CHAPTER II
Man is a social being living in communities, the smallest unit being an individual. The individual members constitute the family, and they live in small groups. In India every small group or class has its own ancient culture and traditions, which are passed on to the future generation. The novelist generally presents the picture of society, its culture, its traditions and its social norms in his novels. Joan Rockwell feels that fiction plays a great role as a source of information about the sociology of a nation. He says: "...fiction is not only a representation of social reality, but also a necessary functional part of social control, and also paradoxically an important element in social change. It plays a large part in the socialization of infants, in the expression of official norms such as law and religion, in the conduct of politics, and in general gives symbols and modes of life to the population, particularly in those less easily defined but basic areas such as norms, values, and personal and interpersonal behaviours" (qtd.in V.V.N.Rajendra Prasad, Arun Joshi: Self 21).

Rajendra Prasad looks upon the Indian English novel as a mirror, which reflects the social and cultural life of man. He observes: "The images of society that are reflected in these writers are complex and unified. But it must be reiterated that we don't read these writers in order to forge a sociology of the Indian novel in English. We go to them to appreciate the way in which they successfully function as lamps, that is, for the light they throw on the Indian socio-cultural-problematic" (Arun Joshi: Self 20).
Joshi's protagonists go against the norms of society, its traditions and culture. This socio-cultural alienation is an everyday experience of man. In everyday usage alienation often means turning away or keeping away from former friends or associates.... In psychiatry alienation usually means deviation from normality; that is, insanity. In contemporary psychology and sociology it is often used to name an individual's feeling of alienation from society, nature, other people, or himself (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 76). Twentieth Century philosophers have given various definitions of the socio-cultural alienation thus:

According to Gwynn Nettler, alienation is a certain psychological state of a normal person, and an alienated person is "one who has been estranged from, made unfriendly towards his society and the culture it carries" (A Measure of Alienation 672). For Murray Levin, "the essential characteristic of the alienated man is his belief that he is not able to fulfil what he believes is his rightful role in society" (Man Alone 227). According to Eric and Mary Josephson, alienation is "an individual feeling or state of dissociation from self, from others, and from the world at large" (Introduction to Man Alone 13). For Stanley Moore the terms "alienation" and "estrangement" "refer to the characteristics of individual consciousness and social structure typical in societies whose members are controlled by, instead of controlling, the consequences of their collective activity" (Critique of Capitalist Democracy 125) (Encyclopedia Philosophy 77).

N. Radhakrishnan thinks that alienation is a socio-psychological condition of the individual and he points to Marx for introducing this concept into sociology, and to Sartre, Camus and Nathaniel West into creative creating. He says:
The concept of alienation, which dominates the contemporary writing in one form or other, broadly speaking, denotes a socio-psychological condition of the individual which involves his estrangement from certain aspects of his social existence. It has also been used to explain ethnic prejudices, mental illness, class consciousness, industrial conflict, political apathy and extremism. It was Marx, following and amending the idealist conception of alienation as exemplified in the writings of Hegel, who first introduced the concept into the sociological theory. Though Marx's analysis was made in the 1840s it was only in the 1930s that Sartre, Camus and Nathaniel West introduced this theme in creative writing (134).

Elizabeth B. Hurlock defines the characteristics of a socially and culturally alienated person as "reserved, listless, having withdrawn behaviour, self-bound and concerned with his own interests and welfare. Such a person, causes troubles to others by being noisy, boisterous, and shows off, by resisting authority, ignoring rules, regulations and rejecting the accepted cultural mores regarding behaviour, speech and dress" (Psychograph of An Alienated Hero 104). Elizabeth B. Hurlock further writes:

In general, the alienation is marked by such unsocial behaviour as teasing and bullying, making unpleasant comments, being hypercritical, intentionally annoying people, lying and being sneaky, raising alibis or projecting blame on others and being sullen, sulky and moody. People characterized by the socially ineffective syndrome are annoying to others, while those characterized by the recessive and socially disinterested are so distasteful that others have no desire to have anything to do with them (qtd.in Susheel K.Sharma, Psychograph 104).
Susheel K. Sharma feels, "Sindi's case, in Foreigner, is not a study of an individual but 'the whole lot of mankind' suffering from the modern malaise of cultural estrangement, social isolation and self estrangement" (Philosophical Reverberation 94). Sindi is tossed from country to country from his childhood. Sindi is a victim of dislocation, which results in socio-cultural alienation in him.

Sindi is the offspring of a mixed parentage—his mother British and his father an Indian. He becomes an orphan when his parents die in an air crash near Cairo. Since he has lost his parents at the age of four, his parents have become strangers to him. The only relative, for whom he has formed some affection, is his maternal uncle who has brought him up. The childhood instability has made him lonely and he has felt himself a stranger everywhere—in Kenya where he is born and brought up, in London where he has had his schooling, in Boston in America where he has studied as well as worked, and in India, the land of his ancestors where he finally has arrived. Sindi tells Karl that because he is born an Indian he is looked upon with contempt by the Europeans: "So what about the world? I was born an Indian and had been spat upon; had I been a European, I would have done the spitting. What difference did it make? I would still die and be forgotten by the world. And spitting hadn't made the world's big shots any happier than we were. What was the point, then, in fighting these straw men who suffered as much at the hand of existence as I?" (F 30)

Sindi explains that his foreignness lay within himself and he can not leave it behind wherever he goes. He says that his foreignness is due to the feeling of insecurity caused by the death of his uncle. Sindi's socio-cultural alienation is due to the loss of his parents, and then the death of his uncle. He reasons out thus: "I hadn't
felt like that when my uncle was living. It wasn't that I loved him very much or anything — as a matter of fact we rarely exchanged letters — but the thought that he moved about in that small house on the outskirts of Nairobi gave me a feeling of having an anchor. After his death the security was destroyed" (65).

A. A. Sinha remarks that cultural interaction manifests itself in the experience of dislocation, which results in the anguish of alienation. He notes: Pulled by two cultures, caught between exile and home coming, rendered homeless both at home and abroad, they get often doomed to a pallid, savourless, asocial existence. People without roots or roles became dysfunctional, neurotic and infinitely sad without the dignity of tragedy because they possess no sense of affiliation to any particular culture or their royalty to a culture is not accepted as real (Anguish11). A. A. Sinha says: “Sindi’s dilemma is socio-psychological. His is a case of sociological anomic resulting in ontological insecurity, or the psychosis of engulfment” (Anguish 21).

Sindi and Babu of Foreinger, Romi and Billy of Strange Case, and Som Bhaskar of Last Labyrinth are all placed in similar situations, in the sense that they are students who study in Western Universities and then return to India. Sindi has completed his doctoral degree in mechanical engineering and Babu has joined engineering in the University at Boston. Romi comes to New York from a mid-western university for a summer course at Columbia, and shares the room of Billy, the research scholar, doing Ph.D in Anthropology in the University at Columbia. Som discontinues his education because of the sudden demise of his father. All of them experience socio-cultural alienation in America as well as in India. In America it is the common experience of the immigrant. M. Mani Meitei referring to the protagonists of Joshi writes, "Their English education and western degrees are of little help to discard their unconscious bond with age-old Indian ethos and cultural heritage.
Arun Joshi very ably deals with this theme of emotional dominance of man over his intellectual and orthodox values of life, stressing the need for the individual to remain faithful to life, responding to it in a healthy primitive manner (Indian Ethos 166).

Sindi feels himself an alien in the midst of the Americans, even when he is surrounded by a crowd of people dancing around him. He sees the distorted image of the faces of people reflected in the cheap mirror in the bar. It makes him "feel even more like an alien". He wonders, "how you can be in a crowded room like that and still feel lonely, like you were sitting in your own tomb" (F 24). Sindi says he used to feel lonely whenever it snows or rains. He says: "It gives me a sense of aloneness and that is about the only way of feeling alone in these maniac cities" (102). Sindi disparages American society, which he finds devoid of humanism. Sindi tells June that he is not "made for America", since he finds America much "too sterilized", and "clean and optimistic and empty". He says he wishes to live among human beings, and not among machines, and if he continues to live in America for some more time he will go mad. He thinks: "America is a place for well-fed automatons rushing about in automatic cars" (95).

Babu, a minor character in Foreigner, arrives in the U. S. A to pursue his studies. America excites him and he admires the Americans. He bemoans that he is not born an American. Commenting about this Sindi writes: "‘I like their dash’, Babu said enthusiastically. ‘Indians are so underdeveloped as compared to them. Sometimes I wish I had been born in America. Not that I have anything against India but there is nothing to beat America’ " (96). In spite of his wish to live in America, his short stay in America makes him feel lonely and alienated, and he is filled with nostalgia for his home country, India. He is struck by the difference between the cultures of these two nations, India and America. He is reminded of the Indian hospitality, which the
Indians show to the foreigners, who visit their country. Babu says: "If we meet Americans in Delhi we take great interest in them, don't we?" Babu expects the same in America and feels hurt when nobody shows interest in him when he tries to talk to them in the streets. Sindi comforts him by saying that the Americans are busy people and are "pretty good people on the whole" (21). Babu finds the place "cold and lonely" and feels his Indian friend, Sindi, more helpful than the Americans. Yet he does not "want to mix with Indians all the time", because as he tells June, "You don't develop fully if you stick around only with your own countrymen". June points out the reason why the outsiders feel alone and alienated in America: "Americans have their own faults, you know. You may not find them very congenial towards foreigners".

Romi Sahai (SC) says that he and his friend, Billy Biwas are able to overcome the alienation, and the feeling of loneliness with which every Indian is affected, during their long stay in America, because they had strong roots in Indian tradition and culture: "We also had the advantage of a shared background. In spite of a somewhat longish stay in America, neither of us had lost our roots in India or in the city of Delhi, nor did we suffer much, except for passing spells of loneliness, from that alienation that many other Indians seemed to be burdened with" (SC 25).

Sindi (F) decides to go over to India the land of his ancestors to get away from America, and to escape from his decayed self. He shifts his abode from America to India in the hope of escaping from his socio-cultural alienation resulting out of intercultural and inter-racial relationships; but he feels that he is in the wrong: "Like many of my breed, I believed erroneously that I could escape from a part of myself by hopping from one land mass to another" (F 187). Sindi encounters the same mad world everywhere irrespective of the geographical variations, whether it is India or
America. He says: "In the stagnant deadness of Mr. Khemka's world I had had the feeling that I was settling down. In truth it has only been a change of theatre from America: the show had remained unchanged. I had met new people with new vanities. They merely had different ways of squeezing happiness out of the mad world. And they suffered differently" (219-20). Sindi feels that he has not acquired the culture of India though he has been taught about it when he is a little boy. His uncle and aunt have hoped that by teaching the culture of India they can give him "a place to anchor on this lonely planet" (186). He remembers only a vague picture of India, which helps him to "put some solid flesh on the skeletal outline of India which I had carried about in my head like a somnambulist's dream" (186).

The civilized life of both the western and Indian cities alienate the protagonists. To Ratan (AP) Bombay has become synonymous with the carnal pleasures. Ratan says: "But my thoughts were full of other things. Aside from the women, I was engrossed in fantasies of pleasures that awaited me in Bombay. I have, after all, travelled very little. The very idea of Bombay filled my head with visions of brand-new enjoyment (AP 78).

Ratan thinks that all cities and all societies, and mankind at large is morally degenerated like him. He says that he is tormented by the "...the vision of the vast pit at the bottom of which my life crawled. Like a worm. And, now, this vision trailed me wherever I went...There were others there besides me, a multitude crawling amidst the filth, lolling about in the stink of their creation, conscious of neither the need for succour nor of how it was to be obtained. At times I saw whole cities writhing in it, the whole country. At other times it was not so much one city or another but a generation, my generation, a generation of cowards" (129). Ratan says his life led in the city is engulfed in darkness: "...I had lived in this city and for twenty years, it
seemed to me, there had been nothing but night, nothing but darkness. And I had tried to find home in that darkness" (120).

Som Bhaskar, the protagonist of Last Labyrinth, finds Bombay a better place for him to live in than Benares. He desires to quit Benares and take with him Anuradha to Bombay since Benares alienates him. He thinks: "It was this city, diseased and bankrupt, wallowing in filth and humbug, it was this city of perversions, that stood between me and Anuradha. Until I broke her from its spell, I should never succeed in completely possessing her" (LL 136).

Joshi feels that civilized societies irrespective of the geographical variations, whether New York or India, alienate man. In Strange Case, as seen from Billy's letter to Tulla, Billy abhors the city and the civilized life. He writes that whenever he returns from his expedition he finds it impossible to shake off the sounds and smells of the forest. He writes: "The curious feeling trails me everywhere that I am a visitor from the wilderness to the marts of the Big City and not the other way round" (96). He detests the civilized life in big cities: "I see a roomful of finely dressed men and women seated on downy sofas and while I am looking at them under my very nose, they turn into a kennel of dogs yawning (their large teeth showing) or snuggling against each other or holding whisky glasses in their furred paws" (96). The civilized life disgusts him and compels him to desert the camp. He thinks: "I am fed up of those slimy bastards who are camped across that river, and I am fed up of the millions who surround me in that wretched city where I come from" (146).

O. P. Mathur opines: "The ordered systematized civilized life which the contemporary man is proud of intensifies Billy's problem of identity instead of resolving it. Consequently Billy is filled with a bitter aversion for the civilized world and appetency for the primitive world" (Existential Note 136). N. Radhakrishnan
blames the modern civilization for creating alienated men who refuse to follow the social norms. He remarks: "In this jungle of civilization, unseen laws turn a man into a helpless isolated victim of a monstrous system. The sense of isolation gives rise to various symptoms in the spiritual world of a man. He becomes unhappy, pessimistic and disturbed" (Alienation and Crisis 133).

Billy Biwas feels culturally uprooted, and socially alienated. He feels that the civilized society, with its degenerating moral values, has created social isolation in him. During his stay in America, Billy chooses to live in Harlem, one of the worst slums of New York City since he finds the slums where the poor people live, "the most human place he could find" and the "white America ...was much too civilized for him" (9). Romi, Billy's friend, discovers that Billy wants to identify himself with the poor though he belongs to the upper class society of India: the "upper-upper crust of Indian society" (SC 9).

Billy's strong aversion to civilized life results in socio-cultural alienation. C. N. Srinath says, "... in Joshi's Billy Biwas we see an effort to get release from society, civilization and family not for the sake of identity but, on the contrary, to lose it, sacrifice it, surrender it for the higher things of life (Crisis of Identity 61). Billy leaves the family fold comprising of his father, mother, his wife and children, the civilized upper class society, and the world, and escapes into the dark jungle. Srinath asserts: "So far as Billy is concerned it is not an escape from the realities of life but an escape, if that is the word, in to real life from the sordid, meaningless existence of so-called civilized world" (Crisis 66).

Billy abhors civilized society, which is in the process of degeneration, while trying to adopt Western culture. Billy says to Romi that the civilized society has
affected his nerves and he has expresses about this in his letters written to Tuula. Billy discusses with Romi the cause of his hatred of the society:

'You did not seem to think very highly of our society in Delhi'.
'I am afraid, I was very young then. But it did get on my nerves. Doesn't it get on yours?'
'I haven't noticed. Anyway, all city societies are more or less the same'.
I know. What got me was the superficiality, the sense of values. I don't think all city societies are as shallow as ours. I am, of course, talking mainly of the so-called upper classes. I didn't really get to know the others. I don't think I have ever met a more pompous, a more mixed-up lot of people. Artistically, they were dry as dust. Intellectually, they could no better than mechanically mouth ideas that the West abandoned a generation ago. Their idea of romance was to go and see an American movie or go to one of those wretched restaurants and dance with their wives to a thirty-year-old tune. Nobody remembered the old songs, or the meaning of the festivals. All the sensuality was gone. So was the poetry. All that was left was loud-mouthed women and men in three-piece suits, dreaming their little adulteries (178-79).

Billy lives with a tribal woman, Bilasia. Billy's marriage with Bilasia is not recognized, and so not accepted by society because it is not a legal marriage—not a marriage in the eye of law. Marriage is one of the social laws. A woman is united with a man, after going through the ritual of marriage. There are strict laws, which preserve marital life.

Sindi (F) avoids marriage with June. Kalpana Wandrekar says, "As a member of a social group society makes one a person and a personality gets developed under the moulding influence of social interstimulation. It is a set of social relationships that makes a person. This is why Sindi's attempt to detach himself from any action is an outcome of a wrong assumption that the process will free himself from social binding" (81). Evading marriage on the basis of his detachment theory is an evidence of his socio-cultural alienation.

June (F) wishes to make their life meaningful by entering into marriage with Sindi, who does not approve of this permanent bond of marriage. June alone wishes to
have permanent relationship by uniting herself with Sindi, and undergo the ritual of marriage; but Sindi discourages marriage as suggested by June. Sindi says he does not believe in marriage and explains to June his views on marriage as his conversation with June reveals:

"But why don't you believe in marriage?"
I said I didn't quite know except that whatever I had seen so far in life seemed to indicate that marriage was more often a lust for possession than anything else. People got married just as they bought new cars. And then they gobbled each other up.
"But marriage is also love, isn't it!" June said.
I said I imagined it was since everybody said so, but as far as I was concerned, love that wanted to possess was more painful than no love at all.
"One should be able to love without wanting to possess," I said. Otherwise you end up by doing a lot more harm than good. One should be able to detach oneself from the object of one's love" (F 71).

When June suggests marrying him, Sindi replies that he is not "the right kind of man" for her, and like some people he is not "cut out for marriage", and he does not "really believe in marriage" (111). He gives further explanations that he "was afraid of possessing any body and I (he) was afraid of being possessed, and marriage meant both" (112).

Society insists on marriage, which is thought to be an eternal bond of mind and body of man and woman. When the marriage is broken, which unfortunately happens in the lives of people, it brings unbearable pain to both. Sindi feels that he could not bear the pain of a broken marriage: "It was just too painful for some people and the point was whether one was built to take the pain or not. I didn't think I could, and that more or less settled the matter for me" (112). He continues:

'It is not that all marriages are painful. Here and there you run into odd-balls who know how to love without possessing. For the rest of them, it is one big illusion that has been pounded into them by society. For a while they go around bloated with their own pride imagining things, which just are not there. And then gradually the whole
thing crumbles and they begin to kill each other bit by bit"...When they see this debris they get so confused that they walk into the first bar and get drunk or go to the Bahamas for a holiday' (112).

Sindi thinks that marriage will not be a solution to their loneliness. Sindi says: "Marriage wouldn't help June. We are alone, both you and I. That is the problem. And our aloneness must be resolved from within. You can't send two persons through a ceremony and expect that their aloneness will disappear" (133).

Sindi confesses his intense love for June and yet his psychosis will not allow him to form a meaningful relationship with her. He recounts to her his teenage affairs, first with Anna, and then with Kathi. Anna, a minor artist, who is double his years in age, has gratified her through him sexual cravings, and her yearning for her lost youth. In Anna's studio Sindi meets Kathy, a married woman separated from her husband. Sindi imagines that he is in love with this woman. When she leaves Sindi since, "she thought marriage was sacred and had to be maintained at all costs", Sindi feels miserable. Sindi says, "But at the same time it marked a new beginning in my thinking". He further adds, "The essence of my life in London lay in what I had learnt from Anna and Kathy" (178). These two women cause him much pain till one day he has a revelation that love and pain are only illusions. Sindi explains:

"All love, whether of things, or persons, or one self, was illusion and all pain sprang from this illusion. Love begot greed and attachment, and it led to possession".
"That is not right", June said. "According to you hatred would be much better than love".
"Absence of love does not mean hatred. Hatred is just another form of love. There is another way of loving. You can love without attachment, without desire. You can love without attachment to the objects of your love. You can love without fooling yourself that the things you love are indispensable either to you or to the world. Love is real only when you know that what you love must one day die" (180).
Sindi is under the false notion that his previous affairs with Anna and Kathy have taught him wisdom, and he has learned not to get involved in deep and true love with any woman; but he realizes he has fallen in love with June, and there will be involvement and commitment in his affair with her: "The commitment had already been made the moment I had seen June at the dance. Now it was only a matter of time. Our hands would soon give place to our bodies and then the worst will come; our souls will get involved. It was only a matter of time" (74). The bitter experience, gained out of his previous love affairs, has taught him that love brings disappointments and frustrations to the soul. Sindi says:

I could already see the death struggle of our souls as each of us tried to claim his own destiny. I could see the tears of bitterness and failure...I could smell the decay of love, the sudden realization that the end had begun. And worse, the fear that there might never be another beginning. The hand that so longingly held mine would perhaps some day ache to hit me. I wasn't afraid of getting hurt, but to hurt June would have been unbearable (74).

Sindi remembers what his uncle once said to his friends: "To love is to invite others to break your heart" (82). Inspite of this advice Sindi falls head over heels in love with June forgetting his detachment theory. Sindi observes: "Then she fell asleep. I stayed awake, counting the broken pieces of my detachment. I counted the gains and the losses and the losses mocked me like an abominable joker" (86). Sindi's friend Karl points out to Sindi that June's love for Sindi may have been born out of pity of his sickness: "There is very little difference between love and pity. One is only marginally less repulsive than the other. They both lead to sex". Sindi answers: "Personally, I didn't find them so much repulsive as overpowering...Love was like a debt that you had to return sooner or later. And if you didn't you felt very uncomfortable. Karl comments, "You Indians have got strange theories. One of these days you will all go nuts, I can assure you" (63).
Sindi starts returning her love and becomes fond of her with the passage of time. Sindi says, "...I discovered that whenever she was not with me I felt as if I had lost something. I even began to grow a little jealous when she talked admiringly of some other man. And at times I made love to her not because I wanted to make sure that she still loved me" (90). He realises that he is getting involved, and he is disturbed by June's deep love for him: "What made matters worse was the fact that nearly every time we met, June told me that she loved me. This only aggravated the burden of my guilt" (90). When asked by June whether he too feels the same kind of intimacy for her, he answers enigmatically: "June told me that she loved me. Sometimes she asked me if I loved her. I told her I didn't know what she meant by that but I supposed I love her as much as I loved myself. To this she would say that if that was the case I didn't seem to love myself very much. She said it lightly but that was more or less the truth" (90).

Living in a family, raising children and forming a attachment with wife and children are not acceptable to Sindi. June, the American girl wants to get married to Sindi and settle down in life. Sindi finds it quite impossible and expresses his socio-cultural alienation:

Several times ...June had suggested that we get married. She said we were both growing old and she wanted my children. It was the first time a woman had said she wanted my children. I felt like a bankrupt manufacturer who suddenly discovers that he has something to sell. I tried to imagine myself living in one of those inexpensive suburbs outside Boston, driving ten miles every day and going back to June and the children I had given her. The thought left me with no other feeling except that it seemed quite impossible. And, consequently I didn't see any point in further elaborating it (F 91).

June pities Babu, who is worried over his poor performance in his studies and fears the wrath of his father. Babu, develops an intense affection for June not knowing that Sindi and June are already in love. June returns his love, since Sindi believes in
detachment, and is not ready to commit himself by marrying her, and discourages possession and attachment in love. Sindi watches the development of love between these two and thinks, "Sex might have been the basis for his initial attraction towards June but it was rapidly changing to something else, something that would be much harder to get rid of. I had seen this happen before with some other foreign students and I was worried" (105). Babu starts seriously thinking of marrying June against the wishes of his father. Sindi tries to dissuade Babu from marrying June by indirectly advising him not to be in a hurry to marry June. He tells Babu:

"Listen, Babu, "I said, "don't do anything in a hurry. Women are desirable creatures but they can also hurt you. We all make use of each other even though we don't want to. In your part of the world you marry only once in a lifetime. It is quite a serious matter. Don't just rush into a wrong thing for a temporary need" (124).

His refusal to commit himself to marriage alienates June who accepts the marriage proposal offered by Babu. June feels sad for deserting Sindi because Sindi will like to keep her only as his mistress and not as his legal wife. She tells Sindi: "I had wanted to belong to you, but you didn't want it. You are so self-sufficient there is hardly any place for me in your life except perhaps as a mistress" (F 167). June wishes to enter into the bond of marriage like an orthodox Indian. The Indians believe in marriage, and married life is based on conjugal love and deep affection between husband and wife. Indian culture will not allow free love and sex. Sindi does not wish to abide by the norms of Indian society.

Anuradha (LL), though not married to Aftab, is supposed to be the wife of Aftab since she lives with him, but she is not married to him. Som pities her: "It seemed a pity that she should be nobody's wife". Anuradha explains her modern view based on reason: "It is better not to be anybody's wife" she said..."You can't marry everyone you love. So, why marry anyone at all?" Som asks her then why does Aftab
refer to her as his wife. Anuradha answers that it is "One of Aftab's little make-beliefs" (44). When Som asks Anuradha whether she will not like to marry someone she likes, Anuradha replies, "I can imagine I am married to Aftab. I can imagine I am married to you. My mother used to imagine she was married to Krishna" (128). She says her father did not marry her mother. Anuradha's view on marriage is unacceptable in Indian culture. Such women like Anuradha were looked upon with contempt in India. Indian society does not approve of such illegal relationships between man and woman.

Joshi's protagonists go against the social norms, and are alienated from their native Indian culture. They are quite impressed by American culture. Sex before marriage is quite common in American society, while it is a taboo either to talk or touch the other sex in India. Sindi (F) feels amused to watch the behaviour of Babu in the presence of women. He says: "...he (Babu) clung self-consciously to the door so he would not touch June" (97). While June tries to teach Babu how to dance: "Babu was so afraid of touching her he almost looked foolish. He blushed and refused to meet her eyes. When June insisted he should look at her and hold her closer he blushed profusely" (105).

Judged by Indian moral values Sindi is immoral to the core. Sindi in his teens, while studying in London, indulges in sex with many women—Anna, Kathy, Judy, and Christine. Sindi enjoys intimate moments of passion and pleasure with Anna and Kathy. Sindi ruminates that besides Anna and Kathy," There were other women and there was the routine passing of exams...The rest had merely been supplementaries to fill in the empty hours of the day" (178). Sindi himself says that he may be looked upon as an immoral man; but he is least bothered about it. Sindi tells Khemka: "You had a clear-cut system of morality, a caste system that laid down all you had to do.
You had a God; you had roots in the soil you live upon. Look at me. I have no roots. I have no system of morality. What does it mean to me if you call me an immoral man. I have no reason to be one thing rather than another" (143).

Som Bhaskar (L.L) is also found hungering after other women for sexual gratification though he is married to an" extraordinary woman", (11) Geeta. Som himself affirms that he is running after women before meeting Anuradha. He says:

Leela was several years younger to me...But I was fond of her...How I had chased to get her into bed...I searched her face for clues that might reveal why I had so pursued her ten years earlier. (111).

But his affair with Leela, the woman in Bombay, lasts only for a short period of time. Som finds Anuradha's beauty irresistible. He falls a victim to the charm of Anuradha, and he wants "to possess her wholly" (124), and wishes to take her to his home in Bombay when he comes to know that Anuradha is free and not married to Aftab.

Som Bhaskar also experiences alienation from his family_ his wife and his children. He realises his failure in maintaining the family peace and happiness. Som's love for Geeta is love at first sight. This love at first sight has ended in marriage. Som thinks that their marriage is a failure. He says: "Ten years with me and she had developed her own guide-book of grief. Saints, sadhus, miracle-workers, astrologers, they drew her. Was it my rages that had driven her? My fornications? Her brother's death? Or some urges of her own?" (62-3). Som tries to find out the cause of the unhappiness between him and his wife. He thinks the failure of their marital life may be either due to his quarrelling with her or due to the adulterous life that he leads.

Som ponders on the theory of selection of bride and he asks himself: "Is there a theory of mate-selection_ not the Freudian stuff that old Leela was so keen on _something simpler, nearer to the plays of fate? Why does one man look into a girl's eyes, another at her horoscope, a third at her father?"...Here was no ordinary girl"
He accepts Geeta to be a good life partner, yet finds it impossible to be happy with her. He says, "I had failed to make Geeta happy, or be anything more than a stranger to my children. My friends thought me a nut" (109).

Billy (SC) loses the happiness of his married life due to his extra marital affair with Rima Kaul, a girl who lives near his aunt's place in Bombay. He says he has actually seduced her by exciting her pity for him and has play acted in order to draw her sympathy for him because he has been leading an unhappy life with his wife Meena. Billy accepts his moral degeneration. He says: "The worst of it was that in spite of this knowledge of my degeneration, I continued to behave as before. I continued to whine and lie and sham. I found that I could not stop....You have no idea how ridiculous and fraudulent it became. I offered to divorce Meena and marry her even though Rima herself never even hinted at such a thing" (188). Rima seems to give him the empathy, which he does not get from his wife, Meena; but Rima leads him to his moral corruption. He regrets his moral corruption. Rima innocently falls into the trap of self-pity set by Billy.

Extra marital affairs of the men break the marriages. The cordial relationship between the husband and wife is the fulcrum of family life. The lack of intimacy between the husband and wife becomes one of the main causes of alienation in men. Billy feels estranged from his wife, Meena. He makes a wrong choice in the selection of his bride. He even sends a telegram to Romi informing him that his marriage with Meena is cancelled. But they resolve their differences and get married. Billy narrates to Romi the incident that has led to their quarrel and recounts his conversation with Meena: "'I don't know what's eating you', Meena said. I said, how are you going to be my wife if you can't see what's eating me. 'You don't have to marry me', she says. I said, 'All right, if that's what you want, I'll tell everyone that the engagement is off'"
Billy does not lead a happy family life with his wife and children. Meena pours out her life of woe to Romi at the cocktail party given by one of the East European ambassadors. She tells him that they are not leading a happy married life. She says, "Things are falling apart" (74), and "Billy is getting stranger with every passing day" (75). She says he has been behaving like this ever since their marriage: "But his moods have never been so bad. They have been terrible for the last six months, ever since he started going to Bombay" (76).

Meena suspects that something is wrong with his visits to Bombay, where he goes to help his aunt. Meena complains to Romi that Billy always gets annoyed and quarrels for no particular reason. Meena tells: "About nothing at all. He comes home angry with somebody, something. He sulks around, then starts snapping at everybody. He snaps at me, at the child, at the servants, until I can't stand it and butt in, and we have a full-scale quarrel" (77). She suspects that her husband is involved in an affair with a woman. She wants to confirm whether her doubt regarding her husband is correct. She asks Romi: "...do you think he is having an...affair?" (78). Meena bemoans that Billy feels so alienated from her that he does not enjoy conjugal love. She says: "He hasn't touched me for six months. Not once" (78).

Meena complains to her husband that he makes promises, which he does not keep. She tells him: "You and your promises! I have no faith in your promises" (79). Meena tells her husband in anger, "Go to your cannibals, if you find me so intolerable" (80), and she asks Billy, "Why he married her?" Billy answers her, "I thought you were something other than what you are" (80). Billy realises that they are quarrelling over silly matters. Romi witnesses one such quarrel and describes it."
Oh, God! She murmured, pressing her hands to her temples, "I wish I were dead".
Neither of us spoke.
"I will go away if that is what you want".
"That is not what I want Meena. You know that. For heavens sake, must we go on with this stupid quarrel?" He sounded more depressed than annoyed (81).

Romi ruminates: "How was I to ask him why he was unhappy? Bothered? Annoyed with his family? In spite of the obvious incongruity of these questions, I tried to formulate them not once but several times" (82). Billy really means what he tells Meena. Social and cultural alienation drives him to the saal forests of the Maikala Hills. When Romi asks Billy, what precisely went wrong with his marriage?, Billy tells:

' Nothing went wrong. It was just ill-conceived, ill-fated you might say. It was ill-fated like a ship that gets smashed up in a gale. Only one chance in a thousand can save such a ship. And only one chance in a thousand could have saved my marriage. It might have been saved if Meena had possessed a rare degree of empathy or even a sufficient idea of human suffering. These, I am afraid, she did not have. Her upbringing, her ambitions, twenty years of contact with a phoney society all had ensured that she should not have it. So the more I tried to tell her what was corroding me, bringing me to the edge of despair so to speak, the more resentful she became' (185).

When Romi points out to Billy that it is wrong to have deserted his wife, and that he has responsibilities towards his wife, and his so, he answers, " I had greater responsibilities towards my soul" (185).

Ratan's (AP) is a marriage of convenience, a marriage, which will give him social status and permanence of job as promised by his boss, the Superintendent. His marriage is arranged by the Superintendent. When Ratan says he has not thought of marriage, the Superintendent says: "...it was the task of the elders to think of the marriage of their children" (48). The Superintendent decides to give his daughter in marriage to Ratan since he sees in him an aspiring boy. Ratan accepts to marry the relative of his boss even without seeing her. Ratan thinks that this is the beginning of
his ethical and moral corruption, which has marred his life and career. He explains: “My mother’s visit was a mere formality. Had not I whored? Was not this whoring? Well, there was no possibility of sleep after that. The question swirled about my head for the rest of the night, … without my knowledge a new vision of life was forged for me, a vision that was to dog me for years to come. I have yet to rub it out of my eyes. It is there, like dirt caught in a storm” (51).

Ratan and his wife are juxtaposed to one another in their nature. She always talks, whereas he is quiet. Instead of talking he always engages himself in thinking and his mind is full of strange thoughts. He says: "But, of late, I am once again full of thoughts, strange thoughts. That is another reason why my wife is annoyed with me. She thinks I ignore her. She thinks I ignore her because I am too pre-occupied" (41).

Ratan feels that nothing can satisfy her and make her happy and her discontentment with life affects his nerves. He says: "It is true her discontent got on my nerves, rather unnerved me. It created for me a perpetual disturbance, the nagging feeling that our lives had been robbed of an essential substance, that I had somehow failed her. The feeling generated in me a great confusion" (72). Ratan feels his wife is frustrated because "she had ambitions; expectations from the world that I did not fulfill, especially in the early years of our marriage. There used to be little that satisfied her then: the house, the food, the clothes, the neighbours, the ornaments. Our child, too, did not satisfy her because she had wanted a boy" (90).

He hesitates to share his plan of confessing his guilt with his wife because of her inability to understand his tortured mind. He ruminates: "So I was not able to tell her anything. I should have expected that. What had I shared with her in the twenty years of our married life that could be called intimate? …And boredom it is, I suspect, that has ruled us...My wife, I imagine is content with gossip and religion and the
pursuit of the astrologers: "... In short, that night, afraid and uncertain, as I stared at her shapeless figure I thought I looked at a stranger" (119). Ratan blames the conventional and orthodox mode of marriage for the absence of conjugal love between him and his wife.

The elders do not believe in love marriage, and do not encourage love marriages. They make strong objections to the love marriages, that fall outside their caste and religion. They take the utmost care in arranging the marriages of their children. The bride or the bridegroom is chosen from within their own social class and community, and from the families of equal social status. Babu (F) discusses about the pros and cons of arranged marriages with June. He says his sister, who is very modern in her views does not believe in arranged marriages. Sindi remarks: "Babu was saying how unusual a girl his sister was because she refused to accept an arranged marriage. This sister of his seemed to be a unique woman" (101). He says unlike his father his sister is quite modern in her views on marriage and he admires his sister: "My sister is very modern. She has very progressive views on these things" (95).

Babu reveals traces of socio-cultural alienation, in the sense that he decides to go against the norms of the society. He wishes to indulge in free love with strange women. He tells Sindi that his father is very strict and will be very angry if he finds his son having affairs with women. Babu comes to America with the intention of enjoying sex besides pursuing his studies. He tells to Sindi," What is the good of coming to America if one is not to play around with girls?" and adds: "I don't marry any one. I just want to gain experience, you know". Sindi muses, "one couldn't play around without playing with oneself and that could be fatal" (23).

Babu's miserable life in America makes him select an American girl as his partner in life. He is drawn to her by the sympathy she shows to Babu and the efforts
she takes to soothe his tortured soul. Babu's father, Mr. Khemka is a man very conservative in his beliefs. He belongs to a traditional orthodox Hindu family. Babu says sadly that his father is not a "terrible sort of a father", but he will hate his marrying an American girl. Commenting on his father, Babu says his father will object his son, an Indian brought up with Hindu traditional values, and its rich cultures, marrying an American. He will never approve of his settling in America. Babu feels alienated by his own culture. He says though he finds America a wonderful place he has no other choice but to return to India after completing his education.

Babu's love affair does not end in marriage because he suspects June's virginity, and quarrels with June. Sindi blames the Indian social set up for his premature death. Sindi says: "Behind Babu lay the stupidity of his father and his sister and his entire civilization. I hated everything that was Indian, as if the whole nation had conspired to debauch June (193). Sindi feels that Indian culture and tradition had contributed to the death of Babu. He says:

'It was his innocence that killed him, Sheila. Innocence concocted by you and your father. He lived in a world of dreams, in a world with sculpture in drawing rooms. In the end the hard facts of life proved stronger than his flimsy world of dreams. His death could have been heroic. But the pity of it was that the dreams were not even his own... they were products of the turbid flotsam of a rotting social class he was supposed to perpetuate' (59).

The Indian society has its strong foundation in the joint family system. The father or the husband in a family is held as the head of the family and occupies the top rung in the family hierarchy. The elders occupy a prestigious position. In such close knit families the male children rebel against their parents, especially against their father whose domineering authority they try to resist. The father takes an upper hand in decisive matters and the children find it impossible to comply with their father's
wishes. This results in conflicts, struggles and the usual tensions, which go with such conflicts. Joshi focuses on the socio-cultural alienation by portraying the conflicts, tensions and frustrations in the mind of the protagonists.

Sindi's friend, Babu feels alienated from his overpowering father, Mr.Khemka. Joshi portrays the fear in the mind of Babu whenever he thinks of his father. Babu does not feel free either to talk or write to his father. During his stay in America he writes letters addressed to his sister and not to his father because he is terribly afraid of his father. The fear of his father prevents him from acting on his own. Babu thinks twice before entering into a course of action. He feels doubtful as to whether what he does will be either approved or rebuked by his father.

Babu tells Sindi that though he has been a good student in India, he finds the American system of education very difficult, and it is hard for him to cope with his studies. He fails in his exams because he is distracted by women and he is not able to concentrate on his studies. Babu is severely warned by his professors that he will be dismissed from the college if he fails to show improvement in his studies. Babu feels frightened to face the wrath of his father in case he is thrown out of the school. Babu says: "If they throw me out of school this time, my father might never want to see me again". Sindi retorts: "Well, don't see him", I said, "Are you afraid of losing the inheritance?" (159). Babu is horrified to hear from Sindi a remark which is a blasphemy spoken against a father by an Indian. Babu is shocked by the socio-cultural alienation of Sindi and gets very angry with him. He starts scolding Sindi in his own mother tongue, Hindi instead of in English, which he speaks with an American accent.

Sindi writes: "He (Babu) went on to say that I (Sindi) was a conceited little squirt who didn't know what a Hindu family was like. What is worse, he said, I was a perfect example of an Indian who pretended to be a foreigner and behaved as one" (159)
Sindi feels that Babu is correct in his remark about him. This is because he is a stranger to Indian culture.

June sympathises Babu who gets worried whenever he gets letters from home. June feels angry with Babu's father and refers to him as "an awful bully", who sends long letters of sermons as to "what's wrong with him and how he should carry himself" (130). Sindi answers that in India, "this is the price of love all sons have to pay" (130).

The actions of Indian children are overshadowed by their overbearing fathers. Babu's individuality is revealed in the selection of the girl he wishes to marry. He decides to marry June, the American girl well knowing that he will be rebuked by his father. In his letter to his sister he refers to his decision to marry June and the fear of the raving image of his father. Babu writes: "I have bad news for you, Didi. For weeks now I have been wondering how to break it to you. I am getting married. I have gone through weeks of turmoil before reaching this decision. At last I have found enough courage to marry the girl I love. And yet, sometimes at night I wake up with Father's raving image before me and all my strength drains out of me... Tell him I beg his forgiveness on bended knees" (55-56).

Sindi accuses Khemka who has used his son to bring pride and prestige to his family. Khemka sends his son to U.S.A for higher education, to study engineering. Sindi tells Sheila, Babu's sister that Mr. Khemka's intention in sending his son to a foreign country for education is that, on his return he will "add that much more weight to your (his) family's social status. He could talk to friends at the club about his foreign-returned son" (ibid.). Sindi feels that Babu has become a victim of false social pride and they will have saved the life of Babu, if he has not been sent to America.
Sindi tells Sheila: "Babu was a pawn in your father's hand with no will or life of his own. That's why he couldn't bear the thought of Babu marrying June. It didn't fit his plans. He wanted to marry Babu to a fat Marwari girl whose dowry might bring him half a dozen new factories" (60). Sheila defends her father and says to Sindi, "You don't understand India and you don't understand Indian traditions" (60). Sheila gives the reason why Babu's father objected to Babu marrying June: "You marry in your own caste. A foreigner just doesn't fit in our homes....They don't know the language, the customs. Their religion is different (60).

While lamenting the death of Babu, Khemka says that he has brought up Babu "with all the care a father can give to a child", and when he was a child he himself has taught him "what was right and what was wrong", and "given him his roots". He has sent him to America so that he will "gain some polish". He asks Sindi, "But how would I have known he would abandon all his morality in the process?" (144). Sindi answers: "Your morality was nice for India. It didn't work in America" and as a father he has given him "a wrong set of memories". Sindi adds, "I would have asked him to go into the world and make up his own mind". He means that Indian children are denied independence by their parents. To this Khemka retorts, "Then he would have been like you. Living, but as bad as dead" (145). By this remark Mr. Khemka implies that he has not brought up his son, like Sindi, as a socially and culturally alienated person, who is just equal to being dead though he is alive.

Billy's (SC) parents are gentle and not overbearing in nature. Romi referring to Billy's parents says, "...they were good people, gentle and affectionate, like my own parents. Billy gently teases his father when they are discussing the Krishna murder case: "Billy, obviously pleased at having ragged his father, winked at me" (53). Billy also displays the tendencies of social and cultural alienation.
Billy goes against the wishes of his father, and asserts his individuality in the choice of his educational career. He studies anthropology and gets Ph.D. in Anthropology, while his father has sent him to the western university for doing Engineering. He has shattered the hopes of his father, Mr. Biwas who feels angry with his son for disobeying his commands and upsetting his plans. He feels unhappy, and disappointed that his son has not become an Engineer, a profession, which Indians hope, raises the family's social status. Billy becomes a Professor of Anthropology in the University of Delhi. Lecturing on his favourite subject gives him tremendous satisfaction. Billy’s father laments that if not an Engineer, "Billy could have become a great civil servant, if he had wanted to" (49). Billy’s father is averse to letting his son live in the company of the tribals.

Ratan (AP) feels the impact of his father through out his life and career. Ratan feels that he has experienced alienation from his father in his early life. He says: "For twenty years I barely gave him a thought but now he grows more compelling every day" (AP 8). He feels alienated not only from his father but also from his father's friends. In his estimate they are not true friends. Though they have enjoyed his father's wealth they have not come forward to help his family after his death. Ratan says: “The people for whom my father had squandered a life time had forgotten him within the year...” (17). Moreover they fail to secure a job for him. As soon as they see him they praise his father and say that Ratan should be happy for being "the worthy son of a great man" (25). Then they ignore him. He finds them bad, lacking nobility of character: "I had no doubt that the company of these men, who I knew had formed the back bone of my father's processions ...were pulling me down to a baser plane. And my biggest dread was that I shall fail to get a job and be indefinitely tied to their company" (27).
A distance is maintained between the father and the children in Indian families. This makes the children feel estranged from their father. Som (LL) as a child has been alienated from his parents. Now he regrets that he is committing a similar mistake in the sense that he as a father, has failed in his duty by not sparing his time for his children. He bemoans the fact that they have not experienced his affection since he has not behaved as "anything more than a stranger to my (his) children" (109).

Aftab says that he has not "entered into his father's room for years" (33). Som points out that Aftab's father is "a very good man. A superior person". Anuradha asks in doubt: "Why can't you visit your father's room?" Aftab does not encourage this question. He snubs her with the reply: "Surely, Bhaskar is not here to discuss that" (33).

Children are the joys of family life and the children are petted and pampered by parents. Yet they feel alienated from their parents, when they grow up. In old age the parents come under the mercy of their children. Romi, in *Strange Case*, comments that Billy's mother is an "...an amalgam of prayer and foreboding_ that seems to perpetually dwell on the brows of old people who are hopelessly in love with their children even though the latter don't much care for them (81).

Modern civilized women alienate men. After marrying modern women, men regret that they have made a wrong choice in the selection of the women whom they have married. Kewal Kapur is vexed with his life led in the modern society in the company of his modern wife. In his oration in English he says: "I am survivor of disasters, of cataclysms, that you can't even begin to imagine...I am a survivor, gentleman of card parties, of wedding receptions, five-year plans; of nosy neighbours, conjugal bliss, well-meaning friends and bloody-minded bosses... of that fantastic racket that passes for the MODERN INDIAN SOCIETY. I am a survivor of
mandacious mothers and relentless fathers...of that great disaster of them all: THE MODERN INDIAN WOMAN" (S 96).

Billy (SC) finds in Meena, the representative of the Western culture of the Europeans in India. He tells Romi that Meena is born and bred up in Delhi. He sees in her a woman westernised in her ways, and a talkative nature: "Aside from her looks, for Meena was quite unusually pretty in a westernized sort of way, the most remarkable thing about her was that she was never short of words" (37). He further tells him that she spoke entirely in English with an accent found in the ladies educated in convents and said "Hello,... in the terribly composed manner of modern city girls" (37). Hearing her talk, Romi comments: "It was strange that her English was Americanized" (75).

Geeta is in western costume when Som meets her first. He sees her in her swim-suit and dark glasses beside the swimming pool of the Cricket Club. Som is, also, drawn towards his girl friend, Leela Sabnis who looks westernised in her appearance. She wears jeans, and a man's white shirt. Som says that her hair is browner than before, and cut like a man's when he first meets her. The initial attraction is lost after some time and the men feel alienated from these westernized women.

Ratan (AP) criticises modern women dressed in nylon saris:

But the crowds were the same... Men in striped pyjamas, their ears wrapped in mufflers, women trailing behind in all their finery, nylon saris glistening like glass. It had reminded me of the grim procession the morning my father was killed. There were many of my age in that crowd and I had wondered if they carried similar memories. Or may be, nylon has taken the place of memories. So, at times, it seems (131).

In Homecoming, the soldier on his return from war finds his sister much changed in her thoughts, behaviour and way of dressing: "She wore strange clothes and shiny chains and goggles. She wore goggles even at night. At times she wore
shoes like the ones she wore for riding. She talked strangely, too" (S 99). One day she takes him to a party. He does not like to attend parties: "As a rule he didn't go to parties, they depressed him and worked on his nerves, but she said it was a party of young people. He went because he had been having these thoughts and he hoped he could talk them over with someone. Maybe, he thought, he would feel a little better, more at home" (99-100).

The alienated men feel more inclined to enjoy seclusion than mingling with people in social gatherings and parties. Sindi (F) denounces the social custom of attending parties. Sindi, the ex-officio of the International Students Association, hosted the ball, which is intended to make the foreigners get acquainted with the Americans. But he feels that this social gathering, instead of creating friendliness, created animosity: "Like all balls, the whole thing was quite a fraud. It was intended to bring foreigners in contact with Americans, but all it ever achieved was animosity, everybody ended up hating the Americans all the more" (FR 24). Sindi says that when he works under Mr. Khemka, one of his jobs is attending the social parties at his house. He says: "I didn't quite know what was expected of me at these parties but I tried to make myself as amiable as possible. It was all a bit of a hoax" (17).

The social gatherings, where there will be a lot of fun, alienate Billy (SC). This cultural alienation is revealed in the way he behaves in America, in the party in the apartment of his friend, George. When everyone is engaged in merry making, drinking and eating a lot, Billy is found sitting moodily in the midst of the people holding a glass in his hand. Then Billy starts playing with vigour on a pair of bongo drums kept in a corner for nearly quarter of an hour to be rid of his loneliness. The people in the room become attentive to the music, which carries a fundamental message: "They (music) blazed through our liquor-stimulated sensibilities, like
meteors through the astral night, lighting up landscapes, hills and valleys, gaping chasms of the mind that are otherwise forever shrouded in the black mist of the unconscious. They had brought into the room a reality that had not been there before..." (21). The protagonists detest the intrusion of western music, which to them is nothing but a wild orgy.

Billy objects to Indians adopting Western culture. He abhors the Indians dancing to the tunes of Western music. He says: "I got up more depressed than I had been for months and my nerves so tender as though someone had sawed them up. And the first thing I hear on entering Meena's house is some ten-year-old American pop record braying like an ass fit to burst, and two of her silly cousins clapping their hands and wriggling their hips as if that was the greatest music in the world. That certainly wasn't the India that I had come back for" (60).

Billy's is drawn by the social gathering of the primitive people who assemble on an open ground surrounded by trees on a moon lit night. He is attracted by the music made by the drummers and the girls dancing to the music. He draws a comparison between American music and dance and the Indian primitive music and dance. He tells Romi, "Well, these dances are an orgy of sorts...just as walking into a rose garden or listening to twenty-four hours of jazz is an orgy". By this comment he means that the behaviour of the primitives is not wild in the same way that the jazz singers, the products of modern American civilization, were not considered wild. Billy further asks, "You remember the beat groups that had just come up when we were in America? What happened to them, incidentally?" Romi's answer is laced with sarcasm when he replies, "They have been succeeded by hippies and yippies, and god knows what else" (140). The protagonists feel alienated from the westernised Indian culture.
Ratan (AP) feels estranged from society only after the discovery of his crime. Till then he has been participating in the social activities. Ratan says: Card parties were once again organized and I took my part. I kept late nights, at times with the Sheikh, at other times by myself. I even attended a picnic or two...added my giggles to the laughter of those whom the war had left untouched, even if it had temporarily shut them up inside their homes" (101).

The protagonists suffering from socio-cultural alienation think that they will be free from their alienation only if they set themselves free from the past. Nature helps Billy (SC) to get rid of the years of the cultural past. Romi says: "He squatted at the edge of a promontory and stared into the basin of a gorge five hundred feet below while the tumultuous drums chiseled away the edifice of his past" (141). Sindi (F) calls the past, "the skeleton of dead years" (49). Ratan (AP) tells his student that when the past troubles him, he has to talk inorder to relieve his mind. He says: "There are days when the past crowds you. From every side, pins you down. It helps then to talk" (21). Som (LL) finds New York a city without past, the city which has given him promise of bright future and freedom from sorrows. He observes: "New York, with its monuments of concrete and aluminium and its svelte women, their thighs rosy and slim under the mini-skirts, its dazzling bazaars and a face that had no past, was the haven that- I needed. It contained, at the very least, a promise that I recognized" (114).

Som is alienated by whatever is ancient and traditional. He thinks: "Benares, Aftab, Anuradha, their haveli all were bores, frogs stuck in their ancient marshy wells. What I wanted, I decided, was to go abroad, get the hell away from this land of obsessions" (113). Som prefers the buildings in Bombay to that in Benares. He says: "A turn blocked out the sun and the sky, took us back three hundred years. Buildings
Sindi (F) chooses to live in an inn than in a residence, which houses the members of one or more families. He detests a house because the house has got a personality, the personality of the people it houses. He tells June that he likes to live in flats, away from his family: "My flat has no personality. There are no sounds, no smells; it is like an inn, you walk in and you walk out, just as if you were in an unfamiliar town". When June asks, "Why don't you move in with a family?" Sindi answers, "I didn't say I preferred a house with a personality. I am happy as I am. Some people must live in an inn, you know" (70).

The house tells the story of the people who live in it. Som (LL) comments: "You walk into your parents' house after they are dead and the house starts talking. As we passed, visitors to this carnival of fossils, this other fete for the dead, I felt my senses sharpening" (67). Som Bhaskar dislikes 'Lal Haveli' the ancestral house of Aftab, situated in Benares. Aftab asks Som whether he had seen the inside of such a house as his and says, "There are things about such houses that you discover only with time" (33). Som thinks he would not prefer going to Aftabs's haveli in Benares: "It looked ridiculous from the skyscrapers of Bombay: a tawdry, sensual den, a dead house in a dead city" (108).

The ancient house of Aftab with its ancient family history alienates Som Bhaskar. Som criticises the ancient architecture of this house while going around the houses:

It must have been built over a long period...You could spot the idiosyncracies of the different builders...The house was built either with no plan or with a most meticulous plan, though directed at an elusive objective. We climbed and came down meaningless flights of stairs...until, I realized, that it was a maze that we were moving through. Perhaps, the entire haveli had been built as a maze" (33-35).
Aftab confirms that this house is built like a labyrinth. He explains: "My ancestors baffled their enemies this way. There are rooms within rooms, corridors that only bring you back to where you started", and he adds, "There are rooms where you could lock a man up and he would never be found. No one would hear his cry" (37).

Som feels his home empty since he has not loved his wife and he is without friends. Sindi views his estranged life led in his office, home and city and regrets that he has not trusted any one including himself. He says:

If trust could navigate men through the storms of the spirit, I would have weathered them all.
But I needed the trust_ who doesn't? I needed it all the more because I did not trust myself, or my men, or my fate, or the ceaseless travel on the social wheel. Between the empty home and the cluttered offices, so many men, unknown, unknowable, each with a quiver of axes to grind _between these two poles of existence, friendless in a city that I did not love and which, for that matter, did not love me, even though it eyed my money, in this whore of a city what I needed most was to be reassured that all was well (63).

To Ratan (AP) his home is quite far "if he may call it a home" (9). He says he lives in a government colony, "box upon box of identical flats" (9). He adds "Who... would build a home in such a no-man's land? Who would sink roots in the desert? Personally, between you and me, I hope to pull stumps one of these days and get away; not that I might not fail. One never knows which is one's last outpost" (8).

Ratan estranges himself from his friends, the room-mates who lived with him in the inn, because he has come to occupy a high position in the society. His only friend is his college mate, who becomes a Brigadier and he says "what great cavity he filled in my life" (17). After his friend's death he feels lonely in the world.

Ratan finds that in times of need he can approach neither his neighbours nor his relatives to request them for help. He says: "The very idea of letting them (neighbours) know was unbearable. At this point a new panic descended upon me. My
chances of receiving help seemed to be trickling away like so much sand. I considered my relatives next. I had none—none close enough, at any rate. My wife's relatives?...if they help me they will not let me forget for the rest of my life. I'll be damned, I concluded,...if I ask them" (113). Ratan thinks that somebody has betrayed him, and this betrayal has led to his arrest and imprisonment. He feels friendless and lonely in the city. Ratan expresses his alienation from others when he says:

I felt betrayed, let down. My friends appeared no friendlier than a street-full of strangers. Over and over I churned the facts in my mind hoping to discover a straw, a means of escape. What I saw in the darkening cell, however, was only a steady decline of hope the disappearance one after the other of all alternatives until it dawned upon me that in this great metropolis where I had spent twenty years of my life where I knew dozens of men by their first names, there was none whom I trusted enough to confide in. None who could help me. I was, I now knew, alone (114).

Ratan thinks he cannot talk about his guilt even to his wife and daughter: "I have no friends, ...and this is a matter that I cannot discuss with my wife" (123). He withdraws himself from his wife, his daughter and his neighbours: "I remember I barely talked to my wife or my daughter or the neighbours. In fact I hardly opened my mouth once I was out of the office. Why I kept blabbering at the office I do not know, unless it was to keep up appearances. After all, I had not yet abandoned my play-acting" (129).

Sindi (F) avoids the friendship of the Indian students, who feeling lonely try to attach themselves to him. Sindi says having many friends “fed my vanity in the beginning, but the strain of too many friendships had proved too much” (9). June's death causes Sindi severe pain and he regrets that he has no friends to share his pain. He says: “June’s memory lingered with me like an incurable ulcer....Her memories might have been less painful if I had talked with someone about her, but as usual, I had no friends” (208)
Meena (SC) complains of lack of communication between her husband and herself. She says: "You ask me what the matter is. How is one to know when he doesn't even care to tell me what is bothering him" (SC 75). Billy's estrangement from his wife, just as his wife has said to Romi earlier, is due to a communication gap between himself and his wife. Billy confides in Romi "I tried very hard to communicate with her. It is another matter that whatever I said got distorted in the mirrors of her mind" (185). His wife fails to understand his values, and his interest in anthropological expeditions. Billy, after trying to communicate to her for nearly over a year, leaves her once for all for his anthropological expeditions. Billy tells Romi," Communication between us was soon reduced to zero. All I wanted was that I should be left alone. What she wanted was promises, dozens of them, all directed to ensure that I would not be left alone. Every now and then we had great quarrels followed by tearful reconciliation and a few days of peace ending in another flare-up. Things had really reached the breaking point when I undertook that expedition" (186).

The self-alienated men face the problem of communication. M. G. Hegde notes that in Strange Case, "All these three [Romi, Billy and Dunia] face the problem of effective communication and struggle hard to be understood" (Distance and Discovery 92). Romi (Romesh Sahai) the narrator of Strange Case writes that Billy's life reveals the predicament of a man who struggled to be understood by the modern civilized world. Romi writes:

As I grow old, I realise that the most futile cry of man is his impossible wish to be understood. The attempt to understand is, probably even more futile. If in spite of this I propose to relate Billy's story, it is not so much because I claim to have understood him as it is an account of a deep and unrelieved sense of wonder that in the middle of the twentieth century, in the heart of Delhi's smart society, there should have lived a man of such extraordinary obsessions (7).
Sindi (F) refuses to lead a social life as expected by the society; instead he feels neglected by the society. Sindi says: "Sometimes the ladies would ask me why I wasn’t married and who my parents were, but by and large they ignored me. Later I was told that had I been richer and from a ‘respectable family’ or had I belonged to a family at all, I would have had a much more difficult time avoiding offers of marriage” (17). Sindi finds it difficult to understand the social life of India. When Khemka asks about his social life, Sindi thinks, "His interest in it puzzled me a bit in the beginning. I had only one life and it could be called by whatever name one wished" (47).

Khemka adapts a paternal attitude towards Sindi and advises him that "...to move up in India one needed good contacts and that such contacts could not be developed without a proper social life” (48). Sindi’s socio-cultural alienation is revealed in his reply: "I told him politely I wasn't interested in moving up. A proper social life therefore was not quite necessary for me" (48). Romi (SC) expresses the same view when Meena talks to them about the horsemen and then about the sportsmen: "Both Billy and I were new to India and knew very little of what she was saying. We knew even less of the social life of the various gentlemen, an aspect that apparently interested Meena quite a bit" (39).

Joshi’s protagonists are best examples of the social and cultural alienation, which affects man in the modern civilized society. They are self-alienated men who alienate themselves from all social institution, and from Religion, which is one of the important institutions in society. Such men are introvert in character. Because of their reserved nature they talk less while the women talk more. They do not talk to relieve the tension in their mind. They build a shell around themselves and live inside this shell of their own creation. They refuse to come out of their shell in order to involve
themselves in action. They are afraid of involvement and commitment in life. They find fault with the creator for their miserable plight. Unlike the men, the women take refuge in God. Self-alienation and Religious alienation of Joshi's protagonists are dealt with in the next chapter.
NOTES
