ABSTRACT

The thesis makes a critical study of the theme of alienation in the novels of Arun Joshi, a prominent Indo-English Minor novelist, who hails from Benaras. A detailed analysis of the different aspects of this theme is presented in five chapters.

Chapter I forms a brief outline of the history of the Indo-English novelists, who deal with the inner man and his psychic problem. A study is made of the minor Indo-English novelists, who have dealt with the theme of alienation, to mark the place of Joshi as a prominent writer among the minor novelists. After presenting a brief account of the biographical details of Joshi, a concise critical appreciation of his novels is attempted to show that Joshi's novels deal with the theme of alienation. The different critical approaches made by the critics on the theme handled by Joshi is analysed to prove that Joshi is interested particularly in the theme of alienation. The formative influences on Joshi are traced to the French Existential novelists. After defining the concept of alienation, the researcher has briefly analysed the different aspects of alienation. Socio-Cultural alienation, Religious and Self-alienation, and Economic and Political alienation, as delineated by Joshi in his novels.

Chapter II makes a critical study of Joshi's treatment of the theme Socio-Cultural alienation. Joshi's protagonists feel estranged in the foreign country. Caught between Western and Indian culture, they display a drift towards Western culture. They try to break the norms of society and are critical of Western and Indian culture. They hate to be bound by marriage and show an inclination for free love and sex. They indulge in extra marital affairs, which breakup arranged marriages. They wish to assert their individuality and rebel against their overbearing fathers. They talk less, avoid friends, hate modern
women, loath western music, and abstain from social parties. They also reveal their
disgust for the past and for the cities.

Chapter III is an analytical study of religious and self-alienation of Joshi's
protagonists. In the modern civilized world religious ceremonies, festivals, rituals,
prayers and vows, have lost their meaning. Men lack faith in religion while women
display their religious fervour in myriad but hollow rituals. Self- alienation is solely
responsible for alienating man from religion. Man alienates himself from his true essence,
and moves away from God. Rootlessness and insecurity, loss of parents, adolescence and
chronic diseases affect man's psyche and he is found lacking any ambition in life. The
self-alienated man is possessed by many kinds of fear, and is marked by depression and
suicidal tendencies.

Chapter IV presents economic and political alienation. Man feels alienated in the
present day political set up. Misuse of power and wealth leads to war, and war in turn
leads to poverty. The greedy men in power give undue importance to money overlooking
human values. They hoard money and lead wealthy lives. This creates inequality in
society. The affluence and poverty and the resultant inequality lead to the economic and
political alienation among the protagonists of Joshi.

Chapter V is the concluding chapter, which states the findings of the researcher
that Joshi attempts to de-alienate his protagonists. The de-alienating process is completed
through others, either through women or friends. Joshi is viewed as a visionary, and his
innovative treatment of the theme of alienation is analysed. A comparative study of Joshi
with the other major and minor Indo-English novelists is made to prove that his treatment
of the theme of alienation is uniquely psycho-analytical.