CHAPTER I
Introduction

(The English literature in India dates back to the days of the British rule over India under the reign of Queen Elizabeth.) The introduction of English language and literature in school and university curriculum brought about the literary Renaissance, which manifested itself first in Bengal and then all over India. Educated Indians evinced great interest in the study of Western literature, and this led to the birth of Indo-English literature, which was expressive of the Indian sensibility and the ethos in the medium of English. R.S. Singh remarks that the impact of West on the Indian mind, as a result of the East-West encounter, was responsible for the new intellectual awareness, which kindled the creativity of the Indians. He notes:

It is implicit in the very choice of English by Indians as a medium of creative writing that subjects of international import are selected for artistic transmutation. Naturally, therefore, the process of modernization that started after the Renaissance in the West came to exert influence on the eastern mode of life as a consequence of the encounter between England and India. Whatever the historical or political reasons, once the Indian mind came to know the western style of life and its guiding principles, it felt lured not only to try it but also to re-examine its own almost forgotten achievements of the past. Conscious efforts to emulate the adversary started. It was in this spirit, that after the establishment of the British Empire in 1857, a search for freedom from political, social and religious restrictions got initiated. This search was by implication a step in the direction of self-discovery for the Indian mind (Aloneness Alone 164).

The early Indian English novels written before 1930, were immature and imitative, and modelled on the Victorian novel. It was after the first two World Wars that Indian English novel became creative and realistic. Indian English literature has
took great strides in the field of fiction since then and won universal acclaim. In fact fiction became the dominant genre in Indian writing of Twentieth Century. This milieu was responsible for the spurt of creating many novelists, like besides G. V. Desani who analysed the different facets of existentialism and gave possible solutions to the existential problems of man. They started writing profusely from 1950, and these writings ranged from modern age to the post-modern age. Arun Joshi, Nayantara Sahgal, Salman Rushdie, and among the women novelists Anita Desai, were some of the most significant novelists, who made themselves memorable in the Indo English literature. These novelists were labelled minor novelists compared with the three major novelists Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan.

The contemporaries of Arun Joshi, who have carved a niche for themselves, are Sudindra Nath Ghose, Chaman Nahal, Balachandra Rajan, Ahmed Ali, Rama Sarma, Michael Chacko Daniel, Ruskin Bond, Roman Basu, Naipaul, Raj Gill, Narendra pal Singh, Saros Cowasjee and Sasti Brata. Those who stand prominent among the women novelists in the firmament of the contemporary literary scene are Nargis Dalal, Bharathi Mukerjee, Raji Narasimham, Veena Pintal and Shashi Deshpande. Rushdie's novels have become a great success and created a later generation of Indian English novelists, called "Rushdie's children" (qtd. in R.S.Pathk, Introduction 17). The young novelists of the post-modern age deserving literary merit are Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Upamanyu Chatterjee, and Shashi Tharoor.

These minor novelists have made significant contributions to Indian English literature in themes and techniques. S. Madusudan Prasad applauds these "fast growing novelists", who are prolific in their creativity:
These novelists not only happily demonstrate a thematic and technical maturity but also effectively evince an intensely felt Indian sensibility and a new consciousness, offering remarkable interpretations of imperishable Indian values as well as highlighting our cultural heritage, sometimes in sharp contrast with Western values (Indian English Novelists, Introduction vi).

The minor novelists have treated a variety of themes and they have enriched the Indian English literature. A thematic study of the writers reveal a marked shift in focus from the ‘exterior’ to the ‘interior’.

Many of the novels written under the impact of the anti-imperialistic movement have been set in a historic background. The novelists have tried to create an Utopian India with a better standard of life. The early novelists dealt with social evils like untouchability, caste system, the problems of the minority religious groups, and the indiscrimination shown among the different social classes. They have also brought their focus on child marriages, the injustice done to young widows, illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. Anand, Rao, and Narayan lived in the pre-Independence and post-Independence eras and witnessed the violence and the massacres of the partition of the Indian subcontinent into India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. Their novels picture the historic movements, evoke patriotism and assimilate politics with social reform.

The great event, the struggle for the freedom of India, brought out the creative genius of the next batch of major novelists_ Bhabani Battacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, S.Menon Marath, Manohar Malgonkar, Anantanarayan, Kushwant Singh and Kamala Markandaya. Among them we see a great increase in productivity and a marked improvement in quality of fiction during this period. They depict the national movements, the Quit India movement, the Salt Satyagraha, and the Civil Disobedience organised by the Father of the Indian nation, Mahatma Gandhi, to free India from the
shackles of British Empire. They also celebrate the freedom of India and have written about other important events, such as the partition of India and the Bengal famine. The theme of East-West encounter has become an obsession with many of these novelists, who have written about the consequent socio-cultural changes. They have also written on social causes and advocated women's education, and widow remarriage.

The minor Indo-English novelists have steered away from the socio-economic, political and historic themes to explore the individual's interior world. Shyam Asnani refers them as "new novelists", who have explored themes much different from their predecessors. He adds that these novelists have found new techniques to articulate their new themes:

They are no longer interested in the depiction of the external world, the outer weather, the physical atmosphere or the visible surface action. Their forte is contours of the human psyche. This aspect of their works undoubtedly adds a new and significant dimension to the discipline. Under the impact of the new pressures of the scientific and technological advancement, the world around us shows signs of disintegration of the individual. It is therefore, imperative that the Indian English writer today should seek new techniques to articulate these newly experienced realities (A Study 62).

The two World Wars and the Industrial Revolution have created among us a feeling of disillusionment and caused ideological confusion, which has resulted in a spiritual crisis. Man has felt spiritually displaced and is alienated from God, and his fellow human beings. He is also seized with the fear of the inevitability of death. The philosophers, F. Kfka, A. Camus, and N. Sarrot, have dealt with this existential dilemma of man. The modern generation of novelists in the West, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf, are influenced by these existential philosophers. The minor Indian English novelists too came under this Western
influence and revealed modern trends. They wrote novels which deal with profound psychological problems.

In fact psychology has become the chief thematic concern of the minor novelists. They have studied the sufferings of the psyche, which has got affected due to various factors. The post-colonial period, the period after Independence has brought discontentment and frustration. The moral values instilled by Mahatma have started waning in the modern world of technological know-how. Man has become materialistic and tried to accumulate wealth. Corruption has become rampant in every field of life. Civilized society is not congenial for the growth of his spirit.

The advancement of science, and the spread of the scientific temper have upset all dogma, and many truths traditionally accepted and unquestionably practised by ancestors down the ages have now become disputable point for debate. Up to this period man had been brought up on a strong faith in God, and his spirituality had been fostered by tradition and the rich heritage of the past. In the present age man is caught between tradition and modernity; spiritualism and materialism. Caught between such opposing forces, man has lost his mental equilibrium and is filled with anxiety. The East-West confrontation has caused frustration among Indians, something that lived on even after the arrival of freedom. The amalgamation of the two cultures, of the Oriental with the Occidental, due to the East-West encounter has resulted both in acculturation and deculturation. De-culturation has resulted in the loss of native culture. The Indians have felt culturally uprooted and socially alienated. The loss of his identity has brought about the crisis of identity and a denial of existence.
Of course earlier novelists treated the psychological problems of their characters, but social reform was their main motive. They sowed the seeds for the birth of psychological novels by delineating the plight of the alienated man occasionally.

Anand's *The Untouchable* (1935), an experimental novel, which studies the disturbances in the mind of Bakha, who is torn between love and duty, self and society. Anand has modelled his novels on Joyce and Lawrence, and has borrowed the technique of the stream of consciousness. In Narayan's *The English Teacher* (1945), Krishnan attempts to achieve the knowledge of the self. Rao, in *The Kanthapura* (1938), has used mythology to bring out the multifaceted character of the narrator, the old grandmother. He has used the autobiographical mode of narration to portray the revolutionary feelings of the Kanthapurians.

The novels of the major novelists, written in the modern and post-modern era, after 1960 deal with the psychic problems with which man is afflicted in the civilized world. The treatment of alienation, loneliness and estrangement, is found in some of R. K. Narayan's novels. In *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), Narayan focuses on the sad plight of Jagan whose son goes to America and returns to India with his American wife. This makes the community ostracize Jagan, who experiences loneliness and despair. Anand, in *The Road* (1963), depicts the sufferings undergone by the untouchables. He has highlighted the moral implications of untouchability. The novel offers insights into the psychology of the outcasts. Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) probes into the psyche of the protagonist, Rama, the Vedantin-Hindu, who finds it very difficult to adjust to the materialistic West. Rao has analysed the anxious mind of the young man and has delineated the culture shock experienced by the protagonist when he encounters
an alien culture in an alien atmosphere. In *The Shadow from Ladakh* (1966), Bhabani Bhattacharya depicts the irreconcilable clash of egos between Satyajit and Bhaskar and the frustration in the minds of these two characters. Though psychological motivation is used in presenting the political history of India, these novels are not a psychological novel.

The theme of alienation has become the recurring theme with the minor novelists. The literary critic of Arun Joshi, N. Radhakrishnan avers that Joshi and his contemporary minor novelists are much interested in this theme: "In a number of novels a deep anguish, a sense of the fundamental purposelessness of life, isolation and despair form the chief thematic preoccupations" (134). G. V. Desani’s, *The All About H. Hatterr* (1948), the first modern novel in Indian English literature, is an existential novel, written in the second half of the Twentieth Century, using the technique of stream of consciousness. It gives an autobiographical account of the absurd narrator hero, H. Hatterr who goes in quest of the meaning of life. He is adventurous like Don Quixote and his quests end in discomfiture. Quest has become an important motif in these novels.

The novels of S. N. Ghose are Quest novels. In all his four novels, *And Gazelles Leaping* (1949), *The Cradle of the Clouds* (1951), *The Vermillion Boat* (1953), *The Flame of the Forest* (1955), the protagonists set out on spiritual quests. These novels delineate the Indian youth’s search for self-identity. Shakuntala Shrinagesh's *The Little Black Box* (1955) treats the frustration, resentment and gloom in the mind of a woman protagonist who is alienated from her relatives and friends. B. Rajan is interested in probing the inner recesses of the human mind. His novels are more psychological than
social. The Dark Dancer (1959), presents the protagonists' quest for identity in the context of East-West encounter. In The Too long in the West (1961), Rajan deals with the dilemma of a disoriented Indian with tragic-comic irony. Chaman Nahal, in The My True Faces (1973), treats the disappointment and frustration of the protagonist at finding his marriage broken. The author has used the Quest motif. Another novel, The Into Another Dawn (1977), is in the form of retrospective narration by the hero, Ravi Sharma, who goes to the United States to pursue higher studies. There he falls in love with an American woman and elopes with her; but he has to return to India because of his cancer. Set in the backdrop of East-West encounter, the novel treats the alienation of Ravi Sharma, whose alienation is similar to that of Sindi and Babu in Arun Joshi's The Foreigner (1968), and The Strange Case of Billy Biwas (1971).

The East-West encounter has created rootless and restless Indians. N. Radhakrishnan writes that Kamala Markandaya's The Nowhere Man, Dilip Hiro's A Triangular View, Murari's The Marriage, Anita Desai's The Bye-Bye Blackbird, and Reginald Massey's The Immigrants are novels which have portrayed the Indians who have built an India around themselves, wherever they are, in London or in New York or in Africa. They are treated as aliens not only in the foreign countries but also in their own home country. N. Radhakrishnan feels Joshi's contemporaries have depicted isolated men whose world is inhuman and hostile. He points out that Saro's Cowasjee's The Goodbye to Elsa and Trishanku's The Onion Peel "are about self-alienated persons who find themselves adrift in a universe which is indifferent or inimical to them" (Alienation and Crisis 138). Amitav Ghosh's The Circle of Reason (1986), an imaginative fiction deals with the predicament of poor Indians who have become
morally degenerated in their pursuit for money in foreign countries. Upamanyu Chatterjee's *The English, August: An Indian Story* (1988) treats the theme of alienation, the result of cultural dislocation.

The contemporary minor novelists among women, Nargis Dalal, Bharathi Mukherjee, and Veena Pintal, depict their vision of the society steeped in boredom and loneliness. The emptiness of life that is led in the civilized metropolis has resulted in the loneliness of the soul. In *The Tiger's Daughters* (1973), Bharathi Mukherjee treats the alienation of Tara, who is an Indian but has settled in America. When she returns to India she is treated as an alien. She is driven back to America to escape the loneliness and alienation she has experienced in her native country, India. In *The Wife*, Mukherjee has attempted a psychological study of the protagonist Dimple Dasgupta. Dimple is the neurotic protagonist, who feels frustrated, in her search for her roots.

Nayantara Sahgal's later works are based on the theme of loneliness. In *The This Time of Morning* all the characters suffer due to loneliness for different reasons. The *The Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) depicts the life of four persons who have become alien to one another. Their psychic problems are analysed in the background of the tragic political event, the division of the Punjab.

Anita Desai is a powerful woman novelist, who has explored the interior landscape of the mind. Desai shares equal place with Joshi among the minor novelists in Indian English literature. In Anita Desai’s *The Cry, the Peacock*, Maya, the alienated heroine, is pessimistic from her childhood, and is obsessed with the fear of inevitability of death. To end her mental aberrations she first kills her husband and then commits suicide. In her second novel, *The Voices in the City*, Desai, using the technique of
stream of consciousness, has revealed the mind of Nirode’s sister Monisha, who has made her confessions in the form of diary writing. Her childlessness gives her a tragic view of life, and leads to her spiritual break-down. She commits suicide, and dies of self-immolation. Her sister Amla, too, feels the absurdity of her existence, and feels that her life is insignificant in this world. In *The Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971), Desai’s main concern is with political and social realism. Yet, influenced by the existentialist philosophers she expresses the futility of existence in that novel.

Arun Joshi stands prominent among his contemporaries, the minor novelists of the late sixties and seventies. Pier Paolo Picciuco, of the University of Bologna, hails Arun Joshi as a major writer of Indian English fiction. He observes that Indian English fiction of the post-colonial literature has suffered a set back, and Arun Joshi is one among the authors forgotten in the shadows. In his estimate, Arun Joshi ought to occupy a major place in the top rung of Indian fiction writers. Pier Paolo Picciuco observes:

> Arun Joshi is a major name. Though winner of the Sahitya Academy Award in 1983, he never found the right fulcrum to climb the scale of success. One can possibly ascribe this fact to two basic reasons: the first is that at the time Arun Joshi wrote Penguin India had still not made its grand and messianic entry on the scene and he was therefore printed by minor publishers. The second is that he himself was an introvert and reserved person: in his own words, he didn’t “consider [himself] connected with the world of writers”. The result is that, although his value is generally acknowledged by the restricted circle of scholars, his name paradoxically remains unknown to a wider audience as his novels are sadly out of print, or worse still, victims of a careless distribution, which leaves large parts of India out of its range (30).

Madhusudan Prasad hails Arun Joshi a remarkable novelist: “It is out of mud that lotuses are born and out of the largely sub-standard writing of the last two decade a few remarkable works by novelists such as Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal and
Salman Rushdie have come up and bloomed...” (Perspectives 224). Devinder Mohan feels that Arun Joshi occupies a prominent place among the minor Indo-English novelists. He observes:

In the tradition of the Indian Novel written in English, Joshi should come to the forefront...Joshi tells us who we are and what kind of world surrounds us with all our obsessions in a multi-cultural set-up, our economic needs within the complexity of this set-up and our need of expressing the darkening despair so that man understands his aloneness, in which everybody is equally caught (Beyond the Litany of Wants 83).

Arun Joshi, a native of Benares in Utter Pradesh in India, born in 1939, is the youngest son of (Dr) A.C.Joshi, the Vice-Chancellor of The Hindu University, Benares. He had his early education in India, and completed his higher education in the United States of America at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He obtained a degree in Engineering from the University of Kansas. After returning to India, he became the Member of the Governing Bodies of many Industries. After 1965, he set up his own industries. Arun Joshi’s literary career started with the publication of his first novel, The Foreigner, in 1968, which made him a prominent writer in the field of Indo-English Literature. Then he wrote The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, a novel in 1971. In 1976, a collection of short stories, titled The Survivor was written and then came the novel The Apprentice in 1974. His next novel The Last Labyrinth written in 1980, won for him the Sahitya Academy Award in 1982. He wrote his last novel The City and the River in 1990. He had also published a literary quarterly, The Vagarth, in English. He had written a biography too, in collaboration with Khushwant Singh, titled, The Shri Ram-A Biography. Arun Joshi breathed his last in 1993. E. Satyanarayana writes: “Undoubtedly, his untimely demise in 1993 is a big blow to the field of Indian Writing in English” (108).
Arun Joshi, the novelist, has used his protagonists as mouthpieces to voice forth his social, political, and religious views on life. Though the purpose of the novel is entertaining the readers, generally the novelist uses this genre to teach moral ideas. Arun Joshi has made use of his novels to convey his serious philosophies to the people, still maintaining the pleasure of reading. He is an excellent storywriter. In every novel there is a main plot and a sub plot. There are stories within stories, and the novelist deftly spins his stories, and slowly unravels them. Thus the reader’s interest in the story is sustained throughout the novel even though he has used the novel as a powerful medium to convey his vision to his readers. O.P. Bhatnagar remarks: “The plots of his novels are as well constructed as those of detective stories. The sequence of events creates as much suspense as a thriller” (Fictional World 64). He further adds that the subject matter of these novels are very serious such as a ‘thriller would not dream of touching’ (64). The author makes a study of serious psychological problems. Shyam M. Asnani appreciates Joshi’s skill when he says: “Joshi is a serious novelist who writes with the consummate skill of a story-teller” (A Study 70).

A brief outline of all his novels in chronological order will reveal the mental condition of the protagonists, the situations in which they are placed and the circumstances that lead them to their neuroses which alienate them as from their own self, from society, from religious, economic and political life. Shyam M. Asnani commends Joshi as an important Indo-English novelist: “With the publication of his first novel, The Foreigner, Arun Joshi has emerged as an important Indo-English novelist. His skill lies in his ability to describe experience in a human voice so that the
The Foreigner is written from the perspective of the protagonist, Sindi Oberoi who narrates the story in the first person, from reminiscence of his life in the past. He presents to Sheela, Babu’s sister, an autobiographical account of his life led in America, alternating it with his life in India. Sindi Oberoi, an Indian who goes to the United States of America for higher education, feels alienated in the foreign country. The main plot of this fiction, is the love story of Sindi Oberoi with June Blythe. It is closely knit with the life of Babu, the son of Mr. Khemka, a wealthy business man in India. Babu too comes to pursue his higher studies in America. Sindi starts narrating the story after identifying the dead body of his friend in the morgue. The story alternates between the past and the present. Sindi evades marriage with June since he does not believe in attachment. At this juncture Babu arrives. He feels homesick, lonely and alienated in the foreign country. More over, his poor performance in studies makes him feel depressed. June Blythe’s kind and sympathetic words draw him towards her. He falls in love with her and requests her to marry him. Sindi’s detachment theory alienates June from Sindi. She resolves to marry Babu, despite her deep love for Sindi. The conventional morality, inculcated in Babu as an Indian, makes him postpone his marriage with June. This makes June miserable and drives her back to Sindi. Babu comes to know that June is having sex with Sindi. His desperation at his poor performance in studies makes him get heavily drunk. Besides this, his jealousy and suspicion of the relationship between Sindi and June make him give vent to his anger on June. He calls her a whore, and rushes out of his room for the suicidal ride in his car,
and then to his death. June carries Babu’s baby in her womb, and after a few months she too dies because of an unsuccessful attempt at abortion. Sindi owns the responsibility for the twin tragedy and comes over to India. He meets Babu’s father who employs him as his Personal Assistant, to manage his industry, the air-conditioner plant. He finds Mr. Khemka, a dishonest man evading the payment of tax. This makes Sindi resign his job. He experiences loneliness and estrangement in Indian society. Sheela, Khemka’s daughter gives him a sense of commitment and requests him to take over charge of the Company. Muthu, a low paid employee in Khemka’s Company points out the plight of the workers who are starving, because of the closure of the Company. After Mr. Khemka is legally punished and imprisoned, Sindi comes forward to manage the Company. At the end, Sindi is seen serving the poor workers and their families.

J. P. Tripathy considers Joshi’s next novel, a powerful work. He observes: “The most powerful and appealing work of Joshi, however, is his second novel, The Strange Case of Billy Biwas. In it Joshi develops the search for identity motive on a large scale” (78). Keki N. Daruwalla, asserts that Arun Joshi had established his reputation as the finest novelist even before he wrote The Last Labyrinth. He further adds: “It was Strange Case of Billy Biwas which had put him firmly on the map” (136).

Romesh Sahai is the chief narrator of this novel. The story is about his friend Bimal Biswas affectionately called Billy. Billy is the son of a supreme court judge in India. Romi meets Billy, a research student doing Ph.D in Anthropology at Columbia. During his college days Billy has expressed a desire to live with the primitive people in order to find out the aboriginalness of the world. Romi returns to India due to the
sudden demise of his father. He qualifies himself and enters the Indian Administrative Service. He is appointed as the District Collector of Jhansi. Billy also returns to India with a Ph.D degree in Anthropology. He becomes a Lecturer in the Delhi University. Both of them get married; but Billy leads an unhappy marital life. He feels discontented and alienated from life in civilized society. He goes on an anthropological expedition with his students to the Maikala hills in Madhya Pradesh and disappears one day. The police conclude that he must have been killed by a man-eater, and closes the case. Romi does not accept this theory and he pursues the case. His job as a District Collector helps him in this pursuit. He finds Billy in the garb of a tribal. Billy, the protagonist of this novel narrates to Romi the story of his past spread over ten years. Billy tells Romi how he lost himself to the beauty of Bilasia, the charm of the Chandtola hills, and the rhythmic sound of the drums beaten by the villagers. Mr. Biwas, Billy’s father, knowing that Billy is alive approaches the Chief Secretary to trace him out. The search for Billy ends unsuccessfully in his death, which is mourned by the whole village.

The Apprentice, the third novel is a superb one. Madhusudan Prasad endorses this view:

Joshi’s third novel, The Apprentice, is an outstanding novel, which is also obviously reminiscent of another novel of Albert Camus’ The Fall. Technically a confessional novel, and self-realization as well as resultant contrition are its main motif. It is written in the form of a monologue, which is eminently suited to the confessional mode of narration as well as the theme dealt with. Indeed, the monologue has been handled superbly well in this novel, and in this sense it is a magnificent novel in the sphere of Indian-English fiction” (Indian English Novelists 58).

After receiving the Sahitya Akademy Award in 1983, Arun Joshi told his interviewers that of all his novels he liked his novel The Apprentice: “This novel still remains my favorite” (qtd. in Pier Paola Piciucco 43).
The Apprentice is in the form of a monologue. Ratan Rathor, the protagonist of this novel, narrates his biography to his student companion while passing through the streets of Delhi. He recollects his childhood days spent in an atmosphere of patriotic fervor in pre-Independence India. He contrasts this with the building up of his career expanded over post-Independence era. Ratan, the native of Punjab, is the son of a rich lawyer who has squandered away his money. He is faced with the problem of unemployment. After a period of poverty, he secures a job as a temporary clerk in the Ministry of Defence. Ratan alienates himself from his friends who have helped him in his hard times. By his hard work he gets promotions and marries the daughter of his Superintendent. Fate strikes Ratan when he is at the height of his fame and power. Ratan accepts bribe from Himmat Singh for supplying defective war materials to the army stores, during the Indo-China war. His intimate friend, the Brigadier who works in the army is affected by this corrupt deal. His friend quits the army since the defective equipment has failed him and then commits suicide. The fear of exposure of his guilt and the tragic death of his friend torment Ratan. He realizes his moral down fall and wishes to cleanse his soul by becoming an apprentice to God. Ratan resolves to shine the shoes of the worshippers at the temple gate.

The Last Labyrinth is a superb novel, which won the Sahitya Academy award for the author. Usha Bande remarks that this novel, as the title suggests, "probes the labyrinths of the soul, which become metaphors for life and death and give symbolic significance to the entire drama of existence" (Symbolism 150). Then she quotes the authors opinion about his own novel: "Soon after the Award, the novelist admitted in an interview that for him life’s meaning lies in the dark “hopeless mazes where you may
get irretrievably lost or discover the shining secrets at the core of life” (ibid.). O. P. Saxena feels that this novel is noteworthy for its narrative technique: The Last Labyrinth is a more ambitious novel extending the characteristic search of Arun Joshi’s heroes for roots and identification in a more involved technique of story telling” (Art and Vision 111).

Som Bhaskar, the protagonist of The Last Labyrinth, runs a plastic manufacturing business in Bombay, and he wishes to buy some of the shares of another plastic manufacturer, Mr.Aftab. He visits Aftab in Benares and is overwhelmed by its streets. The dark rooms and the labyrinthine corridors in Lal Haveli, the house of Aftab frightens Som. It reflects the fear of death in his mind. The story shuttles between Bombay and Benares. Som is enchanted by the physical beauty of Anuradha, the mistress of Aftab. Som swears to buy not only the property, but also to win the mistress of Aftab. He climbs up the mountain to buy the last bit of Aftab’s shares, which is with the priestess, the Gargi Mata. Som discovers, in the mountain temple, the presence of God in the form of an eternal flame, which has been burning for over thousand years. Anuradha refuses to desert Aftab. Out of jealousy, he buys all his shares. After depriving Aftab of all his property, Som goes to the house of Aftab who accuses him as a snake, which had sneaked into his house. Som requests Anuradha to come with him, but Anuradha disappears from Lal Haveli. Disappointed, Som returns home and tries to commit suicide; but is saved by his wife, Geeta.

The City and the River, the last novel of Arun Joshi, is written in the form of a parable. In this novel Joshi has changed his focus from alienated individuals to that of an alienated community. The theme of this novel is the struggle of a particular
community, which is poor, and illiterate, against exploitation by a rich, and, a powerful ruler belonging to modern, civilized society. Joshi has developed the story in the manner of an epic tale, with a prologue and an epilogue. O. P. Mathur feels that Joshi has made use of allegory to present the "generalities of politics" which "consists of the art of attaining power and the craft of retaining it ... (Contemporary and the Cosmic150). Further, about the theme, he notes: "The theme of the novel is multilateral, spanning its political, sociological and mythical dimensions in a world, which transcends its contemporaneity and contains characters who are archetypes rather than recognisable human beings with individual characteristics" (150).

In the Prologue, the Great Yogeshwara, the sage, tells his disciple, the Nameless-One, the tale of how the city was destroyed thirty years ago by the great deluge. The city was ruled by the Grand Master with the help of the Council consisting of an Astrologer, the Minister for Trade, the Education Adviser, the Police Commissioner and the Master of Rallies. Though the Astrologer and the Hermit of the Mountain were the disciples of the sage, the Astrologer helped the ruler in governing the country, and the Hermit helped the people in their times of need. The society was formed of four classes of people, the aristocrats, the brick people, the mud people and the boat people. The boat people offered their allegiance to the river, the Goddess Mother and they refused to pay allegiance to the Grand Master, the earthly ruler. Special laws were framed by the Astrologer, and the Grand Master ordered the arrest of the boat people who violated the law. They arrested Bhumiputra, a teacher, and a professor, and the Headman who supported the cause of the boat people. The boat people grew violent with every measure that was taken by the Grand Master to suppress the people. At the
command of the Grand Master, the police commissioner destroyed the rose garden, where Bumiputra had taken cover. This led to the destruction of the embankment of the river, which flooded the city and destroyed it with its waters. The Nameless-One, the illegitimate son of the boat people, who had been anointed by the hermit, and sent away in a boat before the tragedy struck the city, was the only survivor. In the epilogue, the Great Yogeshwara sends the Nameless-One to the city in the person of the Hermit of the Mountain, to purify the city, and to prevent the city from disintegration.

Arun Joshi has published a collection of short stories under the title of one of his short stories, The Survivor. Critics have concentrated only on his novels and there is not much criticism found on Arun Joshi’s short stories. M. K. Naik criticises that “These stories tend to be merely anecdotal” (Asoka Pillar 250). Joshi has written ten short stories and they all end on a tragic note. They portray the tragic life of alienated men. Joshi has focused on the evils that beset man in the modern age and the miseries undergone by him. M. G. Gopalakrishnan observes: “The protagonists in Arun Joshi’s short stories, like those in his novels, symbolize modern man in his groping through the dark alleys of life” (70). E. Satyanarayana supports this view and writes that Joshi in his short stories “touches on the varied issues that predetermine the existence of man” (108).

The short story, The Gherao, brings out the agony of a Principal due to the generation gap between himself and his students. The Frontier Mail is Gone, portrays the misery of a father whose daughter has run away with the gypsies in the Frontier Mail. Leela’s dreams, of moving with the men of civilized society, land her in a brothel home. The Eve-Teasers is about the story of two youngsters, Ram and Shyam, who
tease the college girls in the running bus. In *The Boy with the Flute*, Mr. Seth repeats the prayer taught by his mother in his childhood when he is faced with a calamity. In *A Trip for Mr. Lele*, the vendor of sweets, Mr. Lele, who disobeys his officer in order to be with his club-footed daughter on her birthday, is dismissed from his job. *The Survivor*, depicts a man who loses his job due to his excessive interest in cinema and film music. In *The Homecoming*, the soldier who returns from war is disgusted by the snug and luxurious life at home, and feels himself a misfit in the society. In *The Intruder in the Discotheque*, an old man is scorned by the people for pretending to look young to get the love of a young girl. In *The Harmic*, a young man, who expects his friend to find a job for him, is shocked to see his friend working in a nightclub as a shameful performer. In *The Servant*, the servant tries to seduce Mrs. Khanna impelled by a wrong assumption that Mrs. Khanna is sexually attracted by him. This ends in the tragic death of Mrs. Khanna and his imprisonment.

A close study, of the novels and short stories, gives a clear picture of the themes handled by Joshi. Arun Joshi has viewed man’s psyche from different angles. This makes the critics, both foreign and Indian, to aver that Aum Joshi has handled various themes—the themes of East-West encounter; the themes related to the existential philosophies such as the theme of quest for identity, and quest for the true meaning of self and God, and the theme of alienation. The various approaches to the novels of Joshi deserve closer attention.

The theme, of East-West encounter, is first treated by E. M. Forster in his *A Passage to India* (1924). This subject has become one of the favourite themes of Indo-English novelists. A few critics think that Arun Joshi is interested in this theme. As a
consequence of the confrontation between England and India, there has been a drastic change in the mode of life of the Indians who adopted the Western style of life. Modernization has started and the old values are reshaped by the new values. This has aroused in some Indians a love for the past, their own traditions, and culture. The Literary men have through their works tried to teach the people that one can become modern still retaining the ancient culture and tradition, the legacy of the past.

Robert Ross points out that Arun Joshi has treated the theme of East-West encounter in his novels:

For Arun Joshi’s characters...a clash of opposites produces in them despair, not delight; paralysis, not excitement. These opposing forces stem from the conflict between East and West, a concern hardly new to the Indian English novel, but one which has not been handled before in quite so striking a manner; for Joshi has created in each of his novels an Indian anti-hero who, like his Western counterpart, stands overlooking the abyss of his time and place; angry, dispossessed yet oftentimes amused at his own plight (1).

C.N.Srinath believes Joshi to be preoccupied with the theme of East-West encounter in The Foreigner. He notes: “[it] has a remarkable degree of maturity and technical competence, remarkable, that is, for a first novel, one is struck by the originality of the writer in the treatment of a theme which has almost become stereotyped in Indian fiction, namely, the east-west encounter” (Interior Landscape 41). Joshi has used this theme of East-West encounter to analyse human psychology _the despair and anger experienced by mankind at large. His aim is neither sociological nor political; it is psychological. Joshi analyses the emotional problems of his protagonists against the backdrop of the social and cultural milieu.

Arun Joshi’s novels are labeled ‘Quest’ novels. His protagonists go on quests i.e., go on endless search, for one thing after another. The East-West encounter has created
a feeling of rootlessness and loss of identity. Man goes in quest of his lost identity and his lost self. R. A. Singh points out: "Joshi is like Kafka and Camus, Saul Bellow, Elism and Malamud. His central characters are products of Colonial consciousness and they are in search of their lost self, their identity..." (89).

In this materialistic world, man strives after wealth, power, and position. This makes him feel that life has become meaningless in this set up. This sends him on a quest to find out the real meaning of life. Usha Bande observes, "Thematically, Joshi's works are about modern man's struggle to find a meaning in life" (Arun Joshi's Women 129). T. Vijaya Kumar observes that Arun Joshi's earlier novels are quest novels: "His other novels have been about individual's convoluted quests for meaning in life, beyond material success, and a search for identity beyond their societal roles" (146).

There are also critics who argue that Joshi's novels deal with man's Quest for God. The Westernized Indian, who has been impressed by the facts discovered by the scientists, becomes rational in his attitude. The modern man is obsessed with haunting questions like 'does God really exist?' and if He exists, then 'who is the real God?'. Besides this he is disturbed by thoughts regarding his real identity and asks questions such as 'who am I?' and 'from where do I come?' Joshi uses 'quest' as the main motif to portray in his novels man's endless search for his inner probings. J. P. Tripathi presents his view of Joshi's involvement with the theme of quest for identity:

Among novelists of the younger generation, Arun Joshi is an expert in setting his actions, situations and characters in the existential frame. He delineates problems arising out of alienation in his novels. Living in a deep-rooted society, his characters find themselves alienated and rootless, and therefore his novels are potentially rich with tension arising from quest for identity and fulfillment of life's purpose (78).
The dilemma of the ‘angst’, the anxiety-ridden man has been highlighted by the existential philosophers, and the existential philosophy is manifested in the writings of Arun Joshi. Pratap Chandra Dash defines existentialism as the “philosophy of self” and traces its origin to Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche: “...an existentialist is distinguished by his idea of protest against theoretical scientific thought and rejection of all existing creeds, his insistence on individualism and preoccupation with fear, hope, alienation, anguish, self awareness, guilt and death” (45). Pratap Chandra Dash, hailing Joshi as “the most significant contemporary Indo-Anglian novelist”, writes that his novels and short stories are “characterised by his treatment of certain metaphysical themes such as rootlessness, detachment, self-dismemberment; psychic quest of the individual for better alternatives in the ethics of being_all being different facets of the existential predicament of modern man” (45). O.P.Mathur writes that Joshi does not have direct contact with the existential movement but “his deep reflection and intellectual probing into the human predicament brings him close to the existential writers of the West” (Essential Note 143). Elena J. Kalhinikova finds in Joshi’s works ” a brilliant illustration of the Indian variety of existentialism” (179).

Critics are driven to give the appellation ‘existentialist’ to Joshi, since his novels deal with the theme of alienation, the basic psychological factor, which causes existential angst. S. P. Swain asserts that Joshi probes the existential dilemmas. He writes:

Arun Joshi’s novels portray the traumas and tensions, probings and pinings of the contemporary man through an exploration of the lacerated psyche of the characters. They register the existential dilemmas and predications of the incarcerated self and limn out the harried experiences of the protagonists in a philosophically stifling and morally stultifying world. Isolated from the
self as well as the society, Joshi’s characters are forlorn and lovelorn. They are so obsessively and neurotically involved in the mundane affairs of life that they fail to choose and decide the tenor of their life. Experiencing the “disgusting absurdity” and “void” of existence, they discover meaning and value through self-probing and self-exploration (190).

Lal Udai Bhan Pandey makes a comparative study of Arun Joshi and Anita Desai and remarks that these two writers are concerned with the individual’s predicament:

[They] record contemporary man’s tortures and traumas. Chief protagonists of their novels are abject outsiders and stark strangers. They are unable to communicate with the world at large and relate themselves with the surroundings... For them the house itself becomes a cage, where their souls groan and grumble and struggle to untie the chains around them. Existential predicament is the Zeitgeist all the major characters of their novels. They are tormented, tortured introverts, non-conformists and stranded wanderers (224).

The introverted man feels mentally sick and feels isolated and lonely. He feels alienated from every one and every thing; from family and from friends; from society and from a whole group; from their self and from God. They lose the zest for life and develop an indifferent attitude to life. N. Radhakrishnan writes that alienation is a ‘strong motif’, which dominates the modern Indo-Anglian Novel: “In a number of novels a deep anguish, a sense of fundamental purposelessness of life, isolation and despair form the chief thematic preoccupations. Many of them depict an isolated man pitted against other men, against society, sometimes engaged in a hopeless quest for his identity or in a self-conscious exploration of the act of writing itself” (Alienation and Crisis 134).

The study of the lives and works of the minor novelists reveal that intercultural and interracial relationships due to East-West encounter were responsible for creating alienation among Indians. The Indian English novelists have spent the major part of their lives either studying or working in the foreign countries. Sending the children
abroad to England and America both for education and employment have become a matter of pride and prestige for the affluent families in India. S. N. Ghose had spent the major part of his life in England. Govind Desani had spent the war years in England and returned to India as a journalist and lecturer on Buddhist and Indian philosophy. Arun Joshi too had his higher education in the United States of America.

The life spent in the foreign countries has created alienated men and women. Writing about the biography of Sasthi Brata and V. S. Naipaul, K. Radha observes that these two are alienated men. She expresses that Sasthi Brata in his autobiography My God Died Young has given critical accounts of the West, especially England and America. She comments: He (Sasthi Brata) complains that the British rule in India has produced men like himself who can neither feel and identify with his own people nor accept "the glare, the steel-muscle concept of human life" in the western countries" (89). About the life of V. S Naipaul, she writes that after completing his education in the West Indies he married an English woman and settled in England where he felt like an alien. K. Radha observes: "He (Naipaul) came to India, the home of his ancestors: to discover his identity. But this voyage of discovery proved a thorough failure as we see from his travelogue An Area of Darkness" (89).

After studying the biographical data of the Indo English fiction writers, Klaus Steinworth says that almost half of the writers have lived abroad during their "formative period" (52). To prove his point he gives the example of Sudhin Ghose "who died in England in 1965, after his efforts to live in India failed after having been away for more than 30 years" (52). He has included further details in the footnote that this "foreign returned" writer suffered from "persecution mania" (52).
These examples reveal the truth that the Indian English novelists experienced alienation abroad and at home. They find in the Western existential philosophy a convenient vehicle to bring forth the plight of the Indians in the alien country. They present the alienated experience of aloneness and estrangement. They try to drive home the point that the life of the Indians in these foreign lands is not romantic as envisaged by the common view of Indians. They interpret the mental agony caused by loneliness experienced among the alien people and the estrangement they experience in Indian society after their return to India. Arun Joshi is not an exception to this kind of experience and he has tried to interpret the restless life of Indians who have returned to India in search of their roots.

M.K. Naik says, “...Arun Joshi is preoccupied with different facets of the theme of alienation” (Perspectives 249). O. P. Saxena looks upon alienation as “the malaise of the contemporary man” and gists out its evil effects on man: “Alienation is one of the greatest problems confronting modern man. Its corrosive impact can be seen in the form of the generation gap, the anti-war movement, the hippie phenomenon, the credibility gap, the compartmentalization of our lives, the stunting of personal development, the conspicuous absence of a sense of meaningfulness of life, and so on” (Alienated Protagonist 68). He finds alienation, a major theme in the literature of the twentieth century, especially in the post-War period. He adds: “Alienation serves as a basic theme and recurrent motif in many Indo-English novels. It is undoubtedly the most dominant trait of several characters delineated in them” (72).

The concept of alienation is new to the field of Indo-Anglian fiction, though this concept has already been found in the philosophical, sociological and theological
writings. It found its way into the writings of Indian English Fiction writers through the influence of the Western philosophers. O.P. Saxena traces the influence of existentialism on Joshi to Camus and Kafka who have attempted to "sketch the confusion, frustration, disintegration and estrangement of modern man" (71). He adds: "Alienation, in its various forms has been dealt with in great details in the existentialist literature and the Absurd Drama" (72). G. Damodar feels that Joshi "has been strongly influenced by the tradition of Cynics in Europe". He observes:

Diogenes of Sinope and his successors have been credited with certain literary tradition, a popular dialectic of moral discontent. For Diogenes civilization was to be corrected solely by individuals in active and iconoclastic confrontation. Such confrontation should go hand in hand with intense scorn. Further, the Cynics mock at the conventional successes and anxieties for their meaninglessness. They held the routine life as a meaningless one. The normal and labelled life allowed no freedom of living nor diversity. It arrested the personal growth and sealed the fate of man. Therefore, the Cynics wanted to start their lives on a lively nothingness (60).

Susheel Kumar Sharma says that Joshi has felt the influence of the trio, Camus, Sartre and Kierkegaard, the existentialists who have contributed to the existentialism and given a new dimension to alienation by dealing with this theme both in their creative and philosophical writings. Sharma writes that Joshi admits this indirectly when he says, "I liked The Plague and read The Outsider"5 (A Psychograph 106). Sharma asserts the influence of the existential philosophers on Joshi when he says: "In an interview with Sujata Mathai6 Arun Joshi reveals that he was influenced by both Camus and existential writers on the one hand and by Gandhi and Bhagvadgita on the other. Besides, these influences the influence of evolutionary philosophers can also be traced in his writings" (Philosophical Reverberations 93). He further adds: "Despite Arun Joshi’s admittance in one of his interviews: ‘Sartre I did not understand clearly or
like as for existential philosophers like Kierkegaard, I have never understood anything except odd statements, there are instances and descriptions in The Foreigner which make the novel read as an existential quest to find a meaning in the absurdity of life” (Philosophical 93).

Critics further point out the similarities between The Outsider and The Fall by Albert Camus, and The Foreigner and The Apprentice by Joshi respectively, and between Kafka’s The Trial and Joshi’s The Apprentice. Joshi is so much impressed by Camus and Kafka that he has modelled his novels after their works. Elena J. Kalinnikova observes that Joshi is influenced by Camus’s The Outsider: “Experiencing the direct influence of the French writer, Arun Joshi has followed him and has created works about the aimless existence of a man ...” (179). Joshi is also impressed by the psychological ideas of Freud and Jung. When reviewing Arun Joshi’s novel M.Man Meitei, comments on Joshi’s indebtedness to these philosophers: “A significant contribution the book makes is the infusion of the current psychological ideas especially of Freud and Jung...” (Awareness of Worlds 10). Joshi in his article gives the answer to the questions regarding his own art, and refers to the influence of Freud:

From time to time I asked why I write? Why I pick up the themes that I do? I suggest that the following extract from Dr. Freud’s lectures at the University of Vienna (1915-17) might provide at least a partial answer. ‘There is in fact a path from phantasy back again to reality and that is art. The artist has also an introverted disposition and has not far to go to become neurotic. He is one who is urged on by instinctual needs which are too clamorous, he longs to attain honour, power, riches, fame and the love of women, but he lacks the means of achieving those gratifications. So like any other with unsatisfied longing he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest and all his libido too, on to the creation of his wishes in the life of phantasy from which the way might readily lead to neurosis’ (qtd. in Kalpana Wandrekar 79).
Arun Joshi has blended the Western Christian philosophy with the Eastern Indian Hindu philosophy. As a child brought up in the Indian traditional set up, Joshi has imbibed the Hindu philosophy from the Vedic literature. Joshi has incorporated theological thoughts from the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavat Gita in his novels.

The theme of alienation runs as an undercurrent in all his novels and short stories and so the researcher has chosen to analyse and prove that Joshi has given an excellent treatment of this theme in his novels. The definition of the concept of alienation, its origin and its evolution becomes important in this context since the topic chosen for the research work is 'Alienation in the novels of Arun Joshi'. The concept of alienation, and what it really means are compiled from dictionaries and encyclopedias, and presented here.

Alienation is the feeling of being isolated from certain aspects of one’s environment. Alienation may occur when a person breaks his emotional ties with another person, group, institution, or belief. The concept of alienation and de-alienation, sin and redemption, was found quite early in the Judeo-Christian tradition. St. Augustine and Martin Luther found the concept of alienation in man’s struggle to alienate himself from his imperfections by identifying with a transcendental perfect Being. This concept first gained importance in the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel, Ludwig Feuerback and then of Karl Marx.

The basic idea of Hegel’s philosophy is that God, the Absolute Idea, is a dynamic Self, engaged in a circular process of alienation and de-alienation. There was an inherent dissociation between man as a creative Subject seeking to be able to realise himself and man as an object influenced and manipulated by others. The finite mind of man produces
things, expresses itself in objects, and objectifies itself in physical things, social institutions, and cultural products. Every objectification is an instance of alienation. Man should serve God and attain self-knowledge of the Absolute. If he does not perform this function, he does not fulfill his human essence and becomes a self-alienated man. Alienation would cease when man becomes fully self-conscious and understands his environment and culture as emanations of Absolute knowledge.

For Ludwig Feurback, the source of alienation lay in the institution of religion. The myths of divine power are merely ways in which man projects his own humanity outside himself. He believes that God is man's essence absolutized and estranged from man. Man is alienated from himself when he creates and puts above himself an imagined alien higher being and bows before that being as a slave. The de-alienation consists in the abolition of that estranged picture of man, which is God.

Karl Marx agrees with Feurback's criticism of religious alienation; but maintains that this is one among the many forms of man's self-alienation. Man, not only alienates a part of himself in the form of God. He alienates the other products of his spiritual activity in the form of philosophy, common sense, art and moral. He alienates products of economic activity in the form of commodities, money and capital; he alienates products of his social activity in the form of the state, law, and social institutions. Thus there are many forms in which man alienates from himself the products of his own activity and makes them a powerful world of objects to which he is related as a slave, powerless and dependent. All these forms of alienation are different aspects of man's self-alienation. The de-alienated man is the real man who fulfils himself as a free and creative being.
In the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, observing the radical changes brought about by industrialization, Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tonnies have lamented the passing of traditional society and the loss of the community. Modern man isolated and uprooted from old values has lost faith in the new national and bureaucratic order. Durkheim's notion of 'anomie' (lawlessness), a social condition characterized by individualism and the disintegration of the social norms, is further carried by Weber and Simmel.

Weber emphasises the fundamental drift toward rationalisation and formalisation in social organisation. Simmel emphasises the tension between the personal and the anonymous in social life. Soren Kierkegaard, stressing the importance of the personal experience holds that attaining an adequate sense of self in a world dominated by purposelessness and despair is the central problem of alienation. This philosophy of Kierkegaard is carried in the recent works of Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Satre, and other existentialist philosophers.

The existential theories, both in the religious version of Martin Buber, and in the secular form of Sartre and Albert Camus, emphasise that alienation is inherent in the finite and isolated character of man's existence as a 'stranger' in the world. On the psychological side, two basic elements in Freudian theory explain the aspect of alienation. The first is the principle of Oedipal conflict, the son's hostility towards his father, and the second, the frustration inherent in civilized society. The symptoms of alienation are to be seen in the physiological, the psychological and sociological realms respectively, in psychosomatic illness, neurotic depression or suicide, and student protest movements. The alienation may be classified into different forms.
Alienation of society: There are alienation of societies as a whole (feudal societies and capitalist societies), the alienation of social groups (capitalists, workers, intellectuals, beaureaucrats, producers, and consumers), and the alienation of social institutions (the state, the church, and cultural institutions).

Alienation of Self: A Self can be alienated either from something, or somebody, or from itself. According to the different aspects or sides of the self, the Self alienation may be classified as alienation from nature, alienation from fellow men, or alienation of the self from its body, its feelings, its needs, or its creative possibilities.

Alienation through others: There are different kinds of alienation of things (stealing, giving, and buying and selling). Alienation of Self can be either alienation through others, or alienation through oneself.

Religious Alienation: It denotes estrangement between God and his worshippers. The man, by his sin and indifference, alienates himself from a loving Father, is a distinguishing feature of the Judaic and Christian religious traditions. St.Augustine emphasises that when the Omnipotent God reaches out to the individual soul, the reconciliation begins. The man, who suffers from psychical unrest and desires, and therefore yearns for something to save him, expresses the joy and contentment when the estrangement with his Father is over. The sin is purged through rituals, and man purged of his sins is reconciled to God.

Economic Alienation: Man's basic activity is work and economics is fundamental to man's life. Money is the alienated essence of man. The market process and cash nexus cause economic alienation. Marx writes about the 'alienated labour' and the alienation of man through capital. Marx envisages de-alienation in the communist society.
Political Alienation: Political alienation is marked by electoral defeats caused by people who feel generally powerless. They take the opportunity of expressing their underlying resentment against political authority by not voting them. The consequences of political alienation are psychosis, suicide, delinquency, psychosomatic disorder, wildcat strikes, ethnic prejudice and civil riots.

Alienation may be overcome. Philosophers have prescribed remedies for alienation. St. Augustine has believed that reconciliation can be achieved through belief in Jesus Christ. Marx suggests ‘creative work’, the existentialist’s ‘commitment’, and Freud ‘awareness’ as the solution for alienation. The existentialist finds a solution in ‘action’ and ‘being’, rather than in ‘detachment’ and ‘objectivity’. Freud finds the solution in not only bringing an individual’s unconscious needs to awareness through therapy but also developing a less repressive society and culture. The non-Marxian Sociologists encourage development of a community based action groups whose interplay can provide the individual with a sense of serious engagement in policy determination and can provide society with instruments to combat anomic disintegration.

Joshi has treated the concept of alienation in all its different forms, any one form dominating, and the others on a minor scale in all his novels.

In The Foreigner, Arun Joshi depicts the self-alienation, and the socio-cultural alienation of the protagonist, Sindi Oberoi. Sindi believes in the philosophy of detachment and avoids involvement, commitment and action. His detachment theory causes him self-alienation. Joshi in this novel portrays the alienated foreigner and analyses the questions of detachment and involvement, life and death.
In *The Strange Case of Billy Biwas*, Billy Biwas feels frustrated and self-alienated. The hero is alienated from modern civilized society. Billy abjures the educated middle class society and prefers to live with the tribals in the forest where he finds his identity. Besides self-alienation, socio-cultural alienation is the dominant theme dealt with in this novel.

In *The Apprentice*, Ratan Rathor is the self-alienated protagonist, whose ambition causes him anxiety and leads him to alienation. The novelist portrays the corruption in the modern bureaucratic world. The corruption leads to Ratan's moral fall and Joshi depicts his economic, political, and ethical alienation. Ratan is engaged on a search for his true identity and his true self. After undergoing the ordeal Ratan arrives at renunciation.

In *The Last Labyrinth*, Som Bhaskar, the millionaire industrialist, is the self-alienated hero who always feels a terrible sense of void within him. Som is afraid of the labyrinths in his mind, where the fear of death lurks. Joshi portrays the diseased world of Som, lacking spiritualism. Joshi analyses religious alienation in this novel.

*The City and The River*, is a political novel, in which the author portrays political alienation. In this novel, one whole community, the boat people are alienated from the ruler of the city, the Grand Master. The simple uneducated boat people are alienated from the city governed with the aid of the modern high-tech machinery. Joshi deals with the questions of allegiance—allegiance to be paid to God or to man.

Joshi’s heroes, Sindi Oberoi, Billy Biwas, Ratan Rathor, and Som Bhaskar, are all the male members of the society, who suffer due to psychic disorders. Shyam M. Asnani says: “Joshi’s male characters are lonely, despairing, cut off not only from society but
also from men and families. Moreover, they are pathological, social, masochists filled with overwhelming despair, self-hatred and self-pity” (99). K. R. Srinivasa layengar comments, “... his heroes, for all their education and affluence and sophistication, are but prisoners of their predicaments and inhabit their own gas chambers of self-forged misery. What the heroes lack is compassion, the deeper poise of the spirit, or residuary faith.” He refers to them as outsiders who make desperate “attempts to silence the insidious bug within and reach a rapport with the world” (Fiction of Arun Joshi 39).

Joshi’s heroes attain fulfilment after passing through the ordeal of prolonged suffering. They gradually move from the life of negation to the life of affirmation. Joshi admits that his characters are withdrawn from the world and then they finally return to it. Joshi expounds his point of view about his protagonists: “the first three, to me seem concerned generally about questions of identity and probably, ethics. The protagonists feel truncated, unfulfilled in some way. There is a withdrawal from the world, then a return to it, the whole process making them somehow more whole.” (qtd. in M. Madhusudan Rao 153).

This fulfillment and affirmation of life is accomplished through the women characters. The women have been the suppressed lot throughout the ages and they have come to the limelight in the Twentieth Century. Feminist’s movements and Women’s Liberation movements uphold the cause of modern women. Women are provided with education and encouraged to enter into professional careers competing with men. Women are given equal rights and they exercise their franchise in electing their own leaders in democratic countries. The women novelists focus the sad plight of the
suppressed women and suggest ways for their upliftment in society. Modern women have gained importance in the society. Though women play a minor role in Joshi’s novel, they occupy an important place in the lives of men. They lead the socially and politically alienated men to community and the spiritually alienated men to God.

M. Mani Meitei refers to Indian English literature as a new literature and states it is “characterised by Indian themes, Indian reality and above all, by a new language, that is, a new English, adequately suitable for the communication of Indian experience” (Indian Ethos 160). As Meitei says, Joshi has Indianised the theme and has presented the thematic tensions successfully through the perfect fusion of theme and technique. Joshi has experimented with almost all the techniques employed earlier in the psychological novels of Raja Rao. He has used the flashback technique and has slightly modified the Jamesian technique of stream of consciousness to suit his purpose. Devinder Mohan observes that Joshi has adopted the technique of the existentialists: “Arun Joshi, however, comes closer to French experimental novels adopting Camus’s form of interior monologue” (Splintered Mirror 17). He uses the autobiographical and retrospective narrative to reveal the hidden secrets in the mind of the protagonists. Joshi employs metaphors, images, symbols, myths and allegory and uses fabulistic and satiric modes of narration to probe the mysteries of God and the problems of life and death. Joshi has chosen the difficult theme of alienation and has handled it dexterously. He has expressed the Indian ethos and cultural consciousness in a typically Indian English language.

Regarding his novels Joshi says: “My novels are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and myself....If I didn’t write, imagine I would use
some other medium to carry on my exploration” (qtd.in S. P. Swain 190). Joshi is a visionary who wishes to carry out his mission of bringing a panacea to the world through his novels. M. G. Hegde hails Joshi a visionary: “A man of vision, imagination and enterprise he had the ability to translate into reality his ideas and was able to operate profitably even in the oppressive environment of the British Raj” (19). Joshi envisages hope for mankind in the enduring love and divine grace of God, the Almighty. The introverted men who have alienated themselves are dealienated and make a return to the community. Joshi has presented the dark side of man’s life and suggests spiritualism as the remedy for all evils. Devinder Mohan pays accolades to Joshi calling him ‘the voice of modern man’: “Arun Joshi’s voice—the voice of the modern man—is the voice of the molestation of the modern historical consciousness of Indianism. It is the dilemma of his recurring fumbling in the dark for his traditional faith in the spiritual guiding force” (Beyond the Litany 89).

Joshi believes in the old values and denounces the materialistic world, which has led to the birth of introverted men who are alienated from all aspects of life. Joshi suggests the ways for their return to life. This humanistic approach has made a deep impression on the researcher who has undertaken an in-depth study of the concept of alienation in the novels of Arun Joshi. So far a broad study has not been made on this particular topic. This has encouraged the researcher to make an attempt at a detailed study of all the different forms of alienation as analysed by Arun Joshi in his novels. The following chapters are devoted to the study of Socio-Cultural alienation, Religious and Self-alienation, the Economic and Political alienation.
NOTES


2. An Interview with Arun Joshi, Pier Paolo Piciucco, in JIWE, Vol. 25, nos, 1&2, p.95.


5. “A Winners Secrets”.


7. “A Winners Secrets”.

