Arun Joshi’s fictional world is an informed and artistic portrayal of individual minds overpowered by conflicting urges within themselves. It highlights the basic contradictions of the post-Independence Indian society with its scientific and technological progress, growth of materialism, spiritual degeneration and confusion of values. His novels articulate the problems of Westernized Indians who have somehow lost their spiritual moorings and suffer from cynicism, estrangement from the community, intellectual doubt and crisis of faith. They reveal Joshi’s deep concern for the almost institutionalized corruption, moral decline and precipitate erosion of values in post-independence India.

His fictional world is revelation of a world where the self confronts man and the questions of his existence. His search is directed at the inscrutable region of human psyche and he enters into that mysterious region of uncertainty and inscrutability. This effort of his makes him a great artist of psychological insight. Reading Joshi’s novels is not always a smooth experience; there are moments when one is assailed by doubts and questions. There is ‘something’ that attracts one’s attention and grips. Joshi delves into the inner recesses of human psyche where he finds instincts and impulses at work; he seeks a process of the apprehension of reality, which may lead him to the world of the core of the truth of man’s life. He realizes man’s uniqueness and loneliness in an indifferent and inscrutable universe.
He came into limelight with the publication of his very first novel, ‘The Foreigner,’ which appeared in 1968. Writing for him is not a conscious process he told in an interview: "some parts of ‘The Foreigner’, my first book, were written when I was a student in America. I gave it up then and completed it later in 1966.” The novel about a Kenyan-Indian is largely autobiographical. This was followed by the publication in 1971 of his second novel, a more imaginative one, ‘The Strange Case of Billy Biswas.’ The novel is about a mystical urge, a compulsion which makes Billy go away. Both these novels, Joshi says, "are primarily concerned with religious issues-the problems of an essentially Hindu mind."

Joshi’s third novel, ‘The Apprentice,’ was published in 1974. It is different in tone from the earlier novels. Ratan Rathor, its hero, is Everyman-a contrast to other protagonists in so far as his intellectual level is much lower. ‘The Last Labyrinth’ published in 1981, won Joshi the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award. Though basically a love story, it explores the hero’s search for meaning of life. Like The Foreigner and The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, the novel is preoccupied with man’s mystical urge.

The City and the River (1990) is a departure from the existing oeuvre of Joshi as it is “a commentary on the times” and "a political parable." Joshi has made use of prophesy, fantasy and politics and presented the story in a wider backdrop. The metaphysical questions that he seeks to explore in the political context that reflect men's ambition, egoism, selfishness, defiance of Truth,
and the suffering consequent upon them. He stresses the need for spiritual commitment and collective responsibility to do away with evils. *The Bhagavad-Gita* and the Indian mythology in shaping the thematic structure of the novel influenced Arun Joshi. It is this cyclic repetition of things that affords the novel a unique place in Indian English Literature.

Along with novels, Joshi has also published a collection of short stories entitled *The Survivor*. Though he has excelled in longer fiction and his novels have been more popular, it does not mean that his short stories are, by any means, inferior. In fact, there is more force and more precision in some of them.

All eight chapters of this thesis are arranged to provide a full picture of Joshi’s novels as well as his artistic vision in his short stories. In The first chapter entitle *Introduction* is divided in two parts. The part of this chapter I have tried to present the short history of Indian literature in English, second part of this chapter is the study of Joshi’s as a novelist. The second chapter of this thesis entitle *Philosophical and existential themes* is related to his first novel *The Foreigner*, which attracted the critical attention. I have tried to shoe the philosophical, loneliness and the existential aspects of human life. In the third chapter of my thesis presents the quest for identity in the human life. Billy Biswas is the hero of this novel. This is the inner vision of Joshi’s soul. I have tried to show his vision about the human beings in the modern society.
Fourth chapter entitle Themes of Crisis and Confession in ‘The Apprentice’, is an attempt to the themes of inner crises and confession. Ratan Rathor, the unsophisticated jobless protagonist of this novel who tried to find the solution of his sufferings throughout his life. Fifth chapter pf my thesis is an attempt to show themes of love, religion and life in ‘The Last Labyrinth.’ This chapter presents the Indian panorama by an Indian and explores the issues like love death God and life. Som Bhasker is the protagonist of this novel he is as pale latter-day shadow of European existentialist.

Sixth chapter Themes of Politics in City And The River presented malpractices in which people wielding political power indulge and the ways in which people respond to them. Taxonomically speaking, the malpractices presented here are of two kinds: the malpractices presented here are of retain power and the malpractices resorted to in order to eliminate dissent. The responses of the victims range from total surrender to uncompromising resistance. Seventh chapter is an attempt to show the themes of human predication in Joshi’s novels. I have discussed how various social constraints give birth to the feeling of anxiety, loneliness, ennui, depression and psychosomatic disease and estrangement.

Eight chapter of my thesis is an overall estimate the thematic study of Joshi’s novels. In his novels he tried to explore the mysterious underworld called human soul, in his distinguished novels. He believes that life’s meaning
does not lie in the glossy surfaces of pretensions but in the dark mossy labyrinths of the soul.

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Dated: 

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Place: Meerut