured or withered, one dies spiritually. In Nectar in a Sieve Markandaya portrays the impact of industrialisation on native agricultural people leading to alienation and death. The uprooting and resultant exodus create an excruciating sense of insecurity and identity crisis. Nathan and Rukmani are evicted out of their land by the infringement of modern industry on the native agricultural soil. The Nowhere Man portrays poignantly the plight of alienated Indians who live in foreign countries through exploring the inner crisis of Srinivas which arises out of alienation and loss of identity.

Not only alienation resulting from rootlessness but marital alienation also becomes a thematic concern in Markandaya. The distance between Premala and Kit increases in Some Inner Fury despite her attempts to remould herself to the anglicised tastes of her husband. The cultural barrage between them remains unbridged till death puts an end to her “soul shrinking compromises.” Through her the novelist highlights the insecurity, isolation and vulnerability that the traditionally brought up Indian woman feels, when she has to accommodate to the tastes and values of a culture in flux. The problem in A Silence of Desire stems from Sarojini’s blind faith in the healing power of a swami. Her domestic harmony is threatened because
of the drying up of communication between the rational husband and the believer wife leading even Dandekar suspecting her of infidelity. The Golden Honeycomb deals with alienation in the midst of princely pomp and splendour. More than any ordinary woman queens are forced to eshew their identity to suit the royal needs. The double standard operates all the way up to the royal chambers. The failure to produce an heir to the throne in royal wedlock is attributed to the queen “while Bawajiraj, whose sperm sexes the child, is not even mentioned” (52). The too submissive queen accepts the son born of her husband’s liaison with another woman as the royal heir. She is the symbol of the passive feminine, stunted in her womanhood, stunted as a human being.

Perhaps no other Indian writer of the contemporary literary scene has won such international acclaim as Arundhati Roy for the audacity of her technique and theme in her debut The God of Small Things. The novel deals with the problems “besetting women in a male dominated society, caste taboos and the lives of rudderless children of a broken home.” As a divorced woman and the mother of two “fatherless waifs” (45) Ammu has no ‘Locus Standi’ neither in her paternal home nor in the conservative society. Her relations with the Paravan further alienates her from family and society and she is even denied a decent death and burial. Roy also reveals the impact of the traumas of childhood on the developing psyche of the children. They fail to establish meaningful relationships and become stranded and alone. Marital estrangement runs through all the generations of the family depicted. The marriages of Mammachi and Pappachi, Ammu and Baba, Chacko and Margaret Kochamma, Rahel and Larry, all end in fiasco pointing to the basic incompatibility that exists between each couple.

Jaishree Misra also focusses on the theme of marriage, divorce and motherhood in her much-touted debut novel Ancient Promises. Unlike the early romances which ended in the ringing of marriage bells Misra takes us from the corridors of the divorce court narrating the falling apart of an arranged misalliance where two incompatible souls were yoked together for the sheer benefit of family prestige and
pomp. The novel also endeavours to gauge the depths of paranoia, isolation and desperation that Janaki, the heroine, is forced to face with the birth of a mentally retarded daughter. The determination with which she takes up a difficult motherhood strengthens her to take the final leap from boredom, estrangement and trauma to the arms of freedom and love.

In the delineation of alienated protagonists, especially women, three novelists who have contributed seminally are Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Bharati Mukherjee. While most of the novelists deal with alienation in general Desai, hailed as the usherer of psychological fiction into the Indian literary arena, delves deep into the labyrinthine minds of her protagonists depicting alienation in its different aspects. A wide repertoire of alienated characters ranging from troubled children to cultural transplants emerge out of her novels Cry, the Peacock, Voices in the City, Where Shall We Go This Summer?, Bye-Bye, Blackbird, Fire on the Mountain, Clear Light of Day, In Custody, Baumgartner’s Bombay and Fasting Feasting. The recurring theme in Desai is “the irreconcilability between the inner and the outer worlds, the imponderable gulf between expectation and reality” resulting in deep anguish of the sensitive soul.

While Desai’s women in their strife for liberation and independence become frustrated, and neurotic most of Deshpande’s women are economically independent, yet psychologically confined. Torn between tradition and their roles as professional women, they reflect a realistic picture of contemporary middle class woman. Dark Holds No Terrors, Roots and Shadows, That Long Silence, The Binding Vine, A Matter of Time and Small Remedies are powerful portrayals of Indian women caught in the mesh of tradition and modernity depicting their sufferings, disappointments, frustrations and estrangements in both personal and social levels.

The novels of Bharati Mukherjee transport us to the complex realm of the culturally displaced, geographically alienated characters who migrate to the West and consequently face the tensions of alienation, adaptation and assimilation. The Tiger’s Daughter, Wife and Jasmine depict varied pictures of Indian women in the exotic land, the cultural clash and the resultant psychological turmoil.
As Walter Kaufmann opines, “whether we choose to speak of alienation or not, the experiences widely associated with that term are often held to be distinctive characteristic of our time.” Since no literature can remain immune to the contemporary social conditions, Indian writers have also dealt with the problem of alienation. Indian women writers in English, no more marginal, do not lag behind in the portrayal of alienated characters. Though each writer approaches the theme from her own perspective Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Bharati Mukherjee focus on the complex problem confronted by contemporary Indian woman whose attempts to survive in a dispassionate world often isolates and alienates her.
Notes

8. Feurlicht 55.


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Feurlicht 55.

Feurlicht 45.


Donald Oken, “Alienation and Identity: Some Comments on Adolescence, the Counter Culture and Contemporary Adaptations,” *Alienation: Concept, Term and Meanings* 89.

Oken 97.

Feurlicht 76.

Sharma 25.


Feurlicht 87.

Feurlicht 89.


Feurlicht 30.

Feurlicht 91.

42 Ghosh 38.
43 Ghosh 150.
51 Mukherjee, *The Twice Born Fiction* 29.


60. Kaufmann xvi.