CHAPTER IV
Joshi’s portrayal of economic and political alienation is based on the existential philosophy that man is economically alienated by the market process and cash nexus, and politically alienated by the State and its administrations. Man, instead of controlling money, and the processes of the market, is being controlled by them. Sociologists have believed that this sense of alienation has intensified in the modern capitalism and bureaucratic socialism. Karl Marx, who has transformed Hegel’s philosophy of alienation into a secular and materialistic idea, has given an economic interpretation to alienation. He has taken into consideration the socio-economic situation of the worker in capitalist society, and propounded his theory. He says that people are alienated from their fellow human beings because of economic competition and class hostility. Man is alienated not only from the products of his own activity, but also from his productive activity. Man’s labour instead of being spontaneous and creative is compelled. Man is faced with the problem of alienated labour, since he cannot fulfill his “species being” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 574) in work. The essence of man remains unrealized. He sees the cause for such a condition in Capitalism.

Neo-Marxists, Erich Fromm and the philosopher Herbert Marcuse, have blamed modern civilization for failing to realize the creative potential of human nature. They talk of the false consciousness of man, and the distortion of his character imposed under capitalism. The individual becomes out of touch with his inner self because he is not involved in his work. His work is not intrinsically rewarding but is a mere means to
extrinsic rewards such as salary and promotion. Erich Fromm distinguishes four basic types of self-alienated or nonproductive character orientations— the receptive, hoarding, exploitative, and marketing orientation. He thinks of marketing orientation as a modern product, typical of twentieth-century capitalism. Ambition is the first step to economic prosperity, and the alienated heroes are found to be lacking in ambition. Sometimes ambition leads the protagonists to alienation. Ambition causes anxiety and frustration, and makes the aspirant to forget one’s values.

Modern civic society has caused the political alienation, which is the result of the decline of the community based on tradition, and the corresponding emergence of a secular society based on mass action. It is responsible for creating the sense of powerlessness and estrangement. The Encyclopedia of Psychology defines Political alienation thus:

Political alienation, or disaffection, is basically a feeling of dissatisfaction, disillusionment, and detachment regarding political leaders, governmental policies, and the political system. Feeling of political disaffection comprises at least five components: powerlessness, discontentment, distrust, estrangement and hopelessness (48).

Due to their disaffection they cause electoral defeats and express their resentment against political authority by not voting them. Alienation may also occur when a group loses its leader who has represented its dreams and hopes. People reveal their alienation by indulging in wildcat strikes and civil riots.

In The City and the River, Joshi portrays the political alienation of one whole community, the river populace, namely the boat people or boatmen, that resulted from the lust for power, and its misuse by the Grand Master, who rules the city. In this novel the Grand Master is an alienated character, who in turn causes alienation in others. The
Grand Master feels that the boat people are rebellious, and the city has “become an unruly place, a plaything of asuras” (15). The Boat people alienate him and he refers to them as asuras, the demons. He says: “Their insolence, already great, has crossed all limits. At the slightest excuse they raise their rebellious standards and not a day passes when the streets are not filled with their vulgar din” (16). In an ancient, and obsolete language, to impress the people, the Astrologer, the master mind behind the Grand Master, makes this announcement: “God has sent the Grand Master to be your servant. Looking after this city is like a yajna for him, his life is the ahuti” (17).

The Grand Master wishes to suppress the boat people, who are growing in number. He is afraid of the enemies “within and without” (CR 21). M. Mani Meitei remarks: “Enemy within is more psychological than real and is a sign of spiritual aridity and moral bankruptcy in man. This happens when man is blinded by vested interests and narrow aims” (Man, God 49). The Grand Master says: “As their numbers grow so does their discontent and so much easier does it become for the spark of rebellion to ignite” (CR 16). So he wishes to curb the population explosion. He says: “Let their numbers be frozen by law, the force of arms if necessary. Nothing else will suffice” (16). This makes the Astrologer suggest the passing of the law namely the Triple Way. The first law is: the Grand Master is the father of the city and all the citizens are his children equally. This implies that they should pay their allegiance to the Grand Master. The second law is: the wealth of the city belongs to everyone and so there shall be only one child to a mother. The third law is: the man who goes against the Triple Way will be received without mercy and may be treated according to the Grand Master’s law of compassionate righteousness (18).
The Headman of the Boatpeople, a woman, tries to bring to the notice of the Astrologer, the Grand Master’s principal adviser, the sad plight of the boatpeople. She says that “God’s law is twisted in the hands of the Seven Hills” (20). The Seven Hills stand symbolic of the officialdom. She points out the truth that there are plenty of grains grown with the water from the river, which flows from the mountains; but those who toil do not enjoy the fruits of their labour. She says: “...the crop is then pasted with labels of money and the mud-people do not have the money and so they are seen running here and there fighting over trifles...Let us hope a time will come when things will be better. For the moment, though, those who carry the city on their backs have to smell of sweat and look unkempt” (20). When the Astrologer refers to her about the enemies within and without, and the enemies who are a danger to the existence of the city, the Headman by her answer to the Astrologer implies that the enemies within are more dangerous than the enemies without. She says: “But of the enemy without, all know it is the boatmen’s blood down the ages that has saved the city from annihilation” (21).

The city functions under the democratic government with the Grand Master as the head of this government assisted by the Astrologer, the various Ministers, and the Council Members, the representatives of the people. The Astrologer tells the Grand Master that since they cannot rule the city without the help of the boat people, they should find subtler ways of governing them till the Grand Master’s prophecy about the coming of a King comes true. The Grand Master accepts the Astrologer’s advice and he says: “As a first step it will be enough if our people are taught a lesson. Let the fear of the palace_ and its laws_ be first drummed into them. Let us, I suggest, declare a new era. Let the new era discipline our people and provide new food for their thoughts. Let it lift
the darkness from the land and prepare for the glorious dawn of which your dream is a harbinger” (22).

The Astrologer announces on an auspicious day the beginning of a new era known as ‘The Era of Ultimate Greatness’ (23), mainly with the aim of suppressing the boatpeople, and the new era begins with the arrest of a boatman and a clown. The new era fills the people with fear and foreboding. The Astrologer accepts that ever since the beginning of the New Era, there is “suppressed anger in the city” (45). The Commissioner issues orders for further arrests. The arrests are conducted stealthily at night, and the Commissioner gives the list of people to be arrested, and a black card with the name of the person to be arrested. The arrested persons are taken to the prison, ironically, named Gold Mines.

The Grand Master violates human rights and values. As a foolish dictator he issues orders to arrest the son, wife, daughter or the neighbour, in case the police officers cannot arrest the wanted person. One such arrest is the arrest of Patanjali, a very old man, the neighbour of Bhumiputra, known as Master Bhoma, the Teacher of Mathematics, who educates the boatmen regarding the absurd government of the Grand Master. When Dharma, the police officer, comes to arrest Patanjali, he finds out that Patanjali is “ninety years old but he had neither income nor relatives nor a permanent place of residence” (25).

The Police Commissioner tells the Professor that the boatmen have become treacherous and the city needs a “violent clean-up” (82), and that the New Era with the Triple Truth framed to govern the city is not enough. He says that the city is full of poor people and adds: “...the poorer a city is the more guns its government needs” (82). He
mentions about the system of Justice operating in the city. He says: “There are two systems of justice in the world, Professor. Citizens are either presumed to be innocent and we have to prove their guilt or the citizens are assumed potential criminals and they have to prove their innocence” (83). He says that their city follows the second system, that is, the citizen has to prove his innocence. He charges the Professor, and Master Bhoma with the offence of insubordination.

Hypocrisy and duplicity marks the conduct of the Grand Master. In the sugar coated language of an expert politician, he says that as a ruler of the city he looks to the welfare of the people, while actually he is engaged in suppressing the larger section of the population—the boat people. He tells his Minister: “I accept your command which, for me, is the command of the city, the command of the humblest of the humble and the wretched of the wretched. With your help, and God’s grace, I shall not cease my labours until I have wiped away every tear from the eye of every citizen of this great city” (213).

The Grand Master says that the people are headstrong and cannot be trusted. The city has the rule of law and if they are aggrieved they can send the petition to the government. Instead of doing this they come out in boats and blockade the river. They are making mischief and so he is forced to use the police force against them. This wrong view of the boatpeople makes him adopt strict measures to subdue them. He uses modern hi-tech weapons such as helicopters, tanks, gunships, fire bullets, and lasers.

The Grand Master refuses to believe that his people are unhappy under his government when it is reported to him by the Master of Rallies. He says: “I must listen to him [Master of Rallies] even though he seems rather obsessed with the silly notion that our people are unhappy” (58). The Grand Master is vain and obstinate in refusing to
accept the fact that the people are sad. He says to the Astrologer: "The boatman is bent upon being killed, but it is we who reap the blame. It is most unfair. Even so until now, Astrologer, I have been gentle with the boatmen. You know that. Now, however, their mischief has crossed all bounds, has indeed become a matter of worry for the city-state itself" (58). T. Padma remarks that Joshi presents "a class struggle, a spirited protest by the poor and the helpless against the exploitation and overbearing domination of the rich and the powerful" (109)

The Grand Master is over ambitious, and he wishes to become the King. Equally ambitious are the Minister for Trade, and the Education Adviser, who engage in a conspiracy against the Grand Master to become the next Grand Master. The Education Adviser, is ambitious "ever since he was a student, was to win the war, the war for a place in the sun...the place of the Grand Master or, at worst, his deputy...As a veteran conspirator the Education Adviser knew that conspiracies were double-edged weapons" (61). The Minister for Trade tells the Hermit his motive in trying to become the Grand Master, replacing the present ruler. He says: "...the Grand Master was headstrong and perhaps had ambitions beyond those of a Grand Master" (68). He grows suspicious of the Grand Master and tells General Starch that the Grand Master is conspiring to become a king, and that he has gathered some valuable information regarding Master Bhoma. He tells General Starch: "...a big conspiracy is afoot headed by this man. Of course, Bhoma must be just a code name_ no one can have such a name. I won't be surprised, if the Grand Master is behind it all. Master Bhoma, I have reason to believe, is his own man. Just putting up a feint, as you say in the army" (108). The city abounds in conspirators, and the conspiracies go on till the end of the city.
Bhumiputra starts an indirect attack on the Grand Master by circulating among the boat people the parable of the naked king, who imagines that he is wearing an invisible robe. The Education Adviser tells his son that Bhumiputra is arrested on the charge of carrying on a propaganda against the Grand Master, but Bhumiputra has disappeared before reaching the prison. The Education Adviser plans with his son to takeover the conspiracy of Bhumiputra inorder to blackmail the Grand Master, and then to topple his government. The Minister for Trade, too, wishes to become the ruler of the city. The Hermit tells him: "...it is bad enough that one man wants to become a king. Two such men can only spell chaos. While the two of you struggle for the crown, the city, I suppose, must burn" (113).

The Professor reads false news published in the newspaper owned by the Astrologer. The Master of Rallies controls the radio, and video of the satellite on the Grand Master's behalf because the satellite is the private property of the Grand Master. The Professor feels sorry to read the news item given by the Police Commissioner that Master Bhoma has been accused as a traitor. Master Bhoma has been called the kingpin of the conspiracy. It is written that Bhoma, a teacher who has turned a spy, commands a vast network in colleges, universities and institutions of higher learning. The news continues: "These institutions, the Commissioner said, coming as they do under the jurisdiction of the Education Adviser, have always shown proneness to anti-government conspiracies, Master Bhoma's being the latest" (87). The city's information agencies, and the mass media are monopolised by the ruler, the Grand Master, and thus the relationship between the ruler and the ruled is violated.
The Astrologer makes a flowery speech while addressing the people assembled on the occasion of the Festival of the River and tells them that he sometimes wonders what the fate of the world would be if all men are equally insignificant before the immortal Time represented by the river. He asks: “Who then would be there to carry this world, carry this city, to the other shore?” (98). Then he tells the people of his vision. He says that in his vision he has seen God himself waging war with the demons. He remembers God telling him in his vision, “When evil becomes unendurable I take human form. Seek and, even in your own city, you shall find Me” (98). He says that to speed up the rebirth of the city they have declared the New Era. He says that there are demons in the city, who are “determined to strike at the very root of our lives, at the very heart of the man whose heartbeat is the heartbeat of the city itself” (99).

The Astrologer administers an oath, which says that he will destroy the traitors of the Grand Master’s government and that he will pay his allegiance only to the Grand Master. The Master of Rallies arranges the procession of the boatpeople in their boats on the river. He has also arranged cheer groups, which send cheers whenever the Astrologer makes his grand speech. The Astrologer by a cunning trick converts this convention of the festival of the river into a Festival-cum-Coronation of the Grand Master’s son and makes him a king. He holds the crown over the young man and mutters words in a language which no one understands, and then places the crown on the young man’s head.

The Professor and hundreds of boatmen are arrested for not taking the Astrologer’s oath. Dharma’s lists of wanted persons grows so long and heavy that a separate man accompanies Dharma carrying the lists. Dharma complains to the Commissioner that the names, addresses and sexes get mixed up, and there is confusion
in arresting the correct person. The Commissioner takes steps to ease Dharma’s burden by suggesting that there is no need to give names, and only quantities be mentioned, such as “three cobbler, a score of boatmen, a dozen boatworkers” (142). Along with the boat people their Union leader is also put in prison. The arrest of their leader makes the boat people sad and helpless. It makes them feel that “their back was broken. They were like orphans in an evil world” (144). The Headman’s eyes are blinded and the Professor goes on fast unto death. His demands are: “One, the Grand Master and the Astrologer be tried for putting out the Headman’s eyes. Two, all prisoners be told their crimes or be set free” (165). The Professor dies in prison while undergoing the fast. The Astrologer thinks that the Grand Master’s image is tainted due to the death of the Professor, and the Professor’s blood will wash off the ugly things that have happened in the city.

The Grand Master comes to know about the Professor’s strike only after the Professor’s death. The Grand Master asks the Astrologer to “issue a decree accepting the astronomer’s last wish” (167). The Astrologer says that the Grand Master should think of the consequences if such a decree is issued, and says that thousands and thousands of boatmen will be released from the prison, and the city will be overcrowded with the boatmen. The Grand Master like a tactful modern politician explains: “Issuing of a decree, does not mean its immediate implementation. It will no doubt take time for the officials to assess each prisoner’s case” (168). The Astrologer accepts the Grand Master’s suggestion because this decree will create the impression of a noble ruler in the minds of the citizens, and he thinks that “In matters of state, ...it was a ruler’s image and not the ruler who ruled” (168). The Astrologer tells Dharma, the police officer not to release all boatmen, and says that “There are thousands of crimes, any one of which could be pasted
on a person they did not wish to release. At the worst, men could always be kept behind bars on charges of treason” (169).

The boatmen spend long hours with the professional letter-writers for preparing petitions and submit them to the officials in the government offices in the Seven Hills. The officers give them receipts, which the boatmen keep safely in underground pots where they keep their jewels. When the boatmen find that no action has been taken and the officials have failed them they try to meet the Grand Master, but they are driven away from the palace, because the Grand Master sleeps during day and becomes active during night after darkness. Master Bhoma tells that it is the fate of the boatmen to be ruled by a naked king. He says that a shadow is spreading from the pyramids and the palace and it may cover the whole city.

In the absence of the Headman he takes up the leadership and asks them to get into action. He asks them to go on strike and not to row their boats on the river. He says that the pyramid, the palace, and the Seven Hills are built with the sweat of the boatmen; but the officers who reside in them are deaf to the cries of the boatmen. So he tells the boatmen “As the great river is our witness let us vow that not a boat, not a leaf, not even a piece of straw, shall move on the river’s breast, until these dark phantoms open their eyes, and their ears give us heed. This, my brothers and sisters, is what I say” (178). The boatmen go on strike. They sit on the river banks, and either cry or drink; sing or play on their one string instruments.

The Council considers the boatmen’s strike as the work of the traitors, and it cancels the licences of their boats. The Minister for Trade tells the Education Adviser that Master Bhoma is leading the boatmen to rebellion, and that he is backed by the highest
powers, and the cause of the palace is advanced in the chaos created by the boatmen. He asks the Education Adviser to form a separate alliance with him to defeat the Grand Master. After ten hours of non-stop negotiations they sign a deed, The Deed of National Partnership, which guarantees the city's cash flows to the Education Adviser and to his male heirs for 99 years. The Education Adviser is also guaranteed the proprietorship of the students and teachers. In return, the Adviser with the assistance of the shock-brigades agrees to support the Minister's claim to the Grand Mastership of the city (181).

The Education Adviser's shock brigades form an alliance with the boatmen. The shock brigades convert the strike into a civil war, and unleash violence. They burn all the public places, and storm the prison, and convert the Gold Mines into rubbles. The police men armed with machine guns, headed by the Captain shoot two hundred boatmen at night sleeping in a hall and dump their bodies in the river. Dharma breaks down due to this bloody midnight operation, and becomes neurotic. He calls himself by the name of a boatman whom he has arrested on the first day of the New Era. He is seen dressed in loin-cloth like the boatmen.

The Minister for Trade signs the second Deed of National Partnership, two weeks after the first deed, this time with the chief of the army, General Starch. According to this deed, the army is assured of 10% of the city's cash flows for 99 years. The army is promised a war every five years. In return the General agrees to support the Minister's candidature for the Grand Mastership of the city. He also promises to quell the present as well as future uprisings. The narrator says: "Finally he, pledged eternal friendship to Minister for Trade, his 'comrade-in-arms', and promised to send the troops out at the break of dawn, and teach the civilians a lesson" (196). The Minister requests him not to
do such a thing and requests to help him when it is needed. The Grand Master comes to
know about the conspiracy and about the deed; but he is not bothered about them.

During the Festival of the River, the Astrologer commits the sacrilege of
substituting the hymn of the great river with another song, which sings the greatness of
kings, and their indispensability to the earth. The Hermit, who has attended the ritual in
the previous celebrations, considers this a blasphemy and immediately declares in a loud
ringing voice: “...they had met to celebrate Immortal Time, as embodied in the great
river, and not sing praises of kings” (97). Later the Hermit predicts the end of the Grand
Master as a punishment for the sacrilege he commits during the festival of the river. The
Hermit staring at the river says: “The great river, consort of Time Immortal, our mother,
who feeds us and in whom our dead bones rest, when men desecrate her, ...sing instead
hymns in praise of kings, the epoch must come to an end” (115). The end of the Grand
Master’s rule comes during the celebration of the Festival of the River.

War, whether it is a civil war as in The City and the River, or war with other
countries, causes economic crisis, and thereby leads to political and economic alienation.
General Starch, an alienated man like the Grand Master, says that declaring war becomes
necessary for two reasons: one, they have got enough war equipments, which may be put
to use, and second, war may subdue the people. He says to the Minister for Trade: “We
must declare a war. That will make the civilians come crawling to us. We have all this
state-of -the-art equipment: guns, tanks, lasers. We want to try them out, before they
become obsolete” (108). When the Minister for Trade expresses his fear that the city may
have to lose many precious lives, General Starch says: “Every soldier is committed to die
for his country” (108).
Karl (F) tells Sindi what is wrong with the world with America, Europe and Asia. Karl talks about how these countries are preparing atomic weapons, and getting ready for war. He says, pointing to a crowd of gay men, “Out of this bunch you will get your future atomic wizards, your missile boys, and yet there they sit, pretending to be innocent of their menace, caressing women whose kids they will blow up some day” (30). Sindi thinks that neither he nor Karl can prevent the war. Sindi says: “I wasn’t interested. What was the point in talking about it?” (30). Sindi’s lack of interest reveals his alienation from economic and political life.

Som’s (LL) grandfather gives an alienated view of the British army that was parading. Som remembers his grandfather saying: “They want to show off their boots and belts, that’s why, he said. He patted the pocket of his breeches. I said I did not understand. Madness, he said patting his pocket some more” (153). Som says that his father has carried “a gun in his pocket for protection and also out of a sense of humour” (154). Som says that Aftab’s ancestors have experienced the evil effects of war, and says that Aftab, a plastic manufacturer, is “a child of Benares, the Benares of taluqdars and minor rajahs” (37). Aftab says that his ancestors are brave soldiers, but are defeated by the English army. He says how the children’s backs are broken by the gunshots, and how they lay on the doorstep dying. He says that after this war his ancestors have come to settle in Benares. He says: “Years of idleness and decadence followed. His father tried to rise from these ashes and pushed his fortunes into plastics” (40). Aftab refers to the sufferings, which resulted due to the lending of money by his ancestors. Both lending and borrowing of money affect the persons concerned, and leads them to economic alienation. Now Aftab is faced with loss in his business. When Som asks him to sell his plastic
manufacturing company Aftab says “one could just scrape through” (36). Som points to him that there is no necessity for him to scrape through since he has got money in the bank. Aftab replies: “What’s the use of money in the bank?” (36). Though Som persuades him to sell his plastic manufacturing company to bridge over his financial crisis, Aftab is reluctant to sell them. Som remarks: “He seemed genuinely at a loss….There was nothing to be said if they [Aftab and Anuradha] were bent upon ruining themselves” (36).

Ratan’s (AP) political and economic alienation is due to the war waged with the Englishmen for the independence of India. The country and the countrymen suffer economically even after the war is over. War leads to political and economic corruption, and Ratan’s corruption is representative of the corruption in the post-independent India. Economic alienation and the political alienation are the two sides of the same coin, one leading to the other.

Ratan, is a very good example of economic and political alienation. Ratan’s father is an active participant in the political movement of India. Many national leaders have risen, and have started creating awareness of the need for political freedom for India. This has made the native Indians rise against their political oppressors. Many wars have been fought, and the atrocities of war alienate Ratan. He says: “Processions continued to be formed and broken _ with batons, tear-gas, and guns. Month after month young men were sucked into the turbulence _ to be imprisoned or shot down, or disappear underground. Every now and then someone I knew was imprisoned, maimed, or killed and for days afterwards I felt burdened as though in some way I had been responsible for the killing” (21).
Ratan’s father is one of the freedom fighters, who stands at the head of the processions and leads his followers. Ratan has inherited from his father, his father’s patriotism and courage. When he hears that Subhash Chandra Bose, one of the political leaders, has called for fresh recruits for his army, he shows eagerness to join the army, and goes to the recruiting center. He is excited about the recruitment and he says: “For forty-eight hours, believe me, I could neither sleep nor eat” (21.).

Ratan’s father has lived for a higher cause, the national cause for which Mahatma has sacrificed his life. Ratan thinks how his father, too, sacrificed his life for a noble cause. As a true Gandhian, his father has fought in a non-violent way. He recollects the incident. Ratan says: “I thought of what he said: There is a Mahatma, a man of suffering. Then I thought of the day he was killed, how he had sat, his arms folded above his head, while they battered him with clubs and how he had got up and taken those three steps towards the sergeant” (141). Ratan thinks that his father will not have killed the sergeant because it is not a solution to the problem. Ratan says: “He would not have killed him because it would have been too much of a simplification, too primitive a solution. And primitive solutions, he would have known, never worked” (141). Ratan’s father has shown his rebellion against his oppressors in a non-violent way as preached by his political leader, Mahatma Gandhi.

Ratan feels that though the Indians have fought against the Englishmen, and have obtained freedom from them, they have not achieved the real freedom— the freedom from the corruption of power and money. Ratan observes that the freedom from the Englishmen has failed to give real freedom to Indians. He says that the true meaning of the word ‘freedom’ is lost in the present political and economical set up in the post-
Independent India. He says: "Freedom. Freedom. What is freedom but a word, my friend? Freedom of men, of nations. No more than a word. We thought we were free. What we have had, in fact, was a new slavery. Yes, a New Slavery with new masters; politicians, officials, the rich, old and new. Swindlers in fancy cars. Some of these men I recognized; others I only heard about" (64).

Indians remain slaves politically and economically. He feels that the political situation in India has not improved after the Independence of India due to misgovernment by the administrators. He refers to a report released by the Parliament, which has created a false impression of price rise. This has led to the panic among the public so much so that his co-worker has cut his children's milk by half, because he has said that he cannot afford the full glass that he has been accustomed to give. Ratan feels that people are subjected to immense sufferings by the officials who govern them. Ratan gives an alienated view of the people in power. He says:

They were THEY. The Authorities. The higher-ups.....There was the public and there were THEY. That there were people above me higher and higher, I had always known. But, somehow I had assumed that they would be closer now, almost one of us. Earlier when I thought of THEY I had thought of the Englishmen. Could it be that the Englishmen had been merely replaced? And many times over? Could it be that nothing else but this had happened? (63).

Ratan sees the businessmen and executives building houses, hotels and restaurants in the vast space. He also sees slums growing behind the tall houses of the rich officials. Ratan observes: "I do not know how it all happened. All of a sudden there was too much money, and too much power. I cannot say. Mine is not a mind that can comprehend such things. But I saw it happen. I lived in a little world, frog in the well,
but even frogs in the well gather an idea of what is abroad, an idea of sun and cloud, night and day” (64).

Ratan says that at one stage he has come to understand the real meaning of freedom. He says: “…freedom meant freedom from right and wrong, from restraint, from decency” (64). He adds that one does not know what is right and what is wrong. The man who knows what is right is not able to practise it. Seeing the greed and the courage of the charlatans the good people also have turned charlatans. Ratan comes to the logical conclusion that it is hard to practise his father’s principles and moral values. He opts for his mother’s practical ideas to face the stark realities of life. O. P. Mathur remarks: “The unclean political and administrative set-up has perverted universally accepted norms and has encouraged the unscrupulous pursuit of wealth and power” (Existential Note 139-40).

Ratan says that he has discovered that the acting force behind the materially successful man is money and power. He says:

And enveloping all this a fog beyond the fog, were words. Like today. Words, words, words. Speeches, editorials, resolutions, handouts, slogans, posters, banners, proceedings of the numerous assemblies, exchanges with foreign countries, memoranda of the chambers of commerce, manifestos of trade unions draft five year plans, books extolling our past. An endless barrage of words, very few of which, I too realized, meant anything, just as they mean nothing today. What counted was power….The men were weighed in Money or Power (65).

His father’s martyrdom brings disillusionment. After his father’s death Ratan realizes that unemployment and poverty are the only rewards for his father’s martyrdom. His father’s idealism appears to be foolish, and meaningless to Ratan. His father has squandered all his money for the cause of the nation, and Ratan is faced with poverty. He feels insecure since his father’s friends fail to help him in his calamity. This causes
political, and economic alienation in Ratan. The old values given to him by his father seem trivial and insignificant before the worldly wisdom of his mother, who instills in him the importance of money in the modern world. She says:

Man without money was a man without worth. Many things were great in life, but the greatest of them all was money. It was not that she believed it to be so, she said, but that was the way the world was made....If I had everything and had no money I would be little better than a beggar's shoe. It was not patriotism but money, she said, that brought respect and bought security. Money made friends. Money succeeded where all else failed. There were many laws, she said, but money was law into itself. If I underrated the power of money, she said, I would be sorry some day (20).

His mother's speech on money gives him a new vision. He says: "It was as though an oracle had spoken and revealed to me the mystery of the universe. I felt very sad and helpless. I felt as though I had lost all control over my destiny which from then on would be governed not by what I worked for or how good I was but by some intricate laws of money of which I had no knowledge. It was a vision,...I have not forgotten" (21). He remembers what his mother has said about money: "...man without money, Ratan, is worse than a beggar's shoe" (65). N. Radhakrishnan notes: "Ratan's meteoric rise to the urban elite from a jobless village boy is entirely due to his scrupulous adherence to what his mother told him. He succumbs to the allies of power, namely lying, hypocrisy, graft, greed, bribery, womanizing followed by drunkenness" (Crisis of Identity 143).

He realises the importance of money in man's life, and he accumulates money by corrupt means. He says: "The more money I accumulated, the more I was dissatisfied and the more I was determined to 'enjoy' life. And all the time I thought of death. As long as I did not have money I had not thought much of death....All of a sudden it had
become an obsession, an obsession that mounted in direct proportion to the money that I each day accumulated” (89-90).

Som (LL), too, gives an alienated view of money, and the symbols of material prosperity. He says: “I knew that money was dirt, a whore. So were houses, cars, carpets” (18). Som says that his father is repulsed by the bad smell of money. Som narrates an incident related with his father. He says: “He had walked out of a bank because, he said, of the stench. What stench? The acrylic emulsion, the bright shiny paneling, the smell of leather?...Or just the stench of money?” (143). Som says that his father has never visited the bank after this, and he too has not visited a bank till his clerk negotiated a loan for the purchase of Aftab’s company.

Romi (SC) says how his great-grandfather has lost his money as well as his life since because he has lent a great sum of money to a king. Romi says: “Most of my ancestors had been bankers and were rather well off until the time of my great-grandfather who was foolish enough to advance an enormous sum to the armies of Bahadur Shah in 1857” (12). Romi sarcastically describes how his family behaved like aristocrats even though they have lost their wealth. He reflects: Romi says that his father has not left much money for him. Romi says: “I can always kill time wishing my father had left money” (29).

Romi observes that “Centuries of foreign rule, the period of transition, economic insecurity,...” (179) have made the upper class city society lose their old values. People no more remember the meaning of the religious festivals, and have forgotten the old songs. Billy says that the people should realize their degradation and should think about a remedy: “But, for God’s sake, they have at least got to think about it. If they don’t the
period of transition, as you call it, is going to last for ever and ever. The only thing that I could see them worrying about was Money: Why couldn't they make more of it” (179). He feels that man in the civilized society is interested in only earning, and spending money. Billy questions: “What need would there be of psychiatrists, research foundations, learned societies, great scholars, scientists, ministerial advisers, ambassadors, generals, had the world not initially been hung on this peg of money” (97).

Money is the basis of an economy, but if it is not properly used it will lead to all evils. One should beware of the evils of money, which will corrupt the soul. Ratan (AP) says how he has started accumulating money even after reaching the stage of surplus economically. He starts leading a luxurious life while living among the poor people in India. He gives the picture of his life, which is a proof of his high economic status:

In this poor land I can be called comfortable even well-off. I have a car, a flat, a concrete roof, running water. I have a refrigerator.... My daughter has all the money she needs; for college, clothes, and the cinema....Our health is looked after by the Government. There are delays no doubt but with a bit of telephoning _I have a telephone which is not common _ one always gets it. I have insurance. I have twenty thousand in the bank which is not a fortune but will tide you over a rainy day. Besides, I would have pension when I retire which should be enough for me and my wife....So you see, I did not need the money (61).

Ratan ardently pursues his career, and starts climbing the ladder of success. He is reminded of the words of his father, the Gandhian revolutionary who has denounced career as bourgeois filth (41). His father’s words make him question his action, and causes him mental disturbance. He asks: “What can I do? How can I get away? I am a thick-skin now, a thick-skin and a washout but, believe me, my friend, I too have had thoughts such as these. But what was to be done? One had to live. And, to live, one had to make a living. And how was a living to be made except through career” (41).
Ratan finds corruption at various levels, in economic and political fields. He says that it does not shock him because corruption has become part of his life. Ratan says: “You are shocked? I suppose the young have a right to be shocked....If there is saw-dust in flour and common salt in penicillin, why, my dear friend, why can’t men be expected to buy proxies in the hall of Death” (14). Society has become completely materialistic devoid of any spiritualism. Even the priest, who is supposed to be spiritualistic, is not free of corruption. The pujari [priest] comes forward to bribe Ratan to solve the problem connected with his son’s payment. The priest is worried because his son’s payment has been stopped. Looking after the financial needs of the family rests on the shoulder of the eldest son, and it becomes a burden to the son, if he is the only son in the family. In India, the first-born, if it is a male child, and also the only child becomes a precious child to the parents, because after the death of the father, the son becomes the bread winner of the family. Ratan remembers what the priest has told him. Ratan says:

He said he would not mind if he spent some money to get all that done. Everyone had the right to a cut. He said he understood that. He could suitably meet the desires of all concerned, the clerks, the officers, of the engineer concerned, even, here he asked me to forgive his impudence, even mine. MINE. He said he was a poor man and could hardly afford bribes but he did not mind it in a case like that. After all, he said, we all had to live. And that boy was his only son. He said he would give me any reasonable cut that I demanded (124).

In City and the River, the Grand Trader goes to the extent of advising Dharma to accept bribe. He says: “You must take bribes. A police officer, who does not take bribes comes under suspicion. The Commissioner begins to think he is on the side of the people, more like a boatman in uniform” (106-7).

Ratan feels that corruption has become part of a life in the post-Independent India and that he has been caught unknowingly in the whirlpool of political, and
economic corruption. Ratan says that corruption is prevalent everywhere, and that it is universal. He says:

Deals, deals, deals, my friend, that is what the world runs on, what it is all about. If men forgot how to make deals the world would come to a stop. It would lose its propelling power. Men would not know what to do with themselves. They would lose interest. It is not the atom or the sun or God or sex that lies at the heart of the universe: it is deals. DEALS. It is a bit like my mother's prophecy, about money. It is not whether you like making deals or you like money. They are simply there, like air (51).

He feels himself a criminal, and a guilty man. He blames Himmat Singh for involving him in corruption. Himmat Singh points out that Ratan is solely responsible for his immorality and duplicity. He says: "Your work, your religion, your friendships, your honour, nothing but a pile of dung. Nothing, he said, but poses, a bundle of shams" (137). Himmat further says that people like Ratan "had short memories, and they forget what they did not want to remember...They were forever planning to do the right thing. They were like travellers who always got on the wrong trains without any intention of catching the right one. Always planning. Never doing" (ibid.).

Himmat Singh feels that the poverty, he has experienced in his early childhood, has converted him into a man lacking moral values. Ratan says: "He [Himmat] was born in filth and in filth he had grown. But he had dealt with them, the bosses, men like my [Ratan’s] secretary he had dealt with them on their own terms and he had troubled some of them. He was not proud of it, not anymore, but he had at least not sold himself, like I had, nor, for that matter, had he betrayed a friend" (144). Himmat Singh points out that Ratan himself is responsible for his moral lapse.

Himmat Singh justifies his action. Himmat says that as a boy he has worked as a valet of a Britisher, and after the Britisher has returned to Singapore, he has worked for a
trade union, until he discovers that their president has taken a bribe. He says to Ratan: “What revolutions we used to dream of .... And all turned to ashes” (144). He says that one success has led to another, and with the success of his racket he is brought face to face with the officers at whose hand he has suffered, and who has made his mother a prostitute. He explains the reason for indulging in corrupt deal with the rulers of his country. He says: “There came a time when money lost its meaning. But he found that he could not stop. He did not think he was yet done with the Rulers. He needed his rackets like other men need oxygen. He needed them to get even with those men that he hated. It was their hatred,...that gave meaning to his life. And to feed this hatred he needed the rackets” (145).

Ratan’s job is responsible for his economic alienation. His successful career leads him to his moral or ethical alienation. Ratan comes to Delhi in the hope of getting a job immediately with just two hundred rupees in his purse, given to him by his mother from her savings. His efforts to find a job through the lawyer and the engineer to whom he has taken introductory letters prove unsuccessful. He fails to get a job and the small amount of money starts dwindling. He lies to his room-mates that he has secured a job. He recollects how he “became a sham and a fake” (28), because employment seemed to be more out of reach for him. He starts skipping his meals to save money for his other expenses, till one day he falls sick. After his recovery from his sickness, his room-mate, the stenographer helps him to get a job. Ratan says: “…his [stenographer’s] contacts and a sudden spurt in the war effort conspired to fix me up as a temporary clerk in a department for war purchases” (32).
Ratan says that he has worked hard in the beginning of his career, and his hard work has rewarded him. He says: “I worked night and day. I got many fine chits from my superiors. My faith in a just and orderly world was at last restored. There were days of hard work and nights full of sleep. There was no illness” (62). He leads a peaceful life with just enough money to run the family. Ratan is hard working, and active when there is need for money, but becomes dull and lazy when he has reached the stage of surplus economically. Ratan bemoans that he has lost his physical briskness. He says: “I too, at one time, had been complimented on my demeanour and here I was slouching and slumping and yawning every five minutes of crisp winter morning. It was rarely that I had seen those other men yawn except when they were ready to go to sleep or something. And there was nothing that annoyed me more than my own subordinates yawning in the middle of the day leave alone right early in the morning (67).

Ratan’s job as a clerk alienates him from his low-status room-mates. Ratan’s reminiscence of his past echoes his economic alienation. He says:

I had left it [room] soon after I got the job _ for lodgings that I considered more appropriate for my class! I never thought I had belonged there. The disastrous three months’ spell, I told myself, was only a temporary set-back. I was, of course, thankful to my room-mates for what they had done for me but that did not mean that they and I were to be clubbed for all time to come. No matter if I was starting out only as a temporary clerk getting a salary half the turner’s. I was a different cut: educated intelligent, cultured, and it was my right that I should rise in life, to levels higher than the others aspired for (32).

Ratan wins favour in the eye of his boss, the Superintendent and achieves permanence of job by his docility, and servility, and flattery. He says that these traits are not acquired by him, but are instinctual, and came to him freely the very day he joined his duty as a clerk. He says: “Docility: that was the word I was waiting for. It came to me
naturally enough, the obedience and the docility. Above all, the docility. It was no put-on job. Had it been so it would not have stood the old Superintendent's tests for more than a week. It came naturally, like breathing" (35). Ratan says he learned from his boss how to be clever and crafty in executing the office of a government servant. He says: “More than a teacher, he was a sort of sage, priest of that obscure cult that rules this country….Craft is the wrong word. What he transmitted was a mystique, a style, a style geared not necessarily to getting things done, but of making events obey your will whichever side it happened to be employed upon” (43). Ratan blames the city, which has contributed to his economic alienation. He says: “…I had come to this city…to learn, to work, and in the process to make my mark. I had come full of hope, ambitions, goodwill;… for decades I had lived only in smog: confused, exploited, exploiting, deceiving, and now deceived. Deceived beyond my imagination” (138).

In The City and the River, one finds alienated labour in the boat people. The Grand Master says that the boat people refuse to work: “They are poor, but refuse to work for anyone except themselves; refuse, it seems, even to do that…”(14). He feels that they should work harder. But their headman has told the Grand Master that whether they work hard or not they get meals only two times a day. So they are poor. The Grand Master’s father has warned him that he cannot subdue their spirits since because they are poor. He has said: “And don’t let their poverty mislead you into believing that they can be bought” (14).

One’s profession, his work or job, sometimes becomes the cause of alienation to the worker. Sindi (F) reveals his economic alienation in his outlook on work or job. He pities the truck driver, who over works, and skips his sleep-routine by taking ‘No-Doze’
pills to keep himself awake during his drive, in order to deliver his goods, “the Christmas goodies” (100). Sindi says: “The man swallowed his pills and put on his gloves. Hands of America were ready to steer Christmas over pathless roads. For a moment he paused under the porch looking up at the bloodless sky. Then he walked up to the truck, erect and confident, ready to deliver his goods” (100-1).

Sindi finds this truck driver representative of all Americans. The strenuous life of the Americans to build up their economy alienates Sindi. He says: “This was the America that the Statue of Liberty had forlornly presided over for decades. The truck roared to life. The search was on again, the search for wrong things in wrong places” (101). The truck driver has to indulge in this strenuous work for one more week till Christmas. This repulses Sindi who says: “Somehow the whole thing had depressed me. There was something wrong about a man having to drive hundreds of miles in blinding snow when he hadn’t seen a bed for two days. He probably made a lot of money in the process, but still it didn’t seem right” (101). Sindi is alienated by the ever busy American way of life, which he thinks is spent in earning money.

Sindi talks about the sad plight of the workers in America, who are thrown out of job due to technological advancement in the advanced country. Machines have replaced the workers: “We have just developed a machine that will throw twenty thousand people out of work and make them feel so small they will go home dead drunk” (172). Machines do the work of man, and it frees man from manual work. Without work, man feels lazy and does not utilize his leisure for creative activities. Sindi accepts that he does nothing in the evenings. Sindi tells June: “I just told you I have got this nice little machine working. I come home, work, and eat. And then I go to bed” (173).
Sindi does not have the urgency to work when he is in Boston, and he explains to June what has made him take on a job. He has been working while learning. He says that class-room lectures in the London University is not enough to teach him the meaning of life. So he has decided to be employed as a dish-washer in a night club. He says: “...I didn’t work to earn money. My mind was full of thoughts and I wanted a different kind of experience to sort my ideas out. It used to be very hot in the kitchen, especially on the dish-washing machine, but I found that amidst the clatter of pots and pans and clouds of steam I could think” (175).

After coming to India, Sindi hunts for a job in Calcutta and then in Bombay, but he fails to get one. He visits the head office of these corporations, and finds out that one will not succeed in getting a job, because he says: “It was difficult to get appointments with the appropriate people. When appointments came, the interviews were perfunctory, superficial and poorly conducted” (232).

When Sindi’s efforts to get a job fail, Khemka asks Sindi what job he is looking for. Sindi replies, “I want to do something meaningful” (14), a job, which will make him forget himself. He further says: “...something challenging and productive, something in my line a production job, for example” (15). When Khemka asks him what subject he has studied, Sindi answers that he has studied Mechanical engineering, but muses: “I cared two pins for all the mechanical engineers in the world,...” (15). Sindi accepts Khemka’s offer of appointing him as a personal assistant to him to help him in all his activities. Sindi reasons out his motive in accepting this offer of a job. Sindi says: “Maybe I didn’t care much what I did so long as I got away from myself. To refuse his offer would have meant many more days of painful brooding in silent hotel rooms” (15).
Sindi experiences alienated labour while working in the plastic company of Mr. Khemka: “I did the work assigned to me and the volume increased gradually. There was enough to keep even the mediocre busy and Mr. Khemka believed in getting his money’s worth” (47). The income tax officer’s talk reveals the fact that there will always be alienated labour in this world as long as there are employers and employees. He mentions about the Courtesy Week, one of the inventions of a minister, who has wished to bring the workers on friendly terms with their employers, forgetting the differences relating to their positions. He says that this is one of the Election stunts, and the observance of this week is quite meaningless. With a sudden burst of anger he says: “Election stunt, this courtesy stuff, if you ask me! All year we kick people’s bottoms and then we give them a week of courtesy. Mind you, I am not saying that they don’t deserve the kicking but still I would rather kick them all year than make a fool of them with this courtesy stuff” (42).

Mr. Khemka says that “his company was one of the best rated by the government” (140), and refers to his growing business as “a growing empire” (15). He boasts that he has gone to America, and has signed a collaboration agreement for the manufacture of air-conditioners. He feels proud of the deal that he has negotiated with the Americans. He talks appreciatively of his air-conditioner plant. He says: “Ours would be the first air-conditioner plant in the country” (F 12-3). Mr. Khemka and his daughter manage the company, and they are strict masters who display rude behaviour to their servants. Sindi notes: “What puzzled me from the beginning about Mr. Khemka’s office was the mortal dread in which he and his daughter were held by the employees. The workers cringed before them as if the man and his daughter were malevolent spirits whose curse could be
all-consuming. My life had carried me through strange places and I had seen men act
from the ends of tethers, but the servility I came across in Mr. Khemka’s office was quite
new to me” (16). Sindi forcefully drives home the point to Khemka that he has deprived
the poor of their money. Sindi says: “It is you who have swindled those miserable
wretches in rags who push carts on your streets and die at twenty-five. It is you who have
been telling lies and fabricating documents just so that you could air-condition this
ostentatious house and throw gigantic parties for the horde of jackals who masquerade as
your friends” (227).

Khemka remains blind to the fact that the success of his business depends upon
the workers. He pays his workers less wages, but extracts more work from them than
what he pays. For the workers remain economically poor. Sindi resents this exploitation
of the poor employees by Khemka. He sympathises the poor workers, and he criticizes
Mr.Khemka as inhuman:

It was a sad sight. The workers’s clothes were falling off in rags and sweat
poured off their backs as if they had just had a shower. What was the point
in all those big men like Mr.Khemka talking about God and pain so long
as half-naked men had to wrestle with a beastly mass of concrete under a
scorching sun? And all for three rupees a day. These are my people, I
thought. And yet I moved among them as if I were a stranger....And
Mr.Khemka wanted to teach me about life! (F 209).

Sindi, besides his own personal experience of alienated labour, witnesses the alienated
labour of the workers in Khemka’s establishment.

Romi (SC) experiences economic alienation in executing his job, which he thinks
does not bring him happiness. He says: “For one thing, I was still not sure that I had hit
upon the right vocation; for another, nearly everybody I knew got on my nerves” (35).
He says that those in the administrative job have been entrusted with the responsibility of
serving the public. He says: "Instead, we considered ourselves nothing short of princes and behaved like the blase English gentlemen that we assumed young civil servants to have been fifty years earlier. In brief, we behaved like prigs" (35).

Som (LL) feels uninterested in executing his job. He has no urgency or need to work since he is a wealthy businessman, who stays in international hotels in Bombay, the city with the high-rise apartments, and skyscrapers, and he is faced with the problem of idleness. He says: "Then, there was the greatest sorrow of them all_ that no one even guessed: There was the sorrow of idleness. I had this idleness to cope with that no one knew of,...It wasn’t that I had time on my hands or that I sat about. Quite the contrary. I ran about all day and most of the night: wheeling, dealing, quarrelling. But there was always this bit of me, a large bit, somewhere between the head and the chest, just idling about like a stationary engine, getting involved with nothing. It made me feel as though I was asleep" (LL 109-10). Surplus brings leisure and idleness. Som who inherits his father’s properties, becomes a millionaire at the age of twenty-five. He rolls in wealth, and there is no need for him to accumulate wealth. Yet he is greedy and he wishes to buy the shares of Aftab’s plastic company. In the end, he succeeds in buying all the shares of Aftab and completely deprives him of his properties.

In The City and the River, the Grand Trader’s profession paves way for his corruption. The narrator says: "the only reality in the world, he knew, was the reality of money" (90). He further says: "The Grand Trader was, in fact, proud of his profession. He firmly believed that he was a link in that unbreakable chain that connected the producers of goods with their consumers. Just as the Professor believed in the laws of the cosmos the Grand Trader believed in the laws of supply and demand. By his lights these,
ecological alteration. Besides hoarding, industrialization also leads to economic community rifts, another poor, and leads to economic inequalities, and thereby to the syndrome of economic and political corruption. Hoarding makes one section of the opportunity to hoard things. Both the buyer and the seller hoard things. Hoarding is a non-sustainable, Dualing war the shortage of essential commodities gives them an demand for essential commodities. People buy things, and hoard them due to the fear of things in all seasons whether it is war or peace. Dueling peace they create an artificial the officials to achieve their end is a common practice with all traders. Traders hoard on „(106).” The Grain Trader accepts the hoarding of essential commodities and diminishing warehouses are available, who is to be upheld to prevent risks on these warehouses and so was thought. That is all that we want to know. Of course, we also have to know where want to know where a commodity is available and, if available which level at which it was bought. That is all that we want to know. The Grand Trader sees that generally traders are least bothered about such things. Because they are preoccupied with making money all the time. He says: „We only the astronomers' attack the trader says that these commodities are least bothered about such what is hoarding? I buy. I sell. If I think I shall get better prices for myself and for the Grand Trader finds nothing wrong in this politics on buying and selling. He says: „But him to sit on a silver chair, which Dharma finds, surprisingly uncomfortable” (16). The wealth When Dharma, the police officer comes to arrest him, the Grain Trader recognises him to accumulate wealth.
inequality. While making the industrialist affluent, it creates unemployment, which results in poverty.

The economic inequality—both poverty and affluence alienate the protagonists of Joshi. In Foreigner, when Babu comes to America he is wonder struck by the display of American affluence. Sindi says: “Babu kept leaning out of the window to gaze at the more gorgeous pieces of American affluence” (19). The technologically advanced country with its automatic cars, fails to offer any solace to the grieved mind of Sindi when he is confronted with the death of Babu at the morgue. When he comes out after seeing the dead body of Babu, the grief paralyses his mind. He feels desperate, confused, and is not able to think. He says: “It was rush hour and the Boston crowd milled around me. I stood on the pavement and tried to think. Nothing came to my mind except the rumble of engines and the screeching of tyres” (6). Sindi feels alienated when standing on the main highway to New York. He says: “The pathlessness of the bone-white road was sad and beautiful. Huge trucks passed us periodically, looking like bright-eyed ghosts carrying their massive cargo to the skyscraper city” (98).

O. P. Bhatnagar says that Joshi’s novels express anti-materialism. He remarks: “Sindi is against both eastern or western materialism” (Art and Vision 263). He says that America cannot boast of any special achievement since because it has fulfilled its basic economic needs such as having enough to eat. Mrs. Blythe says that the Americans have grown taller than men of other countries, because they have got enough to eat. Mrs. Blythe boasts: “We are taller with longer life and there is almost no disease to speak of” (108). Sindi asks: “And what use have you made of your extra height and extra years? You carry heavier guns and have a longer time to make each other unhappy, that’s all.
Can you call that an achievement?” (108). Sindi reveals his political and economic alienation when he shows his dissatisfaction with America. He feels that America, which after reaching high economic standards of life, is creating the gun culture.

Sindi is quite shocked to see poverty in India, in the slides shown by Mrs. Blythe. When Mrs. Blythe says pointing to the pictures of poverty and asks him whether he recognizes them, Sindi says: “Two naked children stood in the middle of a filthy street. I winced involuntarily” (73). Sindi says that it is a magnificent shot of the slums near Sealdah, but he wonders: “why the tourists were so fond of photographing other people’s misery” (73). The sight of this poverty alienates Sindi, who says: “As I watched the putrid humanity crowding over each other I was conscious of being hurt. A mixture of sadness and rage grew within me. There was something obviously unjust in all this even though one couldn’t lay one’s finger on it” (73).

Economic inequality alienates Sindi when he sees it in India. In Khemka’s house a little dark man brings him a glass of water. Sindi notices that his wrists are very thin. He recollects what Babu has told him about the servants in his house: “… the only poor people he knew were his servants” (F 11). Mr. Khemka advises Sindi not to be bothered by what the workers talk, and to mete out a similar kind of treatment that he gives to the workers. He says: “Never trust these lower classes. They have to be made use of, but kept in their place” (140).

Sindi abhors the affluence of Khemka, who is a rich industrialist in India. Sindi sees in Mr.Khemka a representative of “India’s affluent society” (12). Then he starts describing the richness found in the drawing room of Mr Khemka. He finds “Plush carpets, low streamlined divans, invisible lighting, bell buttons in every corner, and
sculpture" (12). Sindi finds in the dining room "an enormous rosewood dining table laid with expensive cut-glass and polished silver" (14). He says: "Mr.Khemka’s house had the typical look of a rich man’s house at dawn" (222). He sees a dozen bottles of imported liquor, which is available only in the black market, and which Mr. Khemka supplies to his guests. Sindi comments on their habit of drinking orange juice in the morning. He sees Mr.Khemka and his daughter sitting before huge glasses of orange juice in front of them. He sees Mr.Khemka reading a news paper and his daughter Sheila sitting forlornly. He says: “Sheila sat forlornly in her silent Buddha position, her immaculate hands serenely folded in her lap. A stranger would have thought that they were worshipping the orange juice before drinking it down” (223). Sindi feels that this rich society has failed to give Babu the courage to face life. He says: “The rich Persian carpets, those sculpture-ridden walls must have concocted the innocence that destroyed him and very nearly buried me” (12). Sindi says that Khemka has not respected his son, and nor considered him a human being with feelings and emotions, and likes and wishes. Sindi comments to Sheila: “Your father loved him like a factory” (59).

Sindi finds rich men participating in all the social parties in the house of Mr.Khemka. Shyam A. Asnani says, “in the description of the party in Bombay, the corruption, callousness, greed and hypocrisy of the so called elite are ruthlessly laid bare” (A Study 76). Sindi refers to the rich people as, “this crowd of obesity” (17). He feels that his world is quite different from the world of these rich men who are interested in talking about earning money. He criticizes them:

Old men grown fat with success came with their plump wives. They drank and then they had gorgeous dinners. They talked of money and how to make more of it. They left the impression that they could buy up anybody they wanted. Perhaps they could, but it all sounded meaningless to me. I
had read much of inequality in India; now I could see it masquerade as company law and the amendments of Parliament. I had no moral to apply one way or the other, but the fat men left me with a distinct feeling of being out of place. We were looking for two different worlds (ibid.).

Sindi comments that Mr. Khemka had “the self-confidence of the wealthy” (16). When Mr. Khemka is wallowing in his riches, his employee, Muthu is living in a single room. Sindi visits Muthu’s house, which is built “near the western edge of the city where the government had constructed one-room tenements for low-income groups” (234). Sindi is shocked to see a zen people living under one roof. He says: “I’d heard much about overcrowding in Delhi but this was the first time I had met somebody who lived with a dozen other people in the same room” (236).

In his ambition to become rich, Khemka indulges in corruption. Sindi says: “It was not until the growing empire crumbled that I understood how it was made to grow” (15). Sindi discovers that Khemka has maintained two account registers, one with real, and another with fake accounts of production and profit. When Sindi asks Khemka why he maintains two registers and whether it is to evade tax, Khemka answers: “Every body does it. What can the government expect if it stupidly goes on increasing taxes. It is a part of the game” (225). Khemka blames the government for his indulgence in corrupt practices.

Sindi finds himself a stranger in the world of Khemka who has been swindling the government for ten years by maintaining two registers to evade tax. When he is arrested and taken away by the police, Sindi thinks: “The crook,…the mean little crook who had to steal money in spite of the millions he had. This was Indian business. So far one had only heard of it, but now it was real. And all along I had been a part of it” (217). Sindi regrets that unknowingly he has helped Mr. Khemka in his corruption. Som reveals his
economic alienation when he says: “I was tired and depressed. The mild, mellow beauty of the twilight outside saddened me more. I wished I belonged to the Scavengers Union and had never set my eyes on Sheila or Mr. Khemka or their silly, ice-cream gobbling crowd” (59).

The affluent Som (LL) finds in Aftabs’s ancestral house alienates him. He comments: “Lal Haveli was an odd mixture of the decrepit and the affluent” (33). He has heard that Benares has been famous for its riches and its craftsmen have provided silks for King Solomon’s palaces, and gold for his temples. Now Som is alienated by the sight of the crowded buildings. He describes the aerial view of the city, which has become overcrowded, and very unpleasant to see: “We looked smack into enormous hoardings….Surrounding the hoardings, like a fisherman’s net, lay a maze of narrow lanes. The lanes were crowded, with people and with holy bulls. The houses themselves were nondescript, built in thick clusters but with a singular randomness as if they grew out of handfuls of seed that one of the city’s million gods had carelessly scattered” (37). Som finds scattered among these a row of white buildings jutting out at all angles. Aftab says that they are widows’ homes, orphanages, and rehabilitation centers. Som replies: “That is a grim list” (38).

When Aftab takes him to visit Azizun’s house, the house of his slave, the poor economic conditions he finds there alienates Som. He feels difficult to sit on a threadbare carpet in the shabby place but is relieved by the appearance of the two children the students of Azizun. The children are undernourished and he finds the childrens’ arms very slender. The children dressed as Radha and Krishna practice dance. Som asks: “How could anyone go through those manoeuvres on half-rations” (94). He sees the children
tired, exhausted, and breathless. Som thinks that they need rest. This makes him to question and analyse the gap between the rich and the economically poor. He asks: “Why were they doing what they were doing? My daily expenses were perhaps more than what was spent on them in a month. Was it this gap that they hoped to bridge with their footwork? What gap could you bridge on an empty stomach, anyway? The well-fed will never be beaten by the hungry, old Leela used to say, unless hunger itself became the weapon” (94-5). Som thinks that may be the children are driven by some other hunger. He says: “May be it was something else that drove them, some other hunger, more powerful than the hunger of the body, something closer to the kind of hunger I suffered from. If they did, they were certainly showing greater perseverance than I had” (95).

In *The City and the River*, the Grand Master and the Astrologer are rich. The Grand Master lives in a palace with rooms, which are numberless, and cannot be counted. The narrator says: “The Grand Master is rich. Under his palace, it is said, there are cellars without number” (13). In the Astrologer’s house silk cushions are found strewn on the marble floor (19). The Grand Master rules over a city, which houses the office buildings. They are “tall structures of steel and glass” (12), built on a hill, and they impress everyone, who sees them, by being “immaculate white” (12). The Professor says: “The Grand Master likes to see the streets clean and empty, in neat vistas that run far to the horizon” (39). The Grand Master is repelled by the poverty of the boatmen and it fills him with disgust: “Their ugliness fills me with disgust. The city is poor, but even in poverty there can be dignity. Must they live in such appalling conditions, go about half-naked? When I look at them I am filled with shame. They are a disgrace” (16).
There is economic inequality even in America, which is a wealthy country. There are slums in America. Romi (SC) is appalled by the slums of America, when he visits Billy who has chosen to live in Harlem, a slum in America, though Billy has come from an upper class society in India. Romi says: “Like most Indians I was wary of the Negroes and positively scared of Harlem” (9). Then Romi describes the appalling conditions in the apartment of Billy. He says: “His apartment was appalling. It was on the second floor of a tenement house that housed at least a dozen other families. It was situated in what must have been one of the worse slums of New York City....At night you could hear the rats scampering among the garbage drums. Inside it used to be terribly hot so that, as far as possible, everyone stayed out on the stoop” (9-10).

Billy (SC) comes from a rich family. Romi is struck by the display of wealth in the house of Billy. He says: “His family were obviously very well-to-do and from what one could see, lived in great style. They had old crystal chandeliers in the drawing-room, a thing rather uncommon in private homes. Portraits of their ancestors hung on the walls, and I learnt that they were in some way connected with the rajahs of Burdwan. Another thing that struck me was that their house was completely free of the noises of the street (49). Billy, too, is alienated by his own riches. When Romi introduces Billy to his friends, Billy bows mockingly and self introduces himself as “The great financier” (36).

Billy says that he and tribal people, are least interested in the economic, and political conditions of the nation. Neither politics nor economics interest Billy. When Romi tells Billy that the country may be disorganized due to the death of the political leader, Nehru, Billy says that they are not organized as it is in the tribal village. Billy also
does not evince interest in the talk about the economic situation in the country. Romi says:

His [Billy] interest in economic or financial matters was even less; so much so, in fact, that I began to wonder if it was not a pose....At the moment, however, it seemed quite implausible that anyone should be so indifferent, indeed stupid, about matters which obviously provided the very sustenance to life. We were talking of the economy of the area and how it would soon go to pieces, what with the wanton destruction of the forests and so on. He was not interested in the question as such, but he did at one point say, ‘It is your contractors, old chap, who are playing havoc with the land, so don’t blame us’ (108-9).

The economic and political alienation of Billy, makes the civilized society to consider Billy a rebel. When Romi first meets Billy in America, his host introduces him as an anarchist. He says: “This is Billy, Engineer, anthropologist, anarchist...and thoroughly crazy, even by Indian standards” (8-9). Billy falls a victim to the civilized society. He is not allowed to live in the remote village in the Maikala hills. The civilized society of Delhi, represented by Billy's father and his wife, try to bring him forcibly back to Delhi. Romi says to Rele, the Superintendent of Police: "(Billy's) 'freedom is threatened, if you want to use the jargon'...by his father, his wife, my wife, by the so-called organized, civilized society and its instruments: by people like you and the Chief Secretary, by that awful squad of armed police, by the old men you just spoke to' "(218).

Romi, though he is part of the bureaucratic world, understands Billy’s mind, and does not wish to take him by force to the civilized society. Romi calls the Chief Secretary, “the supreme God of civilized bureaucratic India” (231). He says that Rele has direct communion with the Chief Secretary. Rele and, the Superintendent of Police step into action against Billy. Billy meets with death for breaking the norms of the society. A
constable shoots a man, who appears to be a tribal in appearance; but he is actually Billy. Billy calls the whole group of men, "You bastards" (233), and falls down dead.

Billy is shot dead, and his case is closed by the officials who conduct the search to bring Billy back to Delhi. Romi ponders, "what we had killed was not a man, not even the son of a "Governor", but some one for whom our civilized world had no equivalent. It was as though we had killed one of the numerous man-gods of the primitive pantheon" (236). He comments: "The strange case of Billy Biswas had at last been disposed of. It had been disposed of in the only manner that a humdrum society knows of disposing its rebels, its seers, its true lovers...nothing but blind blundering vengeance, howsoever camouflaged, awaits all those who dare to step out of its stifling confines. It is a confrontation whose outcome is as certain as the end of solitary boats beating against a maelstrom" (240).

Billy is denied the freedom of living as he wished by the bureaucrats of the modern civilized world. Political and Economic freedom is essential for every man to lead a peaceful life in this world torn with turmoil. Far more important is the freedom of the soul, which too is denied by the power mongers, who are finally responsible for prevailing economic, and political corruption. Joshi thinks that man can dispel the darkness of this materialistic world through spiritualism alone, and thereby man can de-alienate himself.