Introduction

The present thesis seeks to analyse Arun Joshi’s fiction with a view to exploring his creative vision through a critical analysis of the themes of alienation and dispossession. The study is mainly concern with his novels however, some of his short stories are also rapidly analysed in order to bring into focus the centrality of his vision and art. Some of the important devices Arun Joshi incorporates to fictionalize his basic creative concerns are also taken into critical account. The problem of human existence in a world that is bereaved of sustaining values, moral anchorage and warm human concern is the major preoccupation of Joshi’s creative consciousness. Almost all of his novels and short stories invariably take up the issues of existential anguish, alienation and dispossession and therefore call for a concentrated critical approach. Joshi’s place in the central tradition of Indian novel in English is yet another problem that deserves serious attention because Arun Joshi essentially is an intellectual writer who addresses himself to the very essence of being in a world that is confronted with spiritual vacuity and moral bankruptcy. His fiction also reveals a constant engagement with the factors that go into the making of modern mind and his unrest with various socio-cultural and political connotations. It seems therefore worthwhile to briefly but carefully bring into discussion the growth and development of Indian novel in English so that Arun Joshi’s place in proper novelistic perspective is specified.
The Indian English novel is a product of the creative mutation of Indian content and Western form. It is an intrinsic part of Indian reality and is deeply rooted in the Indian soil. The development of this genre can be roughly traced from its experimental stage. The historical romances written in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, e.g. S.K.Nikambe’s *Ratnabai* (1895), S.K.Ghose’s *The Prince of Destiny* (1909), S.K.Mitra’s *Hindupur* (1909) and the realistic, the social and political realism of the nineteen-thirties and nineteen-forties and to the psychological, the post-colonial novels revealing an introspective concern with the individual and the cultural ethos simultaneously.

The late twenties and early thirties of the present century witnessed the flowering of the realistic novel. The Indian English writers started turning away from the past focussing their attention instead on the contemporary issues in their novels social and political problems that arose from the changed historical situation were given prominence. The altered historical perspective stimulated the Indian literary imagination and consequently they began to perceive the prevailing reality in altogether a different way. They addressed themselves to the issues of the human predicament, his socio-psychological conditions and his cultural ambiance in a different variety of realistic manners.
The Indian English novels of the nineteen-thirties and nineteen-forties reveal an awareness of the historical forces that inevitably impinges upon the life of man. The national movement for independence, which had gathered momentum under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, offered the Indian English novelists both inspiration and material.

K.S.Venkatramani’s Murugan, The Tiller (1927) and Kandan, The Patriot (1932) are examples of the social and political fervent caused by the Gandhian movement. The novels written during this period forcefully evoke the tempo of the nation, caught up in the vortex of the freedom movement, in the early thirties.

The most remarkable event of the period was the appearance on the literary scene, of the great trio of Indian English fiction - Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao. With a sustained creative effort, each of them outlined the possibilities of Indian English fiction. It was largely due to their efforts that Indian English novel stood on a solid ground and achieved an identity of its own. As William Walsh writes, “it was these three who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established the suppositions, the manner, the idiom, the concept of character, and the nature of the themes, which were to give the Indian
novel its particular distinctiveness" (1). Mulk Raj Anand’s the *Sword and the Sickle* (1942) and Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938) dealt with the freedom struggle as their central theme. *Kanthapura* is a milestone in the history of Indian English novel. Written during the height of independence movement, the book depicts the emergence of a national consciousness and the socio-political changes caused by the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. Technically too, the novel is a great achievement, drawing extensively from myth, folklore and oral tradition and successfully fusing the harikatha or puranic mode of narration with the stream of consciousness technique. It creates a new kind of English - a 'dialect' as Raja Rao calls it in his famous foreword to the book - to present the nuances of Indian life, its customs, beliefs and superstitions and evoke the subtle tone of voice the rhythm and gesture. The novel is, thus, a remarkable instance of the fusion of language and content of culture and cultural rhetoric.

Mulk Raj Anand is the first writer to give the Indian novel in English a definite tone and texture. He explodes the myths that afloat abroad about the India of the Yogis, Sadhus and Beggars and an earthy presentation of human conditions in the Indian society. His novels gave poetic expressions to the sufferings, inequality, poverty and exploitation of characters who are real individuals, "lovable, sometimes grand, sometimes weak and thoroughly Indian" (2). He did not to find "enough daylight in England or Europe either" (3). He found the raw material for his creative works in his experiences as a child and youth. A host of
thinkers and artists gradually cut their grooves in his identity, but like Forster he shows a unifying view and comes to evolve, what he describes as ‘historical humanism’. The Marxist postulate that “it is not the consciousness of man that determines their existence but on the contrary it is their social existence that determines their consciousness”(4) defines his commitment as a writer. Ruskin and Gandhi gave him ethical leanings and moral courage. Balzac, Tolstoy, Dickens, Tagore and Premchand deepened his response to the problems of the people. He anchors his art in his personal experiences that manifest dramatically in his fictional work and attribute it an aura of credibility and authenticity. His novels are characterized by feelings of rebellion and reform, despair and courage, by a drive for unison and desire for works of art that are aesthetically satisfying with profound moral beauty. In his novels he unequivocally articulates his compassion for the victims. Championing the metaphors of social change he thus, took upon himself the role of artist as ‘the conscience of the race, the guide, the mentor’.

The world of common and peasants, another facet of Indian life, was given sufficient coverage in the novels of regional languages through decades. Rabindranath Tagore, despite his universal humanism, shows concern for the gentle, middle class family. Saratchand and Premchand, however, articulate their genuine passion for the peasant masses, who are considered as the core Indian fiction in English. This concern quite naturally, called for a different mode of perception, a different variety of social consciousness to meet an emotional encounter with the grass roots
of Indian life. The tone of anger and fury seen in Anand’s novels thus is 
found substituted by a note of compassion and tenderness in the 
rendering of peasant life in the novels of Bhabani Bhattacharya and 
Kamala Markandaya. The response of Markandaya and Bhattacharya is 
cognate for they are highly sensitive to the peasants’ suffering and fully 
appreciative of their vitality. Nectar in a Sieve or Handful of Rice and 
So Many Hungers or He Who Rides a Tiger are sensitive records 
rendered in fictional form.

Significant revolutions have always been potent sources of material 
for fiction. The French Revolution, the American War of Independence 
and the October Revolution of Russia have sparked the fire in the artists 
of the respective nations. There are plenty of novels in indigenous Indian 
languages that invariably take a recourse to Indian struggle for freedom 
and its corollaries as their central thematic pre-occupation. The 
counterpart fiction in English has also exploited its preparatory history, 
its varied, violent and non-violent messages, its deep emotional impact 
on Indian life. Inquilab, Kandan the Patriot, In Transit, Chronicles of 
Kedaram, The Sword and The Sickle, Kanthapura, Sunlight on a 
Broken Column, A Time to be Happy, Remember the House, Some 
Inner Fury and Waiting for a Mahatma are among the novels significant 
for one reason or the other.

Independence brought in its wake the blood stained phenomenon 
of partition. It was an extensive, ghastly event of countless corpses,
wholesale carnage and human cruelty. The multitudes were uprooted and ruined. Indian literature in different regional languages and also in English responded to this holocaust, upholding through their characters values that assert humanity and resist its extinction. Amrita Pritam’s Poem New Heer, Krishan Chander’s collection of stories, Hum Wahshi Hain, Rama Nand Sagar’s novel Aur Insan Mar Gaya, Abbas’ Blood and Stones and Ismat Chughtai’s play Dhani Bankeen are sensitive, moving and perceptive treatments of the partition horror. Among writings in Hindi Boond and Samundar by Amrit Lal Nagar, Jhoota Saccha by Yashpal and Bhoole Bisare Chitra by Bhagwaticharan Verma. In English, the novels of Khushwant Sing and Manohar Malgaonkar are prismatic tales of the partition and post-partition life in India. Khushwant Singh’s Train to Pakistan is a perceptive novel on the theme of partition and a milestone in the art of Indian realistic fiction. With a photographic objectivity and an idiom that is racy and earthy, the novelist delves deeply into the gruesome spectacle of contemporary history and asserts values that resist extinction of humanity through symbols and characterization. Malgonkar’s A Bend in the Ganges has a wider range, a large canvas encompassing within it the pre-independence occurrences and the post-partition events. The novelist builds up a complex story of criss-cross incidents through a pair of heroes, Devi Dayal and Gain Talwar. In his prefatory note, he says, “only the violence in this story happens to be true, it came in the wake of freedom, to become a part of India’ history. What was achieved through non-violence, brought with it one of the bloodiest upheavals of history; twelve
million people had to flee, leaving their homes; nearly half a million were killed; over a hundred thousand women, young and old were abducted, raped, mutilated”(5). Malgonkar’s control over the narrative and technique shows admirable insight with which he delineates, a vivid picture of the struggle of Indian Independence and its bloody aftermath.

A comprehensive and intrinsic picture of the permanent and transitional values clashing together is fictionalized through the comic and ironic mode in R.K.Narayan’s novels. His fiction mirrors modern India rooted in ancient tradition and caught up in the flux of change. The corroding, sordid boons of modern materialistic civilization and the primordial ways of Indian life interact in the characters of Narayan’s novels. His Malgudi is a regional world but it gains ‘a representativeness’ by concentration; and extends into a national range, even a comic canvas. Like Hardy’s Wessex, Narayan’s Malgudi that expands from a regional to universal in both synoptic and catalytic ways as it reflects and accelerates the inner change in the character. The Sarayu river, the Mempi hills and forests, the caves and temples are there not just to weave the texture of the external landscape, they, in fact, operate as an elements of consciousness that deepen affirmative Indian vision. The typical protagonist of the Narayan begins as a fallen angel and passes through the trials and travails of the quest for truth evolving gradually the necessary vision. Raju in The Guide is almost metamorphosed from a rogue into a man with spiritual faith.
Another theme, involving larger socio-cultural reality, that has been exploited by many post-independence novelists is the encounter between the East and the West. Following E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* that first set India against England. Indian English writers have treated this subject on emotional, social and political planes. Kamala Markandaya’s *Possession* (1963), Balchandra Ragan’s *The Dark Dancer* (1859), Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s *Esmond in India* (1958) and *Heat and Dust* (1975), Santha Rama Rau’s *Remember the House* (1956), Nayantra Sahgal’s *A Time to be Happy* (1958) and Anita Desai’s *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1972) explore the various implications of the socio-cultural encounter between the East and the West and exploit its dramatic as well as symbolic potential with varied degrees of success.

The finest example of the treatment of the East-West theme is perhaps Raja Rao’s *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960). Spread over a large canvas covering the two continents, the novel portrays through the most intimate relationship between Ramaswami, an Indian scholar, and Madeleine, his French wife, meeting of the East and West on the social, cultural and philosophical planes and the basic incompatibility of these two cultures. A richly ambiguous novel where varied layers of experiences sublimate into a vision of life. Lloyd Fernando, a Malaysian professor and critic, says: “The only Asian novel I know, where the author pursues the goal of satisfactory adjustment between cultures with an intellectual energy comparable to Joyce’s, is Raja Rao’s *The Serpent and the Rope* (6). In fact, the kindred consciousness of the East and the
West impinges upon Ramaswamy's character. The two are contrasted both in external settings and internal mental landscape. The Western world is perceived in tender, poetic and spiritual terms. The novelist finds Indian parallels in the Western land but he is more acutely conscious of the divergences. The characters reveal their inner selves through their actions. Madeleine, Georges, Lezo, Ramaswamy, little Mother and Savithri embody in their actions, the heterogeneous attitude to the basic questions of sex, marriage, life and death. The marriage between Madeleine and Ramaswamy withers away as the cultural ethos of the two cultures resists losing itself. The novelist is, obviously, in favour of India, of Hinduism but he does not exaggerate one at the cost of denigrating another. He believes in the integrity of each heritage for to be 'true to one's own background is to be true to all backgrounds'. The novel's success, however, does not lie merely in catching India at its best but in its deep meanings, sustained symbolism and universal stance. The gamut of multi-cultural experiences and religions of the world give Ramaswamy's discovery of the self and quest for self-fulfilment emotional sharpness and philosophical depth.

Indian English novel in the post independence period shows a clear shift in its direction. The camera eye of the author switches its focus from the larger public issues of the society to the private problems of the individual. The novelists renounce the larger world in favour of the inner man and reveal a preference for deeper probing into individual psyche and self-introspection and self-scrutiny. Kamala Markandaya's
The Nowhere Man (1972) deals with the psychological crisis of an Indian immigrant in London. B. Rajan's The Dark Dancer (1959) contains psychological study of a foreign educated Indian Krishnan, who is torn between his love for his British lover and his loyalty to his Indian wife. Shakuntala Srinagesh's novel The Little Black Box (1955) is also an attempt at writing psychological fiction, depicting the thought processes of an embittered woman who is persecuted by and alienated from her family. In the novels of Nayantra Sahgal - in A Time to be Happy (1958) and This Time of Morning (1968) political turmoil of the outside world and the private torment of individuals are woven together. These novels project solitary women trying to combat the agony of broken marriages and the inescapable loneliness of life, and searching for self-realization and sexual liberation. This shift of direction is more distinctly manifest in the novels of Anita Desai and particularly of Arun Joshi.

Freedom of the country could not fulfil the expectations of the people, poverty, social injustice and class inequity continued to plague the people even after the departure of the colonial rulers. The cleavage of the country on religio-political grounds, the consequent communal riots that left millions of people either dead or homeless, the painful exodus to the refugees - all these caused a depression in the freedom fighters and resulted in the growth of general distrust and pessimism. It appeared that peoples' hopes and beliefs had been misplaced. Their expectations of a just and ordered society and of economic, political and cultural changes after independence seemed to have been belied. The rapid
industrial and scientific development, the westernization of life in the urban areas of the country and the increase of consumerism added comfort to the superficial life of man. But the inner-self continued to be corroded by discontent, despair and lack of faith in the traditional values that had sustained an entire generation before independence. The deluge of materialism brought in its wake a growing sense of loneliness, purposelessness, alienation and drift. It was, as Ratan Rathore, the hero of Arun Joshi’s third novel, The Apprentice, says a generation “of frustrated men sailing about in a confused society, society without norms, without direction, without even, perhaps, a purpose”(7).

The result of this confusion was introspection, the turning inward, to find out what had gone wrong. The Indian English writer discovered himself as a self-conscious, individual caught in the socio-historical and psychological upheaval, he came to realise that his primary concern as a creative artist was to deal with persons and not groups, with individual sensibility rather than class cast consciousness. The moral confusion and the spiritual depression that the writers suffered from were further intensified by the literary impact of the West, particularly the influence of European authors like James Joyce, D.H.Lawrence, T.S.Eliot, Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre and Virginia Woolfe, etc. It resulted in a new literary phenomenon, the emergence of an anti-hero in Indian English novel. This unheroic hero as Anita Desai writes in Voices in the City is a man for whom loneliness was the natural condition, aloneness alone he considered as the treasure worth treasuring. He was endowed
with inexplicable perplexities, complexes, fears and anxieties. This man was characterized by an obvious lack of inner poise of the spirit as well as trust in himself and in the people around him. The novels of Anita Desai are built around this loneliness of individual life and are concerned with the exploration of the inner world of sensibility. The crises in her novels like *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), *Voices in the City* (1965), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) and *Clear Light of the Day* (1980) issue from the private torments of broken marriages, emotional fiasco and the failure of communication between individuals. They deal with emotional traumas of fragile introverts suffering from severe loneliness and alienation from family and society. Arun Joshi probes deeper into these crises of contemporary Indians. His novels express the anguish of sensitive individuals continually tortured by their spiritual uprootedness, clash and confusion of values generated by the sheerly materialistic, self-centred and corrupt society. Arun Joshi comments on his own creative reaction against the prevailing socio-moral and historical chaos.

"My novels are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and of myself .... If I did not write, I imagine would use some other medium to carry on my explorations"(8).

An artist dealing with reality in its vertical dimensions naturally turns out to be a little more pensive and introspective than the one who takes up reality in horizontal manner. Instead of taking into creative
account, the horizontal reality writer, like Arun Joshi, searches beneath the mere external manifestations of reality. He transcends the apparent and phenomenal world and enters into the mysterious depths of human existence. Many a time he takes recourse to imagination and fabrication of situations to capture the inner dimensions of the reality that governs life in its ruthless multiplicity and shapelessness. Joshi as an artist, therefore is not content with the recreation of experience in a coldly scientific manner. He feels a need to shape it, a need to rediscover reality which lies hidden in the actuality of life.

Fiction for Arun Joshi, is not a source of entertainment either. It is not a medium for propagating ideas or ideological debates that gained currency in post-modern times. He does not even advocate political or social ideas like Mulk Raj Anand. Nor does he create an imaginary world like R.K. Narayan. He does not escape from the world of human struggle. He has in fact not set a formula of writing fiction. In his novels man is invariably confronted with the self and the questions of his existence. He attempts a serious probe into the existential problems of mankind. His fiction in fact, betrays a deliberate attempt to take into creative account the socio-cultural dimensions of reality that has a direct bearing on the ultra-sensitive consciousness of his characters. His indictment of the materialistic drive of the spiritual sterile society appear to be deeply rooted, not in any religio-philosophical attitudes but in the simple fact of man's deviation from his own elemental self. Lost in the fun house of the sheerly materialistic pleasures, luxuries and carnal
gratification. He is bereaved of the moral integrity and passionate intensity, Joshi’s novels...

"delineate more of human problems than issues arising out of regional loyalties. His characters step out of themselves and question not only the atmosphere which impinges on their consciousness but their own self indulgent attitudes keeping them away from facing the truth. His condemnation of the industrial, the civilized and the materialistic world is not guided by a sentimental extolling of Indian Philosophy and values of life but by a genuine faith in the integrity of the primitive values of sensuousness, passion and action."(9)

Arun Joshi in this regard can arguably be placed with other two noted Indian novelist in English, Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai. These novelist too delves deep into the psyche of man, his mental agitation, tensions, dreams and desires. We do not find in their novels carefully built social setting since the focus is on the inner emotional ethos of man rather than upon the external, social or moral environment. A truly realistic Indian English novel has to be about poverty and survival, if realism means an artistic transcript of an existing social condition. Psychological novels too are realistic in a certain sense and goes beyond ethics or economics. The poetic or inner reality aimed at by psychological novels lies far beneath the surface realism and manifests itself as an affective capturing of the texture of subjective response to the
passing panorama of life. These novels portray the tenuousness of individual sensibility amidst the chaos of whimsical impulses, compulsions and emotional blocks.

Arun Joshi’s fictional stance therefore is characteristically different from that of Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai inspite of their concern with the inner realities of existence. Kamala Markandaya takes a recourse to an achieved peace as a natural corollary of her protagonists’ acceptance of their roots of their conformism howsoever reluctant may it be. Whereas Arun Joshi’s central characters reflect his conviction that every man has a significant role to play in shaping the course of his life, that is why Arun Joshi notwithstanding the oddities and deviations maintains a proper aesthetic distance in delineating the protagonists and their predicament. In this respect, he is different from Anita Desai who totally identifies herself with her protagonists “who are all females, restless tormented and alienated”(10). She is at her best while describing their abnormal conditions and haunting passions. Arun Joshi modifies his mode of analysis from one novel to another, from one level of perception to another. He is concerned more with the inner turmoil of soul rather than external setting. In an interview to Sujatha Mathai, Arun Joshi has specifically pointed out that his novels aim at exploring “that mysterious underworld which is the human soul”(11).

As a novelist, Arun Joshi is primarily concerned with man’s anguished efforts to find moorings for himself in the tumultuous sea of
life. He believes in charting the course of personal destiny rather than conflicting social, racial settings, etc.. What is presented in Arun Joshi’s novels is not the common place East-West encounter but a poignant picture of ‘angst’. The ‘angst’ in fact, constitutes one of the most important dimension of the modern Indian fiction in English and Arun Joshi occupies a prominent position amongst the few Indian novelists who persistently contextualise this concern. E.J. Kalinnikova rightly comments, “the essence of modernism in the Indian English novel manifests itself most distinctly in the existentialistic trend, to which, in the present time, the creative young Indian writers like Anita Desai and Arun Joshi can be referred” (12).

Themes of existentialism in Indian fictional context have not always received adequate positive critical response. Many of the Indian English novelists, trying to keep abreast of the world literary scene, have been looked down upon as pervert, dabbling in corrupt, western attitudes to life, as neurotic, ‘suspended between two worlds and rooted in neither’ (13).

This sort of critical attitude is not a balanced and healthy attitude. It certainly can not justifiably appreciate or evaluate modern literature with all its contemporary indigenous and global complexity. It also may blocks fresh thematic and technical avenues in the disciplines of literature.
The new generation of Indian English novelists in fact has been trying to branch out into "fresh wood and pastures new" in contradistinction to a Mulk Raj Anand's sociological purpose, a Raja Rao's philosophic tone or a R.K. Narayan's glorification of the average. Prof. D.V.K. Raghavacharyulu writes about modern Indian writers that they seem to be expressing a "Characteristically critical and adverse intimation of modern life, with particular emphasis on a sense of "disillusionment and estrangement" (14).

The unpleasant aspects of human experience are no longer bypassed by authors as themes unfit for literature but accepted and boldly tackled. This is quite in keeping with the existentialistic tradition of art as "an aspect of our self-accounting" (15). This 'self-accounting' is mirrored in all the novelistic preoccupations of today like "feelings of angst, alienation anguish and futility, of contemporary Indian life" (16). Arun Joshi, amongst all modern Indian novelists in English, is mainly concerned with these dimensions of individual and social existence.

Arun Joshi's fiction employs existential dimensions as sine qua non. It therefore, seems necessary to understand various definitions of existentialism and its relevance or applications to study prevailing realities or literary studies. Arun Joshi may deny it but his fiction betrays significant influence of some of the prominent existential writers like Camus, Kierkegaard and Sartre. Existentialism is not a well organized and systematic philosophy of life nor its beginning can be pinpointed.
Jean Wahl considers existentialism as "Philosophies of existence". It is also considered as a sharp reaction of all forms of rationalism. Kierkegaard reacted against Hegelian idealism. Mercel reacted against the idealist like F.H. Bradley and Brunschvieg. Another important point to be discussed is the dictum that the existentialists set forth - existence precedes essence. They asserted that man first of all exists and then only he thinks of it. All his 'contemplations and his actions are possible only because of his existence'. Existence therefore, is the first principle from which everything else flows. Sartre is worth quoting here.

"....... We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up....... and defines himself afterwards" (17)

Sartre further writes about existence precedes essence:

"....... It is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men." (18)

Modern existentialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries moved in two different directions from the two main sources, one led by
Soren Kierkegaard, Danish thinker, and the other by Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher. Kierkegaard develops Christian and theistic existentialism while Nietzsche develops anti-Christian and atheistic existentialism. The German Karl Jaspers and the French thinker Gabriel Marcel take the Kierkegaardian line of philosophical faith. On the other hand, the German Martin Heidegger and the French Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre develop it on the Nietzschean way of a theism and godlessness. Albert Camus develops a kind of existentialism of the absurd.

After the two world wars the word existentialism got currency all over the world. The chaos, disorder, annihilation and fears and frustration on the one hand and the crumbling traditional values and old world views including loss of faith and God and trust in man along with anguish and anxiety, estrangement and loneliness rendered the life absolutely absurd, meaningless, directionless and futile. It is what Albert Camus called as Sisyphean Act. Existentialism therefore rapidly flourished and entered the realms of literature also. The entire West echoed the reverberations of existential attitudes like, guilt, nausea, restlessness, despair, lack of intimacy and estrangement and over arching absurdity. Existentialism in some way or the other found manifestations in writings of Franz Kafka, Sartre, Camus, Marcel, Ionesco, James Joyce, William Golding, Faulkner, T.S. Eliot, Proust, Hemingway and others.
Existentialism deals with values, attitudes and relationships, which determine man's role in society and the freedom or bondage that he is subjected to. If he is under undue pressure he will have to adopt methods for survival to salvage himself from an aggressive society. This will be extension of the personality, the development of a new dimension of the individual, which will override these critical situations. The hollowness that man feels within the depths of his soul is existentialistic by nature, and this has to be countered to bring the individual to the mainstream of life, to rescue him from perennial isolation.

Arun Joshi is influenced by some of the most significant existential writers like Albert Camus, Soren Kierkegaard and Jean Paul Sartre. Existentialism is an attitude towards life based upon a kind of philosophical analysis of the modern human predicament.

Albert Camus was a modern French Existentialist who dealt with man's position in society and his emotional and spiritual problems. To him, as to most modern existentialists, life was an absurdity to which man had to respond with a powerful spirit and infinite zeal. Therefore in order to survive the negations, one must adopt the role of a rebel and combat life courageously.

When questions regarding the meaning of existence loom up, we are up against a void, because life is not only an endless struggle but also an enigma. What is the solution to these persistent illogicities and
absurdities of life? Eliminating ourselves from this world would be demeaning to our moral beings, reducing us to cowardly and worse still, mindless individuals. An absurd situation should be injected with rationality by assessing the root cause of the predicament, and by confronting it boldly with the requisite solution in view. It is only by adopting this attitude that an individual can overcome the seemingly impossible hurdles. Camus has given the title The Rebel to one of his novels, in keeping with his existentialistic philosophical conceptions, that man should revolt in order to achieve his goals. According to him the dormant conscience should be awakened with a fiery zeal and be inculcated with an urge to cultivate self-respect and establish one's individuality. It is only with an indefatigable enthusiasm and courage that we can put down the subversive features of existence which make life a misery and subsequently all absurdities will gradually be sublimated. Thus Camus advocated a consistent revolutionary stance to alleviate the existing contemptible human conditions. Concomitantly man ought to attribute prime importance to his ego on humanistic principles.

Every individual has been born with his own rights and not to be a slave to another individual or even to the circumstances of life. He is morally bound to assert his will and not be crushed like helpless under dogs, mortally scared as freedom is his birthright. He portrayed to 'do or die' attitude, striving to the last breath to prove one's point in The Myth of Sisyphus. Man's lifelong struggle and inherent burdens had been
splendidly symbolised by the perilous mountain that Sisyphus traverses with his inhuman load of a monstrous rock, only for it to ultimately roll down. The irony of man’s fate has been depicted in his novel, for even if a man succeeds in overpowering his problems, fate and circumstances will circumvent his success and pull him down to dust. But Camus exhorts his protagonist to have faith, exert his will and in this process realization would dawn on him, which would transform and transcend him to levels beyond his present condition. Despite burdens and absurdity of the situations, man should endeavour to master his fate. Meursault, the protagonist of *Outsider* is a nondescript person, flowing nonchalantly in the stream of life. Incidentally, he murders a man and for his insensitive behaviour is castigated by the society. Since he finds life meaningless, he is led to welcome death, believing that men are born to die. This nihilistic philosophy is contrary to the positive and assertive theories of Camus, wherein man’s free will should be asserted even if it calls for a revolution. He should bear his burden all alone, for it cannot be shared or countered by another person. Life, thus has its own demands that call for positive attitudes and pragmatics despite restrains and restrictions oddities and absurdities. Man therefore, is supposed to pass through a painful ordeal of rebuilding or rediscovering of the self crushed under the Sysephian burden of meaninglessness, directionless, faithlessness and godlessness. Sartre rightly suggests that:
"What man needs is to find himself again and realize that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God" (19).

Rene Descartes, a French Philosopher who had based his philosophical theories around a simple belief that his existence was central to his thoughts 'I think therefore I am' Cartesianism pertains to the philosophy of Descartes and this may be the origin of the Hegelian conception, that thoughts are the ultimate truth of life. Idealistic philosophies had to be ultimately forsaken, when existentialistic theories depicting the hard truths and realistic, were found to lend more meaning to man's existence. Therefore within the various conceptions, rational thinking was slotted in the prime position.

Karl Theodor Jaspers, a German philosopher and psychologist who had advocated existentialism in his book *Philosophie* (1932). Also took up a stance that affixed paramount importance to rationality. The scientific and industrial development did in fact not appeal to Jaspers as these aspects fogged the mind, obstructing clear and positive thought processes. Thus rationality and existence are complementary to one another. The juxtaposition and simultaneity of rationality and existence were emphatically underscored by Kierkegaard:
"Each exists only through the other. They mutually develop one another and find through one another clarity and reality." (20).

Freedom to lead one's own life is the fundamental aspect of Jasper's existentialistic ideas. Once an individual is born, he has consistently to construct his being moment by moment and mould it by the values and principles which he deems fit. This is the crucial aspect since he has to establish his authenticity, which is a self-determining factor.

Soren Kierkegaard opposed Hegel's idea that truth is absolute and attacked the reliance on ritual and dogma in Christianity. His books include Either Or and States on Life's Way. 'Kierkegaardian' is a term referring to his personal philosophy:

"When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focussed upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related." (21)

Truth, religion and man's solemn responsibility for the amelioration of society are the three basic concepts of his philosophy. If every individual turned to his inner being and decided to transform
himself positively, then automatically he would be contributing towards social regeneration, as every individual is a constituent of the social infrastructure. Life is a perennial movement evolving temporal and spatial changes in its wake. Religion and truth lends a semblance of stability in our universe as our lives are fraught with emotional insufficiencies, leading to dissatisfaction and even psychological instability. The only palpable solution that Kierkegaard suggests is to extricate oneself from this frustrating and hopeless dilemma and get immersed in religion. He was nurtured in a stern religious atmosphere and his thoughts and ideals were imbued in Christian doctrines. It advocates as most religious scriptures do the universal love, i.e., love and acceptance of all mankind as one's own. This love is very often termed as agape. Kierkegaard decried the traditionalistic Christian rituals and instead, he advocated an introspective attitude, which would enable us to overcome life's obstacles. Romanticists and existentialists share a common belief wherein they express only the experiences that their hearts affirm intensely.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche rejected the 'slave morality' and values of Christianity in works like Thus Spake Zarathustra. His philosophical theory is based upon assertion of the self, the 'will to power' and the doctrine of the 'superman'. Nietzscheanism is the philosophy based upon a distinction between thought and emotion, emphasizing the value of intense emotion in art and life. He is one of the founders of modern existentialism, and unlike Kierkegaard, he is an
atheist, firmly believing that God has been vanquished by humanity. Thus mankind ought to transcend theism and its ensuing dogmas, adopting a transformed set of theories while focusing on life and its recurrent problems. In this manner all absurdities will be confidently overcome, making life more meaningful and authentic.

Jean-Paul Sartre is yet another philosopher writer. He was the founder and leading exponent of school of existentialism. He wrote a trilogy Roads to Freedom and Philosophical treatises like Being and Nothingness. Philosophically, essence denotes the inherent and unchanging nature of a thing or a class of things, as distinguishing from its attributes or its existence. Existentialists stress on life itself rather than on the essence and thereby, automatically reject idealism and anything ephemeral. Sartre's philosophy is that man should learn to withstand the forces of nature, develop his individuality, counteract negations and mould himself accordingly, for his life is like a ball of clay in his hands and he is the potter. Sartre consistently hammers at a single theory, which he believes to constitute the whole genre of existentialism. Every human being has been endowed with an independent mind and a free will. Therefore, it is an offence to mankind if any man leads a life of subjugation, as his prime duty is to nurture his personality and ensure its optimum growth. Existentialism advocates socializing with other individuals resulting in self-improvement while simultaneously contributing to the common good of humanity. On no account should he
forsake his freedom or even opt for solitude as both the attitudes are unhealthy and should be discouraged.

"Man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty and from the moment he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does" (22).

Each individual is born with his own characteristics and hereditary traits which constitute his personality. Therefore from the moment of creation man is destined to be a loner; even amidst his innate loneliness, he should not seclude himself from society, but perpetually strive to transcend his personal dilemma. Like his shadow, his frustration trails along with him as an irredeemable and all-enveloping sorrow due to his inability to transmute it into something joyful. Sartre also stresses on man’s moral responsibility, without which he believes creation itself would apparently lose its ultimate meanings. Therefore, life in general should be flowing smoothly, ensuring its continuous cyclical rotation. It is only by an assertion of the individual will and effort that mankind will prosper. This responsibility remains unexpressed in all official chapters, but is an inherent moral responsibility, the burden of which lies unobtrusively in the soul of every man. This point is stressed to a greater degree by Sartre because of his atheism. He insists that there is no supernatural element to guarantee a smooth and trouble-free life of man. Since he has been gifted with a will of his own and a mind to think for
himself, he should regulate his life and try as best as he can to connote a perfect set of values in his personality. The adaptations ought to be concomitant to his environment and position in society, as he is responsible for co-relation and also for turning life and destiny into a coordinated whole. In a single theoretical conception, Sartre involves the subjectivity and objectivity of life as the inner and outer lives ought to be symbiotic by nature. Despite one’s efforts, Sartre is convinced that man’s life is meaningless and an aura of pessimism encircles his conception of life, therefore any attempt at cognition by certain enthusiastic individuals will eventually be in vain.

Most existentialist thinkers conform to the theory that life as a whole is futile and one’s comprehension of life can never be absolutely soothing. Thus, alienation is cogent to existence as an inherent solipsism enshrouts the subconscious even while the mind is consciously attempting to reach out to other living beings to make life meaningful.

When Arun Joshi was asked about the influence of existentialists, he replied

“I did read Camus and Sartre. I liked The Plague and read The Outsider. I might have been influenced by them. Sartre I did not understand clearly or like. As far existential philosophers like Kierkegaard I have never understood anything except odd statements”.
This makes it clear that Arun Joshi does not attempt any self-conscious superimposition of existentialism on his characters. He does not subscribe consciously to existential theory of life as propounded by various existential writers, chiefly Albert Camus, Kierkegaard and Jean Paul Sartre. But we do find reverberations of existential thoughts in his fiction. He is not an existentialist like Sartre, Camus Kafka and John Macquarie, but his passionate desire to go deep into the dilemmas of existence, suffering, alienation and dispossession bring him closer to them.

Existentialism is used in some of the Indian novels in English like in Across the Black Water of Mulk Raj Anand and Anita Desai’s Fire on the Mountain.

Across the Black Water shows a close resemblance to existential art. It throws light on existential concepts such as meaninglessness and subjectivity through the powerful characterization of its several characters including its hero Lalu Singh. The novel tells us about the limitation of the human life and the mystery of existence about infinitude and guilt, death and hope, freedom and meaning, Lalu Singh the hero of the novel, observes that his condition is shaped by fear and loneliness and there is endless suffering in his existence. He is confronted with the problems of understanding things in human terms and the more he tries the more he fails. His experiences as a soldier in the battlefield of France
in World War I, when Indian troops land in Marcilles make him a stranger in the face of the absurdities of war and consequent turmoil’s, agonies, indifference, tiredness and depression. The tremor of dead spread like a panic in his brain and the confusion of silence and horrors of war overpower him completely. While the oppressions of war render him completely unable to relate outside his own self, his inner urges, struggles, hopes, aspirations as an Indian soldier in France indicate separation from the self. Lalu Singh loves life irrepressibly despite all odds and his keen desire to live makes this novel existentialist in the true sense of the term.

Anita Desai’s novel **Fire on the Mountain** is an existential novel. Anita Desai adroitly explores the emotional life of her characters, especially female characters. She chooses only those characters who are emotionally famished and who fail to come to terms with reality. They choose to live in the cell of the self, building up a world of fantasy. Their preoccupation with the self becomes an obsession with them. All human relations are which in fact supposed to be authentic and the best means of nourishing emotions, prove to be meaningless for these emotionally famished characters - Nanda Kaul, Raka and Ila Das. Each one of them is a victim of emotional agony and craves for privacy, isolation and fantasy to escape from unpleasant reality of life. The novel is pervaded by an overpowering sense of loneliness and isolation in the deserted life of the protagonist, Nanda Kaul.
Alienation and dispossession it should be noted emerges as natural consequences of the existential predicament both in intrinsic and extrinsic terms in order to approach and analyze Joshi’s treatment of alienation and consequential dispossession it seems worthwhile to understand various nuances of the word alienation.

A dictionary of literary terms defined as: "Alienation is the state of being alienated or estranged from something or somebody; it is a condition of the mind". Encyclopaedia Britannica defines alienation as "the state of feeling estranged or separated from ones milieu, work, products of work or self".

The English word ‘Alienation’ is derived from the Latin word ‘Alienato’. Alienato is a noun which receives meaning from the verb ‘alienare’ which means to make a thing for others, to snatch, to avoid, to remove, etc. In French language Alienate and alienation, are used in the same sense as the English words ‘Alienate and Alienation. Anomie and Anomia are used as synonyms of Alienation. The use of these words is considered modern. These words are Greek in origin The meaning of ‘Anomia’ is self-alienation and ‘Anomie’ is alienation from society. ‘Anomia’ is an indicator of Personal disintegration of man from the society. According to G.H.Nettler,

“…… anomia is personal disorganitition, alienation is a psychological state of an individual and ….. alienated in the
person who has been estranged from, made unfriendly
toward his society and the culture it carries” (23).

Generally, Anomie, Anomia or Alienation are interchangeable. In English there are other words other than Alienation. They are Estrangement Isolation and Separation.

Different interpreters of alienation have given different definitions. According to Arnold Kaufman,

“"To claim that a person is alienated is to claim that his
relation to something else has certain features which result
in avoidable discontent or loss of satisfaction” (24).

Feur Lewes says

"........ the word alienation is used to convey the emotional
tone which accompanies any behaviour in which the
person is compelled to act self destructively” (25).

According to the views of Keniston,

"Most usages of alienation share the assumption that some
relationship or connection that once existed that is
‘natural’, desirable or good, has been lost” (26).
In the definition of these thinkers there is an indication of an existing tension and disintegrating human relationship. Martin Buber termed alienation as “the proliferation of the It-World” (27). Sidney Finkelstein defines alienation as

“a psychological phenomenon, an internal conflict, a hostility felt towards something seemingly outside oneself which is linked to oneself, a barrier erected which is actually no defence but an impoverishment of oneself (28).

According to Hegel alienation is of two kinds. The first type of alienation arises due to man’s individuality or incompatibility in his personality and social substance. The second type of alienation is of the same level as the alienation expounded by Rousseau etc., in the principle of ‘Social contract’ in which the theme of surrender or transfer of any right is vested. According to Hegel, the situation arises when a change occurs in man’s concept of ‘self’. The second type of alienation is permanent and from this we can control the first type.

Karl Marx however puts forth a very comprehensive and complex idea of alienation that comprises various extrinsic dimensions of human existence in socio-economic context. His concept of alienation is often classified in the following manners:

1. Political Alienation
2. Economic Alienation
Marx says about political alienation:

"The state does not care about Individual’s existence, in a society without communion between people and that individual in his relation to such a state does not experience a feeling of solidarity, he is only able to relate himself to it as an isolated monad, an individual. Man’s inner life is divided in world split up in such a way”(29).

Marx presumes democracy in which man’s political alienation can be controlled not in a state in absolute power as Hegel thinks. According to Marx to get rid of political alienation, first of all we must get rid of the basic alienation, which is economic alienation. He finds the concepts related to state faulty for political alienation.

The main procedure of every society is to produce for the fulfilment of needs and to create social institutions. Any type of state of being out of this procedure will be termed as the state of being alienated. Due to the state of being alienated the existence of man becomes merely the existence of material human being. In the words of Marx,

"Just as alienated labour transforms free and self directed activity into a mean, so it transforms the species - life of a man into a mean of physical existence”(30).
Marx views on property are that, it creates deep sense of alienation in society. He says:

"Only in the final stage of the development of private property is its secret revealed, namely, that is on the one hand the product of alienated labour, and on the other hand the means of which labour is alienated, the realization of this alienation"(31).

According to Erich Fromm, alienation is the result of capitalist society which disturbs the feelings of man. The growth of the personality of man and factors responsible for alienation are subject to the influence of social-conditions on human existence. In the view of Fromm, among all types of alienation, self-alienation is the most important. Self-alienation is the absence of self-awareness or a complete loss of it. He considers self-alienation pertaining to feelings. He writes in his book Sane Society that:

"the meaning of alienation is that process of feeling in which anyone feels alienation from self"(32).

An Alienated man necessarily becomes alienated from society, because the identity of self-alienation and the situation of the lack of or loss of self-awareness necessarily alienate him from society.
After Erich Fromm many psychoanalysts have also discussed the process of 'self-alienation'. Karen Horney in her book 'New Ways in Psychoanalysis' expresses her views about 'self-alienation'. According to Horney, that man is self-alienated whose:

"Spontaneous individual self (has been) stunted, warped or choked, he is said to be in a condition of alienation from himself (or) alienated from self" (33).

In another book Our Inner Conflicts, Horney again discusses the concept of self alienation with a new approach. In Horney's views the condition of self-alienation is such as the, "person simply becomes oblivious to what he really feels, likes, rejects, believes in short to what he really is" (34).

Man's reality is his 'Real self' and the meaning of self-alienation is the alienation from this 'Real-self'. Horney thinks that the situation of self-alienation arises when a man makes an, 'Ideal-image' of himself in his mind that is other than his 'Real-self'. There exists a "gap between his idealized image and his real-self" (35). Even the "pride in one's respectability alienates a man from his unsavoury past" (36).

Sociologists see loneliness as a kind of alienation, which is found in the absence of intimacy with others. When a man says that he often feels lonely, it is clear that he is dissociated and disconnected from others or
his relations with others are not such as he can overcome his loneliness by meeting them. McClosky points that, “the feeling of loneliness and yearning for supportive primary relationships”(37) are the two sides of a coin. According to him, the meaning of the feeling of loneliness is the loss of significant relation with others. It is the lack or loss of this relation with others that generates a source of alienation. The awareness of this loneliness is sociological in nature; it is called social-isolation. In social reference, the meaning of Social-alienation is the decay of creative and meaningful relations between man and man and man and his environment, between man or the prevailing reality. Man finds himself bereaved of the authentic footholds that grant meaning and directions to life. Alienation thus occurs from unauthentic existence.

Paul Tillich has used the word ‘Estrangement’ for alienation. Tillich has pointed out the difference between real condition of man’s existence and his basic - nature. He has termed this difference as alienation. According to him,

“existence is estranged from essence .... Man’s estrangement from his essential being is the universal character of existence”(38).

Tillich asserts that estrangement thwarts the process of self-realisation, it in fact operates as a hostile force highly pernicious to the elemental self. He puts out:
"Each expression of the estranged state contradicts man’s essential being, his potency for goodness" (39).

Sartre has a different approach to alienation from that of Heidegger and Tillich. His concept of alienation and its two meanings are interpreted in his two different books. These two books are *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and *Being and Nothingness*. The form of alienation analysed in the first book is the indication of Marxist viewpoint and the alienation-concept in the second book is developed on the basis of Husserl’s views. This second type of concept, discussed in *Being and Nothingness* is Sartre’s personal and existentialistic alienation-concept. Sartre was the student of Husserl before he started writing. He was naturally influenced by Husserl.

Sartre’s concept of alienation as propounded in his book *Being and Nothingness* is totally different from Marx’s approach. Sartre’s approach is existentialistic alienation. Sartre says,

"In the shock that seizes me when apprehend the other’s look .... I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities, which are not associated with the objects of the world far from me in the midst of world" (40).
He feels that he is not an object like other objects of the world. Any other man therefore, is supposed to take cognizance of his existence as a virtue in itself. In other man’s view Sartre is an object. While the reality is,

“I am still my possibilities .... But at the same time, the look alienates them for me” (41).

Sartre further says,

“My presence, in so far as it is a present has an outside and it is only this objective outside that he sees” (42).

Sartre thinks that he should detach himself from the sight of the others. But the situation is different,

“Point as I choose myself as a tearing away from the other I assume and recognize as mine this alienated me” (43).

Sartre says that a form of his body is that which he feels in the form of body known by others.

Sartre has analysed alienation in this reference. When this sense occurs on his mind that this body is an object of others, he feels alienated. According to Sartre alienation occurs in the feeling of man. Sartre is not in favour of ridding alienation, but he suggests to accept alienation in the form of a fact, Sartre says that the rise of otherness in the personality of a man is the main reason of alienation.
Sartre in his book *Critique of Dialectic Reason* has broadened Marx's concept of alienation. Marx says that when the production and labour of man is controlled by other man, alienation takes place. Marx saw alienation in the context of labour class only but Sartre has tried to feel the alienation in the life and world of writers as well.

Taviss speaks of two different kinds of alienation, that is 'social alienation' and 'self-alienation'. By 'social alienation' she means

"the sense of estrangement brought out by the sudden discovery that the social system is either oppressive or incomplete with their desires and ideas. 'Self-alienation', however, means the loss of contact of the individual selves with any inclinations or desires that are not in agreement with the prevailing social patterns, as a result of which the individuals are forced to manipulate in accordance with the social demands or feel incapable of controlling their actions"(44).

Alienation from oneself is the more basic form of rootlessness, which forms the subject of many psychological, sociological and philosophical studies. Alienation is a major theme of the human condition in the contemporary epoch. It is only natural that a pervasive phenomenon like alienation should leave such an indelible impact upon the contemporary literature.
The theme of alienation and consequential dispossession has been variously dealt with in modern literature. The alienated protagonist is a recurrent figure in much of the twentieth century American and European fiction. The artist as an alienated soul has been portrayed in James Joyce’s Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, the Negro or Jew as an outsider in Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man and Saul Bellow’s Herzog, and the other novels and the sensitive adolescent as an outsider in Salinger’s Catcher the Rye. Albert Camus’ Meursault and Kafka’s K are serious attempts to sketch the confusion, frustration, alienation, disintegration and estrangement of modern man. Alienation in its various forms, has been dealt with in the existentialistic literature. Owing to historical and socio-cultural reasons, the Indo-English literature also, could not remain unaffected by it. Meenakshi Mukherjee points out, “alienation or rootlessness is a very common theme in it” (45). Alienation serves as a basic theme and recurrent motif in many Indo-English novels.

The theme of alienation in certain works of the pre-Independence era is found. D.F. Karaka, for example tried his hand at the theme of rootlessness in his novel. There Lay the City (1942). The narrator in it typifies an alienated self. The same theme, was taken up by Zeenut Futehally in her Zohra (1951). Zohra’s lover, who happens to be no other than her husband’s younger brother Hamid, is presented as a lonely figure, melancholy, and forever an outsider.
R.K. Narayan’s novels are the foremost in emphasizing the loneliness of man. The gap between the generations is suggested in his **Swami and Friends**. Swaminathan’s father in it stands - at distance both from his son’s idealized world view and his mother’s myth. Mr. Sampath, the central character simply walks away from his vanishing creation.

Narayan’s treatment of alienation in **The Sweet Vendor** is more systematic. Owner sweet business, Jagan has a son, Mali. Jagan’s wife died of a brain tumour when Mali was still a child. Jagan tried to do every thing possible to give him proper education. But Mali arranges to go to America. He returns three years later with an American (half-Korean) wife and a scheme to market a ‘novel-writing machine’. Jagan is ostracized by his community. He leaves Malgudi twice alienated for good. His loneliness and despair become all the more keen because of his memories of his wife’s death and Mali’s resentful treatment. Jagan’s unhappy experiences are typical of Narayan’s alienated characters. “All his novels in varying degrees, convey this sense of unhappy frustration (46).

The earlier Indo-English novelists were thus aware of the dilemma resulting from alienation. Their works bear witness to a certain involvement with the changing national scene and a genuine concern for the destiny of the country. Even when they felt cut off, their sense of isolation was never so acute as that of the later novelists. The reason for
the earlier Indo-English novelists’ feeling rather lonely were chiefly socio-political. While delineating alienated persons, their main aim seems to have been to demonstrate the potential dangers of two cultures meeting in one and the same person and resulting in his unfortunate isolation.

We find theme of alienation in Manohar Malgonkar’s **Combat of Shadows**. The novel is a powerful study of a Eurasian young woman who sought to climb up and become a member of the white English community. She lingers, however, between the two worlds - Indian and Western - without belonging to the either, and finds herself a stranger to both. Ruby’s English lover, Henry Winton, also suffers from loneliness. Winton’s marriage with an English lady does not improve the situation for long. Winton and Ruby represent two different aspects of alienation. In his case its effect is not so devastating; but in Ruby’s, it is a question of life and death.

The theme of alienation and dispossession of different classes of Indian society are Kamala Markandaya’s continuing themes. From the pattern that emerges from her novels we can deduce her message, i.e., as long as one has roots, one survives; and if one’s roots are injured or lost, one dies spiritually. Nathan’s roots, in the **Nectar in a Sieve**, are scarred when he is evicted from his land, and he dies, but Rukmani’s roots are in her children and therefore she lives. Helen of **The Cofer Dams** and Saroja of the **Two Virgins** also feel alienated and dispossessed.
Markandaya's another novel significantly called The Nowhere Man deals in greater details with the plight of a lonely man in an alien land. It charters the inner crisis - the crisis of alienation and dispossession - of Srinivas, who is presented as 'a figure of loneliness', a 'disoriented' person and an intruder, who, even after fifty years of stay in England, feels like a 'nowhere man, looking for a nowhere country' (P.32).

Balachandra Rajan is another Indo-Englisher novelist who deals with theme of alienation and dispossession. Krishnan the protagonist in The Dark Dancer is alienated from his social surroundings. He went to Cambridge and when he was returning to India after two years, he thought "he was coming back to an indifferent sky, an anonymous teeming of houses"; There was nothing in the cracked, arid earth to suggest that he belonged to it. Rajan's another novel, Too long in the West, tells the story of a young lady named Nalini, who stayed at Columbia University for three years. Ever since her childhood she had found her father's village, Madulur, oppressive with its loneliness. Her predicament gets worsened by her stay and education in America. Her mother knows it that "She'll never fit in', in India, because 'she's been too long in the west (P.24) one of Nalini's suitors also tells her: "You won't fit in. You've joined the lost generation, out of place everywhere and acceptable nowhere. You'll always be an exile and an alien, a self-created foreigner, a refugee from yourself. You can't belong. You'll live in two worlds and fall between two stools" (P.55).
The themes of alienation and dispossession have been dealt with more persistently and unflinchingly by Nayantra Sahgal and Anita Desai also. The alienated person is a stock figure in Nayantra Sahgal’s novels. She deals with problems caused by a changing order. Her first novel, A Time to be Happy, projects the predicament of Sanad Shivpal, the son of a rich man, a typical product of a public school, an executive in a mercantile firm. Most of his problems of a West-Educated boy returning to India and encountering in himself the conflict between the two set of values.

Sahgal’s another novel called This Time of Morning, Rashmi, the daughter of Kailash Vrind, flutter with the ‘freedom of sex’. She seeks to divorce her husband, an IFS Officer. Having left him, she comes back to her parents, alienated and utterly distraught. Her affair with Niel Berensen does not minimize her isolation in any way. She herself is not aware of her ambivalence. Rashmi’s problems, despite all her pronouncements, remain as they were. Her entire existence appears to be paradoxical. She craves for modernity and individual freedom, but is considered to be a ‘hidebound, conventional, label-conscious, caste-ridden enigma’ (P.144). It is this superficial approach to life that renders persons like Rashmi Self-alienated, doomed to bear a ‘stab of emptiness, almost of fear’ (P.216).
Anita Desai is another novelist who has dealt theme of alienation in a systematic way. “No other Writer”, it is said “is so much concerned with the life of young men and women in Indian cities as Anita Desai (49). In her novel Cry, the Peacock, we have an exploration of the alienated human psyche in Maya’s self-examination. Hers is the story of a young, sensitive girl obsessed by a childhood prophecy of disaster, whose extreme sensitivity is rendered in terms of immeasurable human loneliness. The novel’s beginning itself brings to the fore the theme of husband-wife alienation by unfolding the relationship of Maya and Gautam. Maya, an inverted favourite daughter of a wealthy artistic father, is married to an older man, detached, sober, industrious lawyer. They are complete opposite. Their married life is punctuated all along by ‘matrimonial silences’(P.12). What pains her most is her ‘loneliness in this house’. (P.9) A restlessness always boils within her and the strainedless holds them apart. She feels defenceless and utterly alone’ in the company of the ‘bleak, comfortless figure’ passing as her husband (PP. 153, 146). The alienation between them is rooted essentially in his philosophical detachment, which Maya brushes aside. Her rootless keeps on increasing every day.

Anita Desai’s another novel Bye Bye Blackbird captures the confusions and conflicts of another alienated person even more exhaustively. Replying to a questionnaire, she herself said that “of all my novels it is most rooted in experience”(50). The tension between the locale and the immigrant bird in the novel involves issues of isolation and
possible accommodation that one has to face in an alien world. Dev, the chief character of the novel, has some intellectual pretensions and has come to study at the London - School of Economics. He is however, confronted with an initial problem of adjustment in a foreign land. It is a world where people 'live silently and invisibly', the world which makes him nostalgic about India - the India of familiar faces, sounds and smells.

Anita Desai's another novel *Voices in the City* charters the spiritual odyssey of a world-weary character, a lean and hungry - looking journalist named Nirode, in Calcutta. The novel is a tragic exploration of personal suffering, which is the consequence of the feverish sensitivity of this young intellectual who has lost his way in contemporary India. It explores the inner climate of youthful despair and is permeated by the existential angst. His character is a strange mixture of pride and agony. As the novel tells us, "The habit of withdrawal had become too strong" in Nirode, and he "grew more and more weary of contact". (p.62)

The treatment of alienation and dispossession is a major thematic preoccupation with Indo-English novelists. Alienation or dispossession occupies a particularly important place in the works of the later novelists. Their protagonists are like Existentialist heroes, nomads 'alienated from nature and society'"(51).

They are misfit in their society largely because of their some defects in themselves or some evil in society. The Indo-English novelist is not so
much interested in making philosophical, objective statements as in presenting the plight of an alienated and dispossessed individual and expressing compassion for him and disapproval for society. It is true that a certain amount of alienation or dispossession has affected, directly or indirectly the whole generation of Indian writers of the present century. But the alienation of Indo-English novelist is ‘an extreme case of the general predicament of the Indian writer and he is the most vulnerable of all’ (52). In most Indo-English novels, it is to the novelists’ own outlook and approach to life that gets reflected in their themes and characters.

“The extent of temperamental and experiential identification between the characters and their creators is really striking” (53).

Dispossession literally means lose of ownership. Dispossession when taken in literary and broader sense means loss of identity. Alienation is the result of loss of identity. The dispossessed personality’s search for identity is a common place theme in modern fiction. Man fails to perceive today the very purpose behind life and the relevance of his existence in a hostile world. Edmund Fuller remarks that in our age,

“man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin, but from inner problem ....... a conviction of isolation, randomness, meaninglessness in his way of existence” (54).
In one of the great, seminal heart-searching of our time, Camus diagnoses the human predicament as follows:

“A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. He is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity” (55).

In an essay on Kafka Ionesco defines the true nature of this ‘absurdity’ in precise terms. According to him,

“Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose ...... cut off from his religious metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd and useless” (56).

In spite of unprecedented scientific and technological advancements, which have added immensely to his physical pleasures and comforts, the contemporary man is doomed to find himself in a tragic mess. The prevailing economic conditions culminating in the abject poverty of the masses and the economic squeeze of the middle class. All these have made increasing and often disturbing demands on
the individual and contribute in their own ways to his rootlessness and dispossession. The present age has shrunk in spirit languishing in confusion, frustration, disintegration, disillusionment, meaninglessness and dispossession.

When we discuss the themes of alienation and dispossession in Arun Joshi’s fiction, we are mainly concerned first, with man’s alienation from society which is the most prevalent kind of alienation, and second, his alienation from his own self. A non-conformist is alienated from society by rebelling against it but a conformist is alienated from his own self by not following the voice of his conscience. It is this division of self which does not let a man live in peace.

Most of Arun Joshi’s protagonists are alienated and dispossessed persons. In The Foreigner, Sindi Oberoi is alienated from society and himself. In The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, Billy Biswas is alienated from ostentations, phoney society of today. The Apprentice, dramatises Ratan Ratnor’s alienation from his soul caused by a strong guilt consciousness. The Last Labyrinth, evokes alienation from the self, the victim Protagonist being Som Bhaskar, an intellectual debaucher and industrialist. The City and the River, Arun Joshi’s last novel, is both a continuation of and departure from his earlier novels. In his earlier novels Arun Joshi was mainly preoccupied with the predicaments of his alienated and dispossessed protagonists in an apparently indifferent and hostile world. This predilection of Arun Joshi still persists in The City and the River, but now his canvas has widened and the crises of an individual has been replaced by the socio-political crisis of the “City” and by implication of the whole humanity.

The short stories present a variety of characters, almost a cross-section of post Independence Indian Society - ranging from a college principal to an immigrant Indian physicist: from a soldier to a young prostitute; from unemployed middle class youth and eve-teasers to a sex-obsessed rustic servant; and from an old man searching for his lost youth to a middle-aged travelling salesman attached to his crippled daughter. Much of the strength of Arun Joshi’s short stories, lies in his deep insight into human reality and character.
The present study is undertaken to trace the different facets of alienation and dispossession in the fiction of Arun Joshi. The themes of alienation and dispossession are the dominant themes in his fiction. His novels veer around the central themes of alienation and dispossession as they affect the individual’s life and shape the human destinies. Most of the protagonists of Arun Joshi find themselves in the remarkable cul-de-sac from which there are no escape routes for them. Afflicted by a sense of traumatic dispossession and the corrosive influence of modernity, the contingencies of culture and social order, the heroes find themselves in a world of blighted hopes. It is, in one sense, a world of thwarted purposes, ruined hopes and more often than not, Arun Joshi’s heroes carry with them a sense of bleakness that does not allow them to actively participate in the diurnal business of life.

His fiction on the whole betrays a persistent vertical movement probing deep beneath the deceptive individual and social appearances, socio-psychological structuration, inherent dichotomies and a perennial quest for sustaining foothold. His western exposure and his intellectual and creative concern with and an exploration of the dark continent of human psyche and soul and its inextricable link with the external socio-cultural, economic and political ambience and also his recourse to realism, fantasy and fable, parable and allegory distinctly characterized by ironical creative consciousness distinguishes him from his
predecessors and contemporaries and establishes him as a class by himself. An interpretative analytical and correlative research methodology taken up in the following chapters would reveal his creative preoccupations and artistic excellence.
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