

MOOSAIC

Footsteps Towards the Literary World



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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
DISPUR COLLEGE
GUWAHATI-781006

MOSAIC

... Footsteps Towards the Literary World

Volume-I, June, 2013



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MESSAGE

The faculty of the Department of English, Dispur College, is going to bring out its first issue of Annual Journal "Mosaic- Footsteps Towards the Literary World." Their effort, no doubt is praise-worthy and I am sure that it will give an opportunity to the Neo-Writers to express their latent talent through their writing in the journal, besides instilling inclination in the minds of the teachers and the students towards research activities.

I wish the endeavor all success.

C. M. Sharma
29/04/2013
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MESSAGE



It is my immense pleasure that the Department of English, Dispur College is going to publish a research journal "Mosaic- Footsteps Towards the Literary World," which will offer the scope of research at the college level as well as encourage the Under graduate students to start research.

Amar Sinha
Principal
Dispur College
Guwahati-6

THE EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

The Department of English takes immense pleasure in presenting to you Mosaic ...Footsteps Towards the Literary World - our first literary venture.

Generally speaking, English literature is the literature of the English as well as literature in English. Being a world language today, other literatures in English, apart from British literature, have also been added to its study.

Until the first quarter of the nineteenth century, higher education in English was a Church of England monopoly. English was appointed as a subject for study only from 1828. However, it comprised mainly the study of English language. English literature as such was first taught at King's College, London, beginning in 1831.

Thereafter- from the nineteenth century to the twenty first century- the contours of the subject of English has changed considerably. The contemporary literary scene comprises a wide array of inter-disciplinary discourses such as Philosophy, Anthropology, History, Linguistics, Translation Studies and Cultural Studies. The advent of literary theory from the twentieth century onwards further widened the horizons of the subject as it now offered a variety of critical approaches to interpreting literature. English literature today is therefore akin to a richly laid out tapestry.

As Mosaic takes its first modest step forward, it has attempted to capture through print, shades of this

tapestry's vibrancy by encapsulating a few of its strands. Thus, through the main genres of poetry, drama, fiction and the short story, *Mosaic* has also covered areas of Modernism, Feminism, Postcolonialism, Postmodernism and included Philosophy too. Keeping with the increasing importance accorded to Translations in the globalised scenario *Mosaic* has also given place to a translated piece from Assamese literature with the hope that it would provide a glimpse of the versatility of Assamese literature to a wider audience. Furthermore, it has also provided a space to creative writing.

We are extremely grateful to our guest contributors, Dr. Gobinda Prasad Sarma, Former Dean, Faculty of English, GU and HOD, Dept of English, GU and Mrs. Aditi Choudhury, Associate Prof. and Former Head of the Department of English, Handique Girls' College, Guwahati. Their immediate response to our request for contributing articles for *Mosaic* has been a very inspiring gesture. We also thank Dr. Namita Deka, Associate Prof. and HOD, Dept. of Assamese, Dispur College for having consented to have her literary piece on Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla to be translated.

I acknowledge with gratitude our primary motivator, our esteemed Governing Body President, Sri C. M. Sharma. His motivating words propelled us into the fruition of this endeavour. I also take this opportunity to thank the Principal, Dr. Amar Saikia and the Vice-Principal, Dr. Nandini Barooah Sharma for their constant support and encouragement. To the combined efforts of the members of the Editorial Board, I offer my sincere thanks. I would specially like to thank Mr. Madhurjya Sharma for his initiative in the designing of the cover page.

May I now invite you, dear Reader, to traverse through *Mosaic*! However, if perchance, you do happen to encounter any pitfalls, I would request you to consider that as having made its appearance inadvertently.

Editor

MOsaic ... Footsteps Towards the Literary World

Volume-I, June, 2013

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ETIOLOGY OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

Dr. Gobinda Prasad Sarma
Former Dean, Faculty of Arts,
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:: The Coming of English to India ::

English came to India in the later half of the eighteenth century as a "by-product of the eventful encounter" between a "vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India" -to use the words of M. K. Naik¹. When this language became the medium of instruction in India about half a century later in 1835, it did not come as an imposition on us, as it is erroneously thought by many zealous Indian patriots. It became our medium of instruction rather on our seeking. The East India Company got a charter from Queen Elizabeth to open trading posts in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta on 31 December, 1599; and the Company ran its business in India from 1600 to 1858. It took the responsibility of administration from 1757; and its government went under the British Crown from 1858. Even during the rule of the Company however, when Sir William Jones came to Calcutta as a Justice of the Calcutta High Court, he established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 and delved deep into the vast treasures of ancient Indian literature. His followers like H. H. Wilson, H. T. Colebrook and James Prinsep had also great love for Indian literature and culture.

When they thought of the education of the Indian people under the rule of the Company, they naturally thought of Sanskrit and Persian or Arabic education. William Jones had such love

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for Sanskrit that he wrote that this language "... is of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either."² However, against these 'Brahmanized Britons' who wanted for India the Indian system of education through Sanskrit and Persian or Arabic, there was another group of Britishers who wanted for India the Western system of education through the medium of English. And as we all know, the earlier group came to be known as the Orientalists while the latter group came to be known as the Anglicists.

The Anglicists had the support of the Western missionaries like William Carey (arrived in India 1793) and his associates, Ward and Marshman who opened their mission at Serampore in 1799 and who, while opening schools and colleges, laid the foundation simultaneously of modern Bengali language through their devoted works in Bengali. But these Anglicists could become really effective only for the strong support of the most erudite Indian intellectual and social leader of the time. Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) who made a strong plea for the Western system of education through the medium of English so that India could hope for a "dawn of knowledge" as he put it in his historic appeal to the then Governor General of the Company, Lord Amherst, dated 11 December 1823. Rammohun Roy was so eager for the Western system of education through the medium of English that he, with some of his English supporters like David Hare, opened a few English schools in various parts of Calcutta. One such English school was established by him in 1816 while another called Anglo-Hindu school was established in 1822. And of course we know that it was because of such zeal and efforts of such great Anglicist leaders, both Indian and British, that the historic Hindu College in Calcutta was established in 1817.

Side by side with these Anglicists who consisted not only of

some British administrators or colonialists and of some Western missionaries who did immortal and pioneering works for the modern Indian languages, but also of prominent Indian intellectuals of vision and foresight, there were the works of the Orientalists who also established *tolis* and *madrassas* for the traditional system of education. Some such Oriental institutes were Oriental College, Rampur (U.P.) established in 1774, Calcutta Madrasa established in 1781 and Sanskrit College, Benares established in 1792.

The East India Company itself did not like to go against the native tradition in the controversial subject; and instead of taking up the cause of English on its own or supporting the Anglicists, it rather established the Calcutta Sanskrit College in 1824 much against the will of Raja Rammohun Roy to whom "this seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no use to the possessors or to the society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago ..." as he put it in his historic appeal to Lord Amherst. That the Company government did not pay heed to such an appeal and established the Sanskrit College shows that it was not enthusiastic about the imposition of their own language or their own system of education.

Anyway, amidst the raging controversy of the Orientalists and the Anglicists, the Company had to institute in 1823 a Committee of Public Instruction to advise it on education. The British Parliament as early as 1813 directed the Company to set apart rupees one lakh for "improvement of literature" and "promotion of science" for the "improvement of the native population". It was exactly for the fulfillment of this purpose that Rammohun Roy wanted English education for India. And

yet the Company for long ten years could not take any decision on the kind of education and its medium through which they would attain this goal. However, even though after ten years of indecision and inactivity, the Company government ultimately appointed the Committee, the Committee itself could not come to a decision. Half of its members was for Oriental education through Sanskrit and Persian or Arabic while the remaining half was for English education. And we are to remember that the members of the first half who wanted the ancient Indian system of education were also British members. However, when the Committee found itself in a stalemate, two new members were added to it. One of them was the famous Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859) - a historian and very powerful, prolific English prose-writer who was also a Member of the British Parliament. Known for his extra-ordinary oratory as M. P. and extra-ordinarily vast learning and gift of rhetoric as a writer, Macaulay was always a controversial figure who was known to have said once: "Burn the British Museum; because all that is there in that vast library is here in my head." This formidable Macaulay was the Law Member in the Indian Governor General's Council for the Period 1834-38. And in that capacity, he was appointed the Chairman of the Committee of Public Instruction. In the Committee itself, he did not take any active part because he found that it was hopelessly divided into two camps. He rather asked the Committee members to present their views before the Supreme Council of the Governor. And ultimately on the basis of these views he wrote his historic Minute in his extra-ordinarily forceful and persuasive language which swept away all oppositions and silenced all dissents to the Anglicists' opinion. And then the Governor General of the Company, Lord Bentinck (1828-1835) declared on 7 March, 1835 "the promotion of European literature and science" and "English education" as "the

great object of the British Government in India."

Not that in adopting English education for India the British Government thought exactly like Macaulay. It became rather a historical necessity as the circumstances would show. Also not that, Rammohun Roy in his opposition to the Company Government patronizing Oriental classical education and establishing institutes like Calcutta Sanskrit College, he was against Sanskrit or ancient Indian or Oriental culture. Vastly learned in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, he edited a Persian periodical and wrote widely and voluminously on Hindu theology, the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* besides editing a periodical in Sanskrit too. But he wanted English education for the regeneration of his countrymen with the knowledge of the West. Similarly, when on the strength of Macaulay's Minute, the British Government adopted English education, it is not that the Company Government was swayed by all his opinions or objectives. Macaulay wrote in his own characteristic way that the objective of English education in India would be to produce "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect." If Rammohun Roy were alive in 1835 when the Government adopted English education for the country, he would have been the happiest man in India. And yet he would have been the first Indian to protest against Macaulay's wish to produce a new breed of Anglicized Indians. But alas! Rammohun Roy was dead two years ago in 1833.

It is difficult to believe that a man of Macaulay's learning was really serious in all his stunning utterances expressed in brilliant rhetoric. In order to show the worth of Western learning against the learning of the East, he wrote: "A single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". Similarly with his passion for over emphasis

and long-drawn rhetoric, he wrote about the Bengalis :

Whatever the Bengali does he does languidly. His favorite pursuits are sedentary. He shrinks from bodily exertion and though voluble in dispute, and singularly pertinacious in the war of chicane, he seldom engages in a personal conflict, and scarcely ever enlists as a soldier ... There never, perhaps existed a people so thoroughly fitted by nature and by habit for a foreign yoke.³

Worse still, he wrote in another context :

What horns are to the buffalo, what paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengalee. Large promises, smooth excuses, elaborate tissues of circumstantial falsehood, chicanery, perjury, forgery are the weapons, offensive and defensive, of the people of the lower Ganges.⁴

Such utterances naturally evoked a strong protest from the Indian side and it reverberated for long. But it is not again that the Britishers themselves took Macaulay seriously. For example, Lord Melbourne, Prime Minister of England of the time (1835-1841) spoke about him half in jest and half in seriousness, "I wish I could be as cocksure of any one thing as Tom Macaulay is of everything."⁵ This itself is enough to see that adoption of the Western system of education through the medium of English was not for persuasion of Macaulay alone or his singular opinions were shared by his own Government completely.

That English was made thus the vehicle for New Learning in India not alone for the pressure of a handful vocal British Anglicists who found their Messiah in Macaulay or for the urge of a handful of learned Indians of the mould of Rammohun Roy but also for the Indians in general who were all eager to undergo a regeneration, can be proved from the hectic enthusiasm of the Indians of the time for more and more books in English. As

Trevelyan notes about the great demand for English books and lackadaisical attitude towards Sanskrit and Arabic books among the Indians at that time :

Upwards of 31,000 English books were sold by the English Book Society in the course of two years, while the Committee did not dispose of Arabic and Sanskrit volumes enough in three years to pay the expenses of keeping them for two months, to say nothing of the printing expenses.⁶

And we have to note here that the School Book Society was only a voluntary organization of the Missionaries and the Anglicists while the Committee of Public Instruction was a Government Committee. To give exact statistics of sale of books in various languages in 1834-35, the year immediately before adoption of English by the Government : "32,000 English books sold in India as against 13,000 in Hindi, Hindustani and Bengali and 1,500 in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic."⁷

The feverish clamour for English reading material among the Indians of that time can be seen in that real episode of an Englishman landing at Calcutta. Immediately on landing, he was surrounded by a crowd of native boys-all seeking English books from him. The English gentleman who did not have enough English books for all those boys had ultimately "cut up an old *Quarterly Review* and distributed the pages".⁸

Such urge of the Indians of the time for the New Learning through English can also be seen from the rush for admission in English schools and colleges opened by the Missionaries and the Anglicists against the lack of interest in the traditional type of schools opened by the Orientalists and the Company Government. The Hindu College of Calcutta founded in 1817 by Rammohun Roy and his Anglicist friends David Hare and Sir Eduward Hyde East drew "100 students"⁹ in the first year. When Hooghly College was established in 1836, in the very first year

there were "1200 applications for admission in 3 days"⁹. Against this, the traditional schools and colleges inspite of government backing presented a very dampening sight.

The English language thus was not imposition on us by the British imperialist rulers; it came to us on our seeking for our regeneration. And this objective of our regeneration was soon fulfilled quite satisfactorily. As F.W. Bain an Anglo-Indian writer observed retrospectively on the fruits of English education in India, when it was adopted first, "India- a withered trunk suddenly shot out with foreign foliage."¹⁰

(Reprinted for ACTA Journal, 1995-96)

Foot-Notes

1. M. K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1982, p.1
2. John B. Alphonso Karkala, *Indo-English Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, The Literary Half yearly, Mysore, 1970, p. 7
3. G. P. Sarma, *Nationalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction* (1978), Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, p. 59n.
4. *Ibid*
5. M. K. Naik, *op.cit.* p.12
6. G. P. Sarma, *op.cit.* p. 5
7. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (1962), Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1973, p. 28
8. M. K. Naik, *op.cit.* p. 11
9. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *op.cit.* p. 26
10. M. K. Naik, *op.cit.* p.1

Shakespeare's comic characters - rising above their genre.

Mrs Aditi Chowdhury

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In which year exactly Shakespeare was drawn into the orbit of metropolitan theatre has been a matter of conjecture through the ages. It is accepted that he was very much a part of the London theatre scene by 1592. The University Wits had already infused a new richness and variety in popular drama and Shakespeare set it pulsatingly alive with a myriad of characters, dynamic and versatile. In the thirty-seven plays attributed to him, he created a body of characters, each sharply individualistic, yet rooted in real life; men and women of mystique as well as of plebeian origins. He thus created a colourful palette of diverse individuals which remain uniquely 'Shakespearean' to the present day. As perspectives and interpretations have changed, new perceptions regarding class, race and gender ambiguities have surfaced. But Shakespeare's ingenuity, insight and understanding of human frailties and foibles have remained unquestioned. His ability to create vibrant worlds of people, his intuitive knowledge of human psychology, his subtle explorations of the different states of mind and complexities of attitude - all these extraordinary qualities ensure his position as the greatest dramatist of all times.

Shakespeare's comic vision was to a certain extent influenced by the vernacular comic traditions prevalent in his time; by the court-plays of John Lyly, who aimed at "soft smiling, not loud

laughing" even with his low characters; and by the two great masters of Roman Classical Comedy - Plautus and Terence. Many of his comic characters are also drawn from the popular comic drama of 16th and 17th Italy known as Commediadellarte. Lyly, he saw performed in private theatres; Plautus and Terence he must have studied and even acted in at school, and the Italian influence, he must have imbibed from the travelling companies of actors. But the sense of human reality and worth which he invested in his comic characters were essentially his own.

Comedy, or the comic, is everywhere in Shakespeare. Just as no two Shakespearian heroes are alike enough to be 'genre-ised', such paradigms cannot be set for his fools too. Each one of his comic creations is individual and distinctive. At no phase of his illustrious career did Shakespeare concentrate on any one type of play. The first group of history plays were followed by a series of comedies where he freely experimented with comic characters. Costard, the clownish rustic appears in *Love's Labours Lost*, as a bungling mediator between different couples. He unwittingly mixes up Love letters and causes a lot of confusion. A *Midsummer Night's Dream* has the mischief maker, Puck. His machinations extend to putting a donkey's head on Bottom and creating serious misunderstandings between the different pairs of lovers including the fairy King and Queen. Bottom is an affectionately mocking study of the conventional 16th century stage clown. Shakespeare uses the absurdities of Peter Quince and Bottom to parody the efforts of the Lord Chamberlain's Men at Court.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Launcelot Gobbo is a shameless opportunist who uses his partially blind and bewildered father to curry favour with Bassanio. Like all Elizabethan clowns, Launcelot's forte is ambiguous verbal confusions and he is treated with amused tolerance by Bassanio, Lorenzo and Jessica.

Much Ado About Nothing has the comic pair, Dogberry and Verges, officers of the Watch, who accidentally stumble across the villains and proceed to handle them in their dim-witted, clumsy manner. It is now almost conclusive that the part of Dogberry was written for the famous comic actor, William Kempe. With Touchstone in *As You Like It*, the Shakespearian clown took on new dimensions. He is the first of a series of discerning fools which culminate in the Fool of *King Lear*. He and Audrey embody an earthy kind of love between the sexes in a most basic level which contrasts sharply with the rarified romantic love that blossoms between Orlando and Rosalind. Touchstone's mockery of pastoral life and his grand rhetoric adds to the comic spirit of the delightful play.

The sub-plot of *Twelfth Night* sparkles with two immortal comic creations - Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch, both splendid in their cheerful absurdity. There is also the mocking voice of Feste, the worldly-wise clown who adds to the fun and frolic. Feste sings three of Shakespeare's finest songs. The festive sub-plot is full of their riotous carousals, verbal sparring and their baiting of Olivia's conceited steward, Malvolio.

The clowns in the romantic comedies conform to a certain format. They speak home-truths and add to the general atmosphere of bonhomie and fun. But Shakespeare did not confine his fools to comedies alone. *Romeo and Juliet* has the irrepressible Nurse and Mercutio. One of Shakespeare's most remarkable creations, Mercutio is "wit's scintillating star", audacious and full of razor-sharp mockery. The garrulous Nurse, full of improper confidences is endearing even in her immodesty. In *Hamlet*, the two grave-diggers help to lighten the solemnity and poignant tragedy of Ophelia's death. Their rational approach to life and death brings about a sense of normalcy to the 'rotten' state of Denmark.

Macbeth has the drunken porter with his rambling innuendoes about hell. In one way, he relieves the horror unleashed by the brutal murder of Duncan. On the other hand, his words reinforce the evil that has been let loose in Inverness. The comic characters in this manner, rise above their conventional duties and often assume the significance of a chorus in quite a few tragedies as well as comedies.

In the history plays *Henry IV Parts I and II*, Shakespeare presents Falstaff, a comic figure of protean proportions. He epitomises a life devoted to pleasure, irresponsibility and self-centredness, yet he is full of an earthy common sense. As Prince Hal changes from a lusty prince to a dedicated Christian king, Falstaff ceases to be of prominence. But in zest, feistiness and vitality, he scintillates as no other Shakespearean comic character does. Devious and manipulative as he is, he rises above the play he figures in. It is widely believed that *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, an uninspiring farce, was written under orders from Queen Elizabeth I, because she wanted to see Falstaff resurrected.

The Fool in *King Lear* defies all conventional stereotypes of a comic character. Full of jingles and inanities, he nevertheless realises Lear's failings and vulnerability from the very beginning. From being a mere Elizabethan stock character, the Fool is elevated to a choral status. His wry humour and sharp insight penetrates into the truth of things where the egotistic King appears foolish and the Fool wise. Shakespeare makes the Fool explore the paradoxes of pretention and reality and develops him into a dramatic character. Since he is the "Licensed Fool", he alone dares to voice bitter home truths to his royal master. He becomes his lord's conscience and disappears from the play as Lear graduates to being a sensitive human being instead of a proud and wilful king. Ironically, Lear's first stirrings of compassion for suffering humanity are aroused by the tribulations of his Fool.

Shakespeare's comic characters thus, do not fit into any particular construct. They transcend the levels of being merely comic and reveal depths and insights about men and matters, which enhance their characters and add new dimensions to the plays. They are based on the professional fools who served in royal courts and noble households and often took advantage of their being "all-licensed". Redoubtable actors like William Kempe and Robert Armin played these parts. The fools provoke laughter and they are also catalysts in drawing people from discord, loss and unhappiness to peace, unity and concord. This principle illuminates most of his comic characters. Through their portrayals, Shakespeare brilliantly displays how his comic characters while being light and frivolous, have yet, undertones of gravitas, compassion and infinite understanding.

D. H. LAWRENCE : AN ANALYSIS, OF HIS "ODOUR OF CHRYSANTHEMUMS"

Dr. Nandini Barooah Sharma
Vice Principal
Former HOD, Dept. of English

David Herbert Lawrence is one of the foremost writers of the twentieth century. He was a prolific writer, who during the twenty years of his literary career tried his hand at different genres of literature. During this creative period, not a year passed without the publication of something important from his pen. He was a versatile genius who could excel in many fields. His novels and short stories are his most important and interesting works. He was a good poet and a gifted writer of descriptive and expository essays. Lawrence was one of the greatest English letter writers and his letters rank with those of John Keats and Gerald Manly Hopkins. Many of his contemporaries like Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy, Kipling were as celebrated as Lawrence, yet none of them had the impact on their age and ours that Lawrence had and yet continues to wield.

David Herbert Lawrence was a genius. He was also blessed with a prophetic vision which he incorporated in all his writings. He did not hesitate to express his own ideas on a variety of topics such as politics, psychology, education, religion and many other spheres. His thinking was original and uninhibited as only of the greatest prophets, and he defied all current practices of fiction

writing. His writings are highly original and thought-provoking. Like Bernard Shaw he was an iconoclast who throughout his literary career waged a war against the conventional values and ideas. Modern science, modern intellectualism, modern education, he condemned as dead and mechanical and in their place he formulated a new science, a new morphology, a new cosmology of his own. He was not only a great artist and a great writer, but also a seer with a message of his own. His views have been expressed forcefully in one work after another. Thus fiction and doctrine co-exist in almost all his works.

It is generally true that Lawrence's short stories treat themes similar to those of his novels, but with a great conciseness of form. In his short stories, Lawrence treats his themes with a greater degree of impersonality than in his novels. The same concerns however recur in spite of different forms and plots - Lawrence's concern for individual relationships, for sexual relationships and for the individual's ability to identify himself. There is often the same fear of industrialism, of self-negating will and thought and of obsolete forms of living. In the short stories there is an emphasis on sexuality and the 'religion of the body', but Lawrence explores this from many angles - from the strange intensity of Henry and March in "The Fox" to the 'automation of sex' between Cathcart and his typist in "The Man Who Loved Islands". The stories also contain humour, satire and wit, though most of it is personal and bitter in tone as in "Things". In addition, in the stories there is a great deal of accurate and careful observation. The mining background in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" strikes the reader as authentic and adds powerfully to the sense of gloom, while the mountains and the whole environment of "The Woman Who Rode Away" is evoked with great actuality even though there may be doubts about the validity of the story. In "The Man Who Loved Islands", the increasingly desolate sea-scape created the

suitable atmosphere and transforms the story into life.

In the short stories, Lawrence explores psychology and the inner depths of personality which are not readily accessible or understandable. He also looks at society, human social behaviour, traditions and the relationship of the past with the present. He uses many forms, from total realism to fables and the prose often shows the rhythmic, symbolical intensity which we associate more readily with the novels.

The first story in which D. H. Lawrence tried his hand at realism was "Odour of Chrysanthemums". This story is one of Lawrence's major studies of family life. Lawrence apparently sent it to Ford Maddox Ford in December, 1909. The *English Review* published the story in 1911 after Lawrence made some revisions, which were asked for by Ford. Lawrence's growing understanding of his own childhood and home becomes clear from the several revisions of the story. It also demonstrates his corresponding development as a writer of realistic short stories.

The real strength of this story lies in its adherence to truth. Lawrence knew intimately what he was writing about. He writes familiarly about the mining community, its habits, dialects and pre-occupations, the nature of Elizabeth Bates and the conflict between Elizabeth and her husband. This story appears to be an artistically heightened view of the estrangement between his own parents, also reflected in *Sons and Lovers*. The tragedy depicted in it is supposed to be even based on that of an aunt of Lawrence and his intimate knowledge of such areas gives his description a physical immediacy that is compelling and authentic.

The opening of the story gives a clear description of a dirty mining village late in the afternoon of an autumn day. The movement of the locomotive, the unknown woman walking by the side of the rail line, the "fields ... dreary and forsaken ... a reedy pit-pond ..." conveys an atmosphere of "diminishment

and decline."² This atmosphere also seems to convey the loveless marriage of Elizabeth and Walter Bates. Although Lawrence revised this tale a number of times, yet he left this image practically untouched. In each of the versions, we move directly to Elizabeth's cottage where we first see her. As evening sets in and the miners from Brinsley colliery return home, Elizabeth Bates, a stern disillusioned woman, calls her reluctant son inside. Her father, the local engine driver, stops his engine outside the gate in expectation of his customary cup of tea. Before leaving he mentions Walter, Elizabeth's erring husband who has evidently broadcast his plans to drink heavily that weekend. Elizabeth, cold and bitter, moves to the kitchen and she resists her children's attempt to speak of other matters and grumbles incessantly about her husband's inconsiderate drinking habits. We come to know through a succession of scenes, that she is a condemning woman. But at the same time, it becomes clear why she has become so. Her husband does not come home after work but goes directly to the pub for a drink with his friends. At the end, a miner comes to the cottage with the news that Walter had been suffocated when a fall of coal had trapped him. Elizabeth prepares the parlour for her husband's body, which is later carried in. When the men have left, the mother and the wife lay out the body and wash it together. As they work, Elizabeth realizes how separate she has always been from her husband and that she has never known or understood him for what he really was. She tries to understand what actually went wrong between them. She sees now how he had suffered through her denial of him, but only death has been able to show her this truth. Till the last moment, we see the life of the couple from within the perspective of the Bates family and its community.

A mood of gloom pervades the whole story. It is not only the main character Elizabeth Bates, who is heavy with depression

and pent-up anger, it is the time of the day with its uncertain darkness, the "dreary and forsaken fields"³ the flames of the pitbank "like red sores licking its ashy sides"⁴ and even the trucks of the train "thumped heavily past, one by one, with slow inevitable movement"⁵. We also see her cottage infected with the same profound gloom. "A large bony vine clutched at the house, as if to claw down the tiled roof. Round the brick yard grew a few winter primroses ... There were some twiggy apple trees, winter crack trees, and ragged cabbages. Beside the path hung dishevelled pink chrysanthemums, like pink cloths hung on bushes."⁶ Elizabeth seems to blend quite naturally with the landscape. "Her face was calm and set, her mouth was closed with disillusionment."⁷ Even the young boy she sternly summons is "resentful, taciturn."⁸

This gloomy atmosphere is somewhat relieved when she plucks a few chrysanthemums and pushes them into her apron band. This appears as a hesitant attempt by her to capture something of the beauty which has passed her by. However, she tosses them when the beauty they represent - the love that should exist between her husband and herself prove once again meaningless. But her daughter who is still sensitive to love and beauty picks them up and kisses them. But Elizabeth rejects her daughter's sensitivity and says: "It was chrysanthemums when I married him, and chrysanthemums when you were born, and the first time they even brought him home drunk, he'd got brown chrysanthemums in his button hole".⁹

Elizabeth's coldness almost instantly subdues her cheery father. Once her father has gone, the gloom closes in once again on the household. "Grey sombre groups"¹⁰ of miners, "a dreary flow of men"¹¹ pass by. Although Lawrance was well aware of this gloomy environment, he probably wanted to show that this special kind of dreariness is a result of Elizabeth's psychological

state. There is a lifelessness about her which suggests that some vital force has been extinguished. She has an understanding of her husband's pre-occupation with himself as she watches her son struggling sullenly with a piece of wood.¹² We can already sense and see the total lack of understanding and communication between husband and wife. As such we can understand better, Walter Bates's drinking habits. In her ceaseless bitterness, Elizabeth ironically predicts what is to happen. "Eh, he'll not come home now till they bring him. There he'll stick! But he needn't come rolling in here in his pit-dirt, for I won't wash him. He can lie on the floor ..."¹³. The irony of this statement becomes apparent as the body is later prepared for burial.

In the second part of the tale, the rhythms of the prose quicken as her fear increases. The opening paragraph is filled with verbs of movement such as struck, rose, dropping, went, opened, listening, scuffled and started. Just as gloom darkened the prose of the first half, so fear agitates it in the second half.

The conversation between the Ringleys and Elizabeth clearly shows the social difference between them. The Ringleys with their heavy local dialect and Elizabeth with her educated accent: "Oh, I wouldn't think of bothering you that far"¹⁴, form the contrast. Elizabeth radiates disapproval and hardens her heart against her husband when she hears Mrs Rigley run across to gossip with her neighbour.

Elizabeth's mother-in-law appears dressed in black and is a complete contrast to her father. As she is emotionally involved with her son, his death causes her terrible sorrow and she begins to feel a new warmth towards Elizabeth and her unborn child. Except when Elizabeth hears the sound of the winding engine in the pit, her reactions are practical and controlled, she will not give in to grief. When she enters the cold, dark parlour which is as cold as the emotional relationship with her husband, it is filled

with the smell of chrysanthemums. The flowers however seem to function for her not only as a symbol of her marriage and her husband's drunkenness, but they symbolize his death too.

Elizabeth is forced to realize that she had killed her husband long before his physical death. "She had denied him what he was - she saw it now. She had refused him as himself. And this had been her life, and his life ... it had become hopeless between them long before he died. Yet he had been her husband. But how little!" Elizabeth Bates's stern spirituality had snuffed out her husband's sensuous flame of life. Her fault had been that she had been trying to know her husband only through her mind.

We fully realize that the image of darkness and gloom works inwards from the outside world. It envelops not only the house but also the people inside, their clothes and also their thoughts. It also shows the spiritual darkness which has kept the husband and wife separate from each other :

She knew she had never seen him, and he had never seen her, they had met in the dark and had fought in the dark, not knowing whom they met nor whom they fought.¹⁶

Lawrence's fiction often explores this spiritual darkness and separation from many angles. This story is most powerful from these angles, in its stark depiction of the strange quality of lifelessness and meaninglessness which such darkness induces. Although the burden of guilt for their failure is seen through Elizabeth and her feelings, we sense that Lawrence with growing maturity recognizes that this relationship is common to many. In the final analysis however, blame and fault are irrelevant. Although Elizabeth realizes that she had failed to see her husband as himself, yet we know that he had unconsciously done the same to her. In this story, Lawrence captures with supreme economy, one of the basic tragedies of unfulfilled human

relationship. "The horror of the distance between them was almost too much for her ..." ¹⁷ The final words of the story implies the inevitable guilt which accompanies such a failure. "But for death her ultimate master, she winced with fear and shame."¹⁸

"Odour of Chrysanthemums" appears to be among the first stories of Lawrence using the realistic technique. It is thus a pioneer in the art of English realistic fiction. This story has many similarities with *Sons and Lovers* and in many important ways explores and corrects problems raised in the novel. Lawrence knew the subject matter intimately and from 1909 to 1911, he deals with this subject which he knew from inside out. In 1914, he revised the ending of this story and this revised ending allowed Lawrence the scope to express an alternate view on the Morel's bitter marriage in *Sons and Lovers* which had been completed two years earlier.

The subject matter of "Odour of Chrysanthemums" deals mostly with the experience and memories common and crucial to nearly all of Lawrence's works. But here Lawrence deals with another vein too. It also shows Lawrence's development as a sexual being. However in the earlier stories, he works these two veins separately.

Throughout his life, David Herbert Lawrence wrote many short stories. He went through several definite periods of development as a creative writer. His settings and subject matter changed as he travelled to different countries and had many new experiences. It changed from the intimate presentation of his beloved Midlands to Europe, specially Germany and Italy where he spent long periods and then on to Australia, Ceylon, Mexico and New Mexico. In his short stories, he wrote constantly about the places he visited and the people he met.

The settings for his novels and short stories often change to reflect the new places he visited. The subject matter of his fiction

too, changes along with the settings themselves. Like the longer novels or works, the short stories reflect his changing moods and opinions.

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Human Hungers in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*

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Anita Desai in *Fasting, Feasting*¹ (which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize 1999) returns once again to another variant of the East-West Motif - a common issue of postcolonial fiction. However, unlike *Bye-Bye Blackbird* and *Baumgartner's Bombay* which also centred around the East-West encounter, this novel does not aim to show either cultural conflict or any negative emotion arising out of the meeting between the two different cultures.

Rather, the novel takes as its subject the appeasement and otherwise of human hungers, both physical and emotional in two different cultures - one Eastern-that is Indian and the other Western- that is, American. The emotional need for love and security is shown in the relationships of the children with the parents in two families of the two different cultures.

This study attempts to show how the novelist, while dealing with this issue of human hungers and its consequence, simultaneously censures social and familial attitudes present in both India and America.

The novel is in two parts. Although there is an omniscient narrator, yet, in the first part, the narrator, to a great extent, projects

the events through Uma, the main protagonist. Forty-three year old Uma-plain, clumsy and a 'perpetual child' (74) is unable to outgrow her home and spends her days "serving" (23) her parents for about twenty years now.

Her parents are nameless and are referred to as having one identity Mama Papa. Their having one identity implies their equal control over their family and now especially over Uma- the only child to be with them- by constantly ordering her to do their bidding and trying to supervise and control her actions.

Their opinion differed so rarely ... there was no point in appealing to the other parent for a different verdict: none was expected or given (14)

The novelist satirically says, with reference to the parents, "Papa's chosen role was scowling, mama's scolding" (10). The good-natured Uma generally tolerates this "Scowling" and "Scolding" attitude yet, at times resentment builds up in her. However, she is denied all possibility of self-expression and the maximum she can do is bang the door or retreat into angry silence. At times, she yearns to write "a private message of despair, dissatisfaction" (134) but knows that in the absence of a friend, this is an impossibility.

Uma is apparently doomed to failure in everything she undertakes. An "abject scholar" (21), she is forced to give up her studies to help the ayah in bringing up her younger brother Arun, after his birth while Mama continues with her social life. Lacking any special qualities or expertise or charming beauty, the parents depend on their offer of dowry to arrange her marriage and Uma waits patiently to be disposed" (85). The first time, their dowry is cheated out of them without any marriage taking place. The second time, the groom's family dupes them by arranging the marriage with their married son in order to secure the dowry to revive his ailing business. The parents now, deem

her unlucky for marriage :

Having cost her parents two dowries, without a marriage to show in return, Uma was considered ill-fated by all and no more attempts were made to marry her off (96)

Mama-Papa are primarily concerned about the loss of the dowry and wedding expenses and are totally insensitive to Uma's feelings and emotions.

It is through this incident that Anita Desai is making a satiric comment on the general Indian family's attitude towards the daughters.

Smothered by the continuous demands of her parents Uma has no social life of her own. An invitation for a coffee party by Mrs. O Henry to Uma alone is viewed by the parents with suspicion and displeasure. Yet when the lady arranges for Arun to stay with her sister during the summer in Massachusetts, Papa views the arrangement very favorably. This brings out the double standards adopted by the father towards Uma. Uma is also refused to take up the offer of a job and is even denied the making of a phone call by Papa. However, it could be construed that it was perhaps over-protectiveness on the part of the parents combined with their primary concern of their reputation that prompts them to such a reaction.

In comparison to Uma is her sister Aruna, who has both beauty and brains. Choosing the most handsome and rich man from amongst her many suitors, she has a splendid marriage and is whisked away to a "fantastic" (103) life in Bombay. Once again, Uma- in spite of her imperfections - has to be the giver in her relationships with her family members as Aruna expects Uma to look after her children during her visits home yet is appalled and horrified at Mama's suggestion of having Uma's eyes being examined in Bombay.

Uma shares an affinity with her cousin Ramu, because like her, he too is a failure when compared to his beautiful talented sister, Anamika. While Uma is heavily myopic, Ramu has a club-foot and wears an orthopaedic boot to steady him. These commonalities help to establish an easy rapport between the two which is missing from Uma's other relationships. Once, on a visit, in spite of the alarm, outrage and protests of the parents, Ramu takes Uma out to dinner. Uma is consequently termed as an "idiot", "hussy" and a "disgrace" (52-53) by an enraged Mama. This again brings out the neglect of a lonely individual's feelings and the callous attitude of the parents for on an earlier occasion, they have sought Ramu out to bring back Uma from *Mira-Masi's* ashram. When it is to their advantage, they use Ramu but when it comes to Uma, they disapprove of his company.

In contrast to Uma is Anamika - beautiful, good, talented and loved by all for her 'moderation, good sense' (68). Yet, her parents fail to value her as such a talented individual. All her talents are paraded forth as a necessary qualification for marriage as she was a 'prize' (69) of the family. Anamika is equally docile - never defiant like Uma - for she never attempted to "contradict her parents or cause them grief" (69)

Thus, she is married to a man who was "too occupied with maintaining his superiority" and who is "totally impervious to Anamika's beauty and grace and distinction" (70). Anamika has no value in her husband's life for he is totally subservient to his mother. He marries Anamika as her degrees and her earning of the scholarship to Oxford - which she is not allowed to avail - would enhance his superiority in front of other men. Thus, after marriage Anamika no longer remains an individual in her own right but becomes the ill-treated daughter-in-law. She is regularly beaten till she suffers a miscarriage and becomes incapable of childbearing, scrubbing cooking, massaging her mother-in-law's

feet or tidying and folding her clothes. In other words, Anamika's status is that of an ill-treated servant. After twenty five years of such ill-treatment, Anamika dies. Her mother-in-law claims that Anamika committed suicide by setting herself on fire while the neighbours say that the mother-in-law in collusion with her son had set Anamika on fire.

Anamika becomes a victim of her emotional hunger. Had Anamika protested before her marriage, she might have been saved such a gruesome death. But she subdues her own emotional needs to that of her parents' reputation and surrenders to marriage. Again, if the parents had taken note of the stories surrounding Anamika's marriage, she might have been saved. But they too, were concerned more about their reputation than about Anamika's feelings and situation. In fact, their reaction to her death is passive resignation - "it was fate, God had willed it and it was Anamika's destiny" (157).

It is in the portrayal of Anamika's tragic condition that Anita Desai can be said to provide an "unsparing" "critique of parents blind adherence to social codes without attending to the emotional needs" ² of the children.

Uma-despite all odds and the tedium of her life - is however a survivor. Although her emotional hungers are often neglected, her life is not totally devoid of parental love. Had her father not brought her back from her disastrous marriage, she might have suffered a fate similar to Anamika. Mama's words to Uma during the time of the immersion of Anamika's ashes reflect her affection making Uma realize that they at least had the "comfort of each other" (155).

It is interesting to note that Uma's circumstances make her quite perceptive. She is therefore, able to see through the hollowness of Aruna's life and feels pity for her as she perceives that Aruna is always discontented and displeased. Again, seeing

Mama's subtle change after the birth of Arun, Uma is filled with disgusted wonder at the mother. "Was this love?... Was this romance?" (31) After Anamika's death, Uma enquires about the letter informing Anamika's winning of the scholarship to Oxford. Uma perhaps grasps intuitively that had Anamika been sent to Oxford, she might have survived. Rather, she had been sacrificed in marriage by her parents.

The unusual reaction of Papa of jumping like a boy playing leap-frog to the birth of Arun indicates the high worth of a son in the traditional Indian family. As Anita Desai ironically says about Mama-Papa :

He had not only made her his wife, he had made her the mother of his son. What honour, what status. Mama's chin lifted a little into the air, she looked around her to make sure everyone saw and noticed. She might have been wearing a medal (31).

Unfortunately, the son here is not treated as an individual with his own peculiarities but is taken to be "an object of pride" (31) that has to be dutifully fed and brought up.

While the girls were being raised for marriage, education loomed large over Arun's childhood. The rigorous regimentation of his life by his parents leaves Arun with no will or emotion to call his own. After the completion of his school examination, his father arranges "another phase of his existence" (121) that is, of going abroad for higher studies. Seeing Papa's frenzied efforts, Uma wonders if Papa was trying to fulfil his own unfulfilled ambitions or hungers through Arun.

Arun's life- always so vigilantly watched over by the parents - completely drains him and he acquires a habitually reactionless blank look. This makes Uma, at times, deeply troubled but she too, is equally helpless.

In America-which is Part - II of the novel that is projected

mainly through Arun's point of view- Arun's "resistance to being included" (171), makes him shun all company till the end of the semester when he has to vacate the dorm. Till that time he had, for the first time, been away from Mama-Papa and his sisters. This had made him experience at last :

... the total freedom of relations of demands, needs, requests, ties, responsibilities, commitments, He was Arun. He had no past, no family and no country (172).

During the summer break, he dreams of a 'self-contained room in an apartment or housing-block" (175) where he would happily remain unknown.

His dream "disintegrates" when he is informed by Papa, who was still "plotting and planning his life for him" (175), of the arrangement made with Mrs. Patton for his stay there. The constricting feeling experienced by Arun is very palpable :

... the sensation of his family laying its hands upon him, pushing him down into a chair at his desk, shoving a textbook under his nose, catching that nose and making him swallow cod liver oil, spooning food into him, telling him; Arun, this, Arun, that, Arun, nothing but ... (175).

Mrs. Patton's words to him, in turn, make him feel nauseous.

Mrs. Patton in America like Arun's mother in India, also plays the role of a parent. But, unlike Mama, she is unsuccessful. When she discovers Arun to be a vegetarian, she is thrilled. However, the food that she provides him with is most unpalatable. This makes Arun feel that, although in a different culture, he is still entrapped.

That the same atmosphere of simmering discontent is prevalent in this western culture also is brought home forcefully to Arun by Melanie- the adolescent daughter of the Patton family.

Melanie rejects any kind of food but tries to assuage her gastronomical hunger by stuffing herself with salted peanuts, ice-cream and candy. Thereafter, she forces herself to be sick in the bathroom. Much to Arun's shock, her parents are unaware of her sinking into bulimia. The real reason behind this emotional disorder is her nursing of a deep anger at her lack of love, understanding and the emotional neglect that she suffers from self absorbed parents. This is brought out by her words to her mother accusing her of not being understanding to her needs, "Why don't you ask me what I want? ... What do you think we all are - garbage bags you keep stuffing and stuffing?" (207).

In the rebellion of Melanie, Arun detects a similarity with Uma.

... a resemblance to the contorted face of an enraged sister who, failing to express her outrage against neglect, against misunderstanding, against inattention to her anique and singular being and its hungers, merely spits and froths in ineffectual protest (214).

Again, seeing Mr. Patton's expression to his wife's telling him that she too, intended to be a vegetarian, he is reminded of a similar reaction by his father;

... he reacted by not reacting, as if he had simply not heard or understood... his father's very expression, walking off, denying any opposition, any challenge to his authority... (185-186).

Arun thus realises, that although he had travelled to a land of both 'license and plenty" (214), he had not really "escaped". Instead, he had "stumbled" into what was:

... like a plastic representation of what he had known at home, not the real thing - which was plain, unbeautiful, misshapen, fraught and compromised - but the unreal thing - clean, bright, gleaming, without taste, savour or nourishment (185).

Thus, Arun discovers through his experience with the Pattons, the underlying sameness of human emotions, irrespective of cultures. Parents may be over zealous in their duties and roles as parents or may be not so mindful. In both cases, there are sufferers. So long as children are not recognized and accepted as unique and singular individuals, they will continue to suffer emotionally.

Anita Desai has adopted the technique of using *leitmotif* to lend a pattern to the novel. The constant repetition of the images of food convey a symbolic pattern of psychological states namely, human hungers and their appeasement. Gastronomical hunger exists in each person which, if not appeased, will lead to many ailments. But man has an emotional side also which in turn leads to human hungers- the need to love and be loved, to have emotional security and confidence. If this is not assuaged, it would lead to scars on the psyche such as emotional breakdowns, neurotic behavior or even death. Instances of these states are Anamika and Melanie. Mr. Patton's excessive shopping also reveals her psychological state. Her later feelings of an emotional vacuum is suggested by the "drastically depleted" (227) kitchen.

Again, *Puri-aloo* was reserved for special occasions. Hence, Uma's asking the cook to have it ready for them back home after the immersion of Anamika's ashes makes Mama realise instinctively that "it is a bond" (156) between Uma and herself. Uma's sharing a special relationship with *Mira-Masi* is shown through the image of mouth-watering *laddoos*.

Arun's staunch preference for vegetarianism is also suggestive of his silent desire to be different from Papa as well as to free himself from Papa's dominating yoke. This is put forth satirically thus:

Papa was confounded. A meat diet had been one of the revolutionary changes brought about in his life

...by ... education ... their eyes had been opened to the benefits of meat eating along with that of cricket and the English language ... They had even succeeded in convincing the wives ... of this novel concept of progress ... (32).

While in India, there is a surfeit of eating- suggesting the close-knit Indian household -in the West, there is hardly any cooking or eating done - suggesting the lack of closeness in the Western family.

It can therefore be observed, that what also emerges from this successful juxtaposition of gastronomical and emotional hungers, is a painful and scathing account - that cuts across cultures - of greed, denial, double standards, false pretences and familial power relations. These act as tentacles that ultimately serve to stifle the hapless individual.

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CONFLICTS OF THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY IN JYOTIPRASAD AGARWALA'S PLAYS

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Jyotiprasad Agarwala, the very name resonates with mellifluous devotional songs, his magical words stirs the young heart with romances, feeds the exploring minds with treasures from the rich cultural heritage and sows the seed of duty of patriotism, honour in every Assamese. This versatile and amazing personality towered over every dominion of the literary field, be it lyrics, drama, stories, novel, children literature, biography etc. He is a combination of rare talents and his ideology is the epitome of peace, love and unity.

My endeavour in this paper will be to concentrate only on the dramatist Jyotiprasad and analyse his treatment of conflict of the contemporary society in his plays. It is believed that expression of any strong emotion in the form of lyric and its recitation is the root of drama. They are written only for the purpose that they can be enacted. It is important while analysing a drama to examine various elements like its story, characters, dialogue unity, wonder, mystery, hamartia if it is a tragedy and catharsis and above all its possibility of dramatization.

The embryo of a drama is rooted in its conflict, and the emergence of two opposing forces in a scene is the birth of a

drama, which consequently advances towards a climax, denouement and catharsis. Ferdinand Bruntier, a German critic who first introduced the word 'conflict' says "In drama or farce what we ask of the theatre is the spectacle of the will striving towards a goal and conscious of the means which it employs". William Archer says more openly on this matter that "Drama is a representation of the will of man in conflict with the mysterious powers of natural forces which limit or belittle us, it is one of us thrown living upon the stage there to struggle against fatality, against social laws against one of the fellow mortals, against himself need be against the ambition, the interests, the prejudices, the folly, the malevolence of those around him". Here Archer is emphasising more on the struggle of man against the forces acting against him rather than the conflict itself. But whatever it is, the interest of a play is embedded in its mystery and suspense. The extent of suspense and mystery of a plot and its treatment by the dramatist is the measuring scale of its success and failure.

Conflict is of two kinds, one is internal and the other, external. In external conflict, the protagonist faces opposition from outside sources, but in internal conflict he is at war with his own conscience, heart, or mind. Although conflict can be of many faceted but self interest has been the main ingredient from the very beginning. In Shakesper's *Julius Ceasar*, Brutus is at war with himself, it is at war with his own personality versus inferiority complex. This type of war originates from psychological reaction that germinates inside a person's mind and spreads like poisonous tentacles which either kills, or totally devastates a persona. Examples of Shakespeare are Hamlet, Macbeth etc. Jyotiprasad's "Xundar Kunwar" is an apt example from his play *Karengar Ligiri*. To establish his ideology and principles he had to fight with his own conscience. A play advances with a specific pace where the beginning, climax, denouement, wonder, mystery

everything remains engulfed in its conflict and therein lies the beauty and life force of a play. Jyotiprasad Agarwala's plays are not only brimming with dramatic qualities but also of conflicts of varied nature. He has written nine plays altogether, and they are *Sonit Kunworee*, *Karengar Ligiri*, *Rupalim*, *Nimatj Koina* or *Rup Kunwori*, *Xon Pokhili*, *Lovita*, *Khanikar*, *Kanaklata* and *Xundar Kunwor*. His *Xon Pokhili* is an incomplete lyrical drama.

Sonit Kunwori's story is from Puranic legend and *Karengar Ligiri* is a fictitious story from old feudal society. In *Sonit Kunwori*, King Ban is in search of a partner for his daughter who should also be a befitting combatant too. His search for an eligible son-in-law gains prominence in the play which ultimately engulfs him in a complex situation. This complexity and conflict seems somewhat pre-destined as King Ban had prayed to Lord Shiva for an equal opponent and as a divine boon from the Lord, Shri Krishna was placed before him as his son-in-law.

In *Karengar Ligiri* unbearable suffering is portrayed from beginning till the end where socially constructed rules and conventions, ethics, and basic instincts play a pivotal role in inducting the characters into the web of eternal conflict. The king is becoming old and as convention, the son has to marry in order to ascend the throne. The queen mother or the *Rajmao* is a staunch believer of social custom and so imposes marriage on her son before his coronation, which ultimately becomes the root of all discontentment. *Xundar Kunwor* places his argument that "if my road to the throne is through the holy fire and under the knots of the bridal attire then let it be not my goal at all". *Kunwor* further says finally "neither I compromise, nor you, please do not disturb me or I will leave my country". Both mother and son are firm on their resolutions and herein lies the seed of conflict. All other characters like *Kanchanmati*, *Ananga*, *Sewali* portray interestingly different roles. We see *Xundar Kunwor* agreeing to marry

Kanchanmati in the last scene of the 1st act but the dissent did not end there, in the 3rd scene of the 1st act itself we get a glimpse of the two characters, an indignant *Kanchanmati* reprimanding *Ananga* for his cowardice. *Kanchanmati* is further enraged when *Ananga* expresses his concern for the woman suffering like a mosquito under a net being a coward himself. In this play, the existing social custom's of that period is the factor which ultimately takes *Kanchanmati*'s life and *Ananga* is sent to exile.

Jyotiprasad very aptly delineates the characters who are gripped with conflict and at war with their own conscience. *Kanchanmati* is not wailing at the court of justice and *Xundar Kunwor*, without hurting his hereditary feudal pride convinces *Rajmao* that as a prince he knows his duty and will never raise the position of a royal maid. *Rajmao*'s administrative supremacy and arrogance on one side and *Xundar Kunwor*'s perplexed situation on the other frames him as a misogynist. But his aversion toward women in reality is nothing but a clamour against the class discrimination in the feudal society.

Rupalim is another play which deals with deep ideological crisis. From the very beginning struggle and conflict advances parallelly towards the end. Here the conflict is between culture and miscreants or in other words between the beautiful and ugly. The significance of this play lies in its treatment of conflict, fear, excitement and a successful solution of its problems.

Lovita is not a stereotypical play but based on a realistic situation. It depicts the reaction of the Assamese society after the onslaught of 2nd world war and 1942 revolution. He writes, "today's Assamese generation feels that after going through much traumas, tribulation and a depressing phase they have remained as a society only with a cultural background, but through this play I want to establish with true facts that Assamese people have not yet lost their resistance power and they still have the capability

to succeed by countering adverse circumstances and establishing their self respect," Lovita is one such women character who sacrifices her life by showing indomitable courage and patience against hostile situation and social custom. Lovita is suffering extreme trauma because of communal discrimination. Lovita is rejected by Golap, who once wanted to marry her, because she has been given shelter by a Muslim family. It is not only Golap but the whole village who refused to accept Lovita. She retorts "I am a Hindu Girl, do you know *Ilahi Koka*, how are these people going to accept me, they will be sinning in this life and in the after life too!"

The girl who is ready to sacrifice her life for her country is in deep crisis because of the social rules which is further augmented by a coward like Golap without the right kind of courage. Lovita sneers at Golap "Don't tell me you are from today's generation, if you do not have revolutionary spirit you can not call yourself a young man! If you cannot raise your voice and protest against the injustices of the king, the law, the social system, the fools and the narrow minded people exploiting the innocent you cannot call yourself today's young man. If you cannot forsake your luxuries and cannot fight for your country, don't call yourself a young man". She tell *Ilahi Koka*, "for shelter only your have kept me in Mouzadar's house, instead of showing compassion and two lines of sympathy they have treated me like a bonded labour and from morning till night showered me with choicest words of insult, I too am a woman of flesh and blood, not cattle!"

Golap fears his society so he cannot keep Lovita in his house. Lovita's clear answer to Golap "you don't have to put yourself in trouble for me, you don't have to feel insulted and cursed by the so called flag bearers of religion. But whatever you say you are not today's young man, be satisfied with your people your

religion your custom, rules and your society". This explosion against Golap is the result of Lovita's conflict with the existing social rules. She sacrificed her life for her country but had to suffer acute mental crises. Lovita's conflict with her revolutionary spirit is the reflection of Jyotiprasad's own revolutionary character.

Jyotiprasad's "*Khanikar*" although cannot be adjudged equally with his other plays, yet through the character of Nabin he portrays a different scenario which throws light on the cultural side of the society. Nabin goes to a foreign land to learn the art of sculpture against the will of his parents and relatives. This is where the root of the conflict lies, the ideal artist in him is at war with the social customs fighting against all odds, Nabin goes to France to establish himself, he succeeds and gets international acclaim too but is unable to free himself from the internal conflict. Jyotiprasad could not avoid the existing social system in any of his plays where we find the characters suffering and suffocating under the unjust social rules of that very period. The characters seems to be nothing but the mouth pieces of the play wright himself. The characters portrayed from the feudel system are heart rending and attractive. His meticulously constructed dialogues vividly express the inner turmoil of every character. Jyotiprasad's construction of plots and treatment of every element like struggle, conflict, crisis not only reflect the contemporary society but infuse a unique driving force in the plays.

Gender Hegemony : A feminist reading of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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The term 'Gender' constitutes the characteristics of socio-cultural origin which are attributed to the different biological sexes adopted by feminists to stress the social shaping of femininity and masculinity to counter the concept that relations between women and men were ordained by nature. To be precise 'Gender' is not sex in feminist studies. Sex is biological which includes anatomy and physiology. Men and women both are the part of reproductive system but women are capable of bearing children. With the biological act of child bearing, certain values like motherhood which is a symbol of femalehood and nurturing a child are the social values attributed to biological performance. These biological functions are determined not only by anatomy or physiology but by the social values attributed to them which constitutes Gender. Gender is dependent on location, time and the cultural frameworks. Hegemony refers to a process through which dominant classes exercise power. As Promod K. Nayar says in his book 'Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory' - 'Hegemony is the domination of particular sections of society by the powerful classes not necessarily through threats of violence or the law but by winning their consent to be governed and dominated. Arundhati Roy's novel 'The God of Small Things' is a kind of novel that encourages the reader to see relationship in terms of hegemonic

perception. Gender hegemony has been a subject of research for the last several decades from 'Virginia Woolf to 'The God of Small Things'. Arundhati Roy's depiction of the miserable plight of women arouses the suppressed women from sleep to consciousness. What strikes us most about the novel at first sight is the novelist's espousal of divergent social issues like casteism, gender oppression, marginalization of women and the underdogs of the society, domestic disturbance, misuse of political power by party's stalwarts and police and so on. The male gender is viewed as the oppressing machinery to marginalize women, the domestic oppression, and dominance of husband over wife.

This study brings to light the gender disparity where the husband Papachy is presented as a dominating demon to let loose his anger, cruelty on his innocent wife as well as the horrible picture of domestic violence and finally a plea for women's freedom from the subversive attitude and dominance of the male ego. In this study an attempt has been made to show how the females have been suppressed for an entire life and how they become free from the hegemony of patriarchy and in the marginalized women-folk against the backdrop of South Indian ethos.

Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things' is an extraordinary achievement in the field of Indian English fiction. 'The God of Small Things' marks the novelist's disturbing awareness and anxiety for the age old oppressive system of the Indian society like casteism, untouchability, dominance of patriarchal society which Indians have not been able to eradicate since the bygone days of Sita, Droupadi etc.

The meaning of the novel is based on Indian history and politics which shapes its plot to a large extent. The novel also focuses on the historical background and develops a profound insight into the frustration of human beings and the desire that emerges from the confines of a firmly entrenched casteist society. Throughout the novel

the author reveals a very complex and long lasting class conflict prevailing in Kerala and various states of India.

'The God of Small Things' befitted very well as a feminist text foregrounding several unseen barriers of patriarchy that has continued to rise in women's efforts to gain parity with men. One of the major issues which very often figures in contemporary feminist discourse is the patriarchal powers within the household, the society and the economy.

The setting of the novel is the rural ethos, a village in Kerala in the 1960s named Ayemenem. The novelist herself becomes a party to the Kerelean rural ethos and this is obvious from the wonderful idyllic description of the village scenery, natural paradise and niceties of the river Munachal. The sullen nights, the south-west monsoon, the short spells of sharp and glittering sun-shine, the pappervines and the wild creepers - all constitute the mosaic of nature's plenty. It is against such a fine world of rural beauty that characters like Pappachi and Mammachi are introduced in Ayemenem house. Roy's gender hegemony begins with the picture of domestic oppression and dominance of husband over wife. The male gender is viewed as the 'Pappachi Moth' the husband is presented as a dominating demon to let loose his anger and cruelty on his innocent wife Mammachi. The picture of the oppressive heat and the unpleasant realities of life experienced by children in the opening chapter can be correlated with the death of Sophie Mol and the tragic life of Ammu, the daughter of Pappachi towards cruel destiny. Both Mammachi and Ammu became the targets of family violence inflicted by Pappachi. The daughter was a mute witness to the senseless beating of Mammachi by Pappachi every night with a brass flower vase. Both the mother and the little girl were beaten and the daughter's best gum boots were cut with scissors. Through the horrible picture of domestic violence, Arundhati Roy presents the destructive effects of the

brutalizing masculine power. What is more painful is that Ammu was deprived of higher education on the ground that in Pappachi's view 'College education was an unnecessary expense for a girl'. Ammu is the sentinel of Arundhati Roy whose heart yearns for freedom and in a state of desperation she goes to Kolkata and hurriedly marries an assistant manager of a tea estate only to find that her husband was an alcoholic and extremely self-centered. Her husband was even willing to handover Ammu to the arms of his boss Mr. Hollick to ensure his promotion. The husband's character enraged Ammu because Pappachi's exploitation repeated again in the form of the husband's bouts of violence. A mother of twins (Rahul and Estha), Ammu's marriage transformed into a divorce and the traditional Indian society, even today has no place or respect for a divorcee. She is an archetype of all those neglected, ignored, helpless and humiliated women of the Indian society who perish in misery and pain.

The novel deals with the transgression of 'Love Laws', which has been operating within the family and the society since time immemorial, and its terrible consequences. The trend of patriarchal dominance and its severe effect has been seen in the Ammu-Velutha relationship which is another unfortunate development by the cruel destiny. The novelist portrayed Velutha as an untouchable of Paravan caste which suffered untold miseries in the hands of high caste people of Kerelean society. He always lives on the margin of society and could not become a fine engineer because he was a Paravan. His essential identity is his caste. When Mammachi hired Velutha as a factory carpenter, Velutha was paid less than what she would pay to a touchable carpenter. The picture of casteism enriches the art of social realism because Mammachi did not encourage him to enter her house. Velutha is the most loved person of the Ayemenem children in *The God of Small Things*, who makes beautiful toys for them, playing together with them, doing all the menial household works of

the family. However Ammu, a divorcee's illicit affairs with a 'Paravan' (an untouchable) horrifies not only the family but even comrade Pillai, as well as the administration in the state under communist rule. It is the act of physical relation between Velutha and Ammu that astonished the entire social set up. He is done to death in the police custody on the grounds of the death of Sophie Mol. The police administration has taken stringent action against them - a low caste man and an upper caste woman who broke the "love laws". Ammu becomes insane and dies in grief and Estha becomes dumb and immobile due to false witness extracted from him in the police station to implicate the innocent and beloved Velutha in the murder of Sophie Mol, a half-child of Chacko. It is worthwhile to mention that "Love Laws" is patriarchal in its origin and is sustained by the four pillars of the society-Religion, Caste, God and the Scriptures. It functions in the society with its dual moral standard and is a very potent weapon for coercion. There are various transgressors of "Love Laws" in this novel but the same mode of transgression is dealt with differently in case of different individuals.

Remembering Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, the way Caesar was assassinated by his best friend, to her children, Estha and Rahel, Ammu dwells on the precarious position of betrayal in such a way that it covers the complete gamut of human relationships. Ammu said, "That you can't trust anybody. Mother, father, brother, husband, best friend, nobody. With children, she said (when they asked), it remained to be seen. She said it was entirely possible. For instance, that Estha could group up to be a Male Chauvinist Pig". It is very clear from the voice of Ammu that gender hegemony has suppressed her entire environment. Estha, Rahel along with their mother, Ammu and her lover Velutha are fellow sufferers of the male dominated Indian society.

In conclusion : it can be inferred that feminism consciousness is either not there in Indian Society or even if it is there, it is not

properly comprehended. There are several obstacles in the minds of Indian women which are not fair to them. They are not conscious that these obstacles have resulted from traditional, religious, sociological and mythical conceptions and deserve re-evaluation and reassessment. The patriarchal hegemony is prevalent as a common phenomenon in Indian society. Arundhati Roy, thus from the start to the finish of "The God of Small Things" brings to the fore the plight of women under patriarchal dominance in the backdrop of south Indian ethos. Roy's portrayal of male dominated tradition of writing is very much implicit in her exclusive details which have been documented so vividly in "The God of Small Things". This points to our women in the country to open their minds to know and establish their right and identities from the subversive attitude and dominance of male ego.

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EXISTENTIALISM AND LITERATURE

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The Philosophy of Existentialism emerges out of the problems of man-- about life, suffering and about death-- in the modern world. It negates all that is artificial and superficial so that by avoiding these man can realize the real value of existence.

The problems of man existed in all ages. But putting man at the centre, as a distinct entity happened in the modern world. The subject 'man' was treated with all seriousness, abandoning all the material and transcendental around him for these were considered as illusory. Also, traditional philosophers did not take the problems of existentialism too seriously in the preceding ages or gave some spiritual solutions to these. It is for these reasons that Existentialism can be said to have been born and best developed in the modern age and its initiation can be said to have started from the Dutch philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard.

The optimistic spirit of people was destroyed by the World War I and the calamities that it brought. There was a desolation and misery following the Great Depression and the World War-II. This despair, gloom and anguish was expressed by the existentialist writers which even today remains a popular mode of reasoning. The important existentialist thinkers were Soren Kierkegaard, Fredreich Nietzsche, Jean Paul Sarte, Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger. A few lesser known existentialists were Simone de Beauvoir, Nikolai Berdyaev, Leo

Sheshtov, Karl Berth, Louis Lavelle. These people played a significant role in the propagation of existential philosophy throughout the continent. The Existentialists,

take man as the central theme of philosophy, and that by man they mean the free, self-creating, self-transcending subject ... existentialism may be regarded as a revolt against absolute idealism ... and as a revolt against positivism, materialistic determinism and psychological determinism, against any form of philosophy which would reduce man to an item in the physical cosmos, so far as this would imply determinism, and against any form of philosophy which excludes a consideration of man's inner life and destiny (Copleston 5).

The existentialists basically consider that there is a lack of perfection, power and control; so life is never fully satisfying because of the suffering and losses that occur. However, they do agree to the fact that 'life' has meaning. Existentialism is the search and journey for true self and true personal meaning in life. When someone or society tries to impose or demand that their beliefs, values, or rules are to be faithfully accepted and obeyed, the existentialists believe that, it is then that a person's individualism is destroyed. This makes a person become whatever the people in power desire, thus they are dehumanized and reduced to being an object. This act is considered to be most objectionable by the existentialists. Existentialism stress that a person's judgment is the determining factor for what is to be believed rather than by arbitrary religious or secular world values.

Existentialism, however, has not remained confined to philosophy alone. It has spread out its branches to other disciplines including literature, theatre, film and television. This study therefore, by taking psychology and psychoanalysis. This study therefore, by taking some examples tries to portray how existentialism has had its influence in literature. In theatre, Sartre's *No Exit* (1944) is

steeped in existential thoughts. These elements are promptly manifested in the 'Theatre of the Absurd', the most notable play being Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Tom Stoppard, Jean Anouilh, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov are other important playwrights who well demonstrated in their plays that we are absurd beings who live in an universe which is devoid of real meaning (Copleston).

In literature, the ideas relating to existentialism have found place since 1922. From 1922 to 1960, writers composed literature and poetry which contained these elements in varying degrees. From 1960 onwards, these elements came to be juxtaposed with new ideas that were coming to the surface in the form of postmodernist thoughts. Fyodor Dostoevsky, Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, T.S. Eliot, Herman Hesse, Jack Kerouac are writers who wrote works containing existential thought. Later novelists such as Chuck Palahniuk, Crispin Glover, Charles Bukowski and others have derived from these writers as well as from the earlier existentialist philosophers. (Johnson) The 1864 novella *Notes from Underground* by Fyodor Dostoevsky is considered to be the first existentialist novel. The 'notes' are from an anonymous narrator who writes a confused set of memoirs or confessions declaring and explaining his state of being alienated from modern society. The novella is divided into two sections. The first, "Underground", is shorter and set in the 1860s, when the Underground Man is forty years old. This section serves as an introduction to the character of the Underground Man, explaining his theories about his antagonistic position toward society. The second fragment of *Notes From Underground*, entitled "Apropos of the Wet Snow", describes specific events in the Underground Man's life in the 1840s, when he was twenty-four years old. This section, in a way, serves as a practical illustration of the more abstract ideas of the Underground Man, set forth in the first

section. This second section reveals the narrator's progression from his youthful perspective, influenced by Romanticism and ideals of 'the beautiful and lofty', to his mature perspective in 1860, which is purely cynical about beauty, loftiness, and literariness in general.

Franz Kafka often created characters who were alienated and who struggled with hopelessness and absurdity. 'Absurd' implies without any inherent or intrinsic meaning. The characters are thrown into this world within set circumstances, but these circumstances have meaning only to the extent it is created by the characters. For instance, in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, a man awakens one morning and realizes that he has turned into a "monstrous vermin", often interpreted as a giant bug or insect. The French existentialist and absurdist Albert Camus in his philosophical essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* describes Kafka's oeuvre as "absurd in principle" (39), but at the same time finds a "tremendous cry of hope" in Kafka which was also to be found in religious existentialists such as Kierkegaard, and which Camus himself rejects (40). In *Metamorphosis*, the idea of existentialism is brought out in a subtle yet definite way. Grete is a character who appears to have the most tolerance for Gregor shortly after his metamorphosis. Gregor was apparently rather fond of his sister (Grete) and hoped to finance her education in a conservatory. He was also mesmerized with her violin playing. His inability to follow through these acts of kindness had led to a faster deterioration of Grete's maintenance of Gregor's room. Kafka uses the character of Grete to prove that unconditional love does not exist, or at least, cannot uphold itself. Grete cannot maintain Gregor's life once she becomes sure that her time and care will amount to nothing. Existentialism requires an individual to rise above the depressive conditions of humanity through personal articulation. The metamorphosis of Gregor allowed him

to recognize the fact that he was being suppressed by society. His exterior form caused his family to question their own lifestyle and re-adapt, shunning all that was useless to them. *The Metamorphosis* causes readers to question their own lives in the present with regard to living with purpose and intent. Doing so may cause conflict as one fights against the will of society, but with it comes liberation and a whole new understanding of existentialism (Johnson).

Kafka's *The Trial* is about the trial of Josef K. who is arrested, summoned, released, attends a series of bizarre trials and is finally prosecuted by a court which seems to have a quasi-authoritative place in society. He attends a series of trials before being prosecuted but the nature of his crime is revealed neither to him nor the reader. K's life seems to be out of control when he and the reader try to understand what is going on. Though the location of the novel is not exactly known, the surroundings seem urban since K. spends most of his time in one building or another. Through the trials of K., Kafka seems to portray a critique of totalitarianism which is a hindrance in the way of individual freedom. He attempts to reveal the evils of modernization and the rise of evil forces in the society by taking aim at the absurdities of the legal system. The novel questions the relationship between law and justice. The paradox is that law is supposed to be an edifice of justice, for it transcends all individual human cases but in fact it is not, for it is oblivious to human cases. (Tranter) Also, the idea of defense seems paradoxical in the novel. The purpose of a defense is to give the individual an opportunity to defend his innocence, but in the case of K, this is futile for all his claims are overlooked. This brings in feelings of inferiority, insecurity and paranoia. Kafka does not present a positive picture of society through the novel. Rather it depicts a world where the interpersonal relationships have deteriorated and have been lost.

Josef K's intense feelings of isolation, alienation and anxiety are evident in the novel :

There are many remarkable things about *The Trial*. Its representation of modern working life as an alienating and uncanny environment, filled with strange and absurd moments; the supposed anticipation of totalitarian horrors, complete with meaningless arrests and unjust death sentences; the portrait of a protagonist negotiating a meaningless and absurdist existence. But what interested me most this time around was the atmosphere of the prose, and the way paranoia seeped into the text through descriptions of confined and enclosed spaces. This claustrophobia, which permeates *The Trial* like a perpetual cold sweat, often manifests itself in incidents that much resemble the clawing desperation of an asthma attack. (Tranter)

Kafka's world is essentially chaotic, and this is why it is impossible to derive a specific philosophical or religious code from it. Kafka's relationship with existentialism is much more complex, mainly because the label "existentialist" by itself is rather meaningless. Kafka certainly remained fascinated and overwhelmed by the major theme of all varieties of existentialist thinking, namely the difficulty of responsible commitment in the face of an absurd universe. Deprived of all metaphysical guidelines, man is nevertheless obligated to act morally in a world where death renders everything meaningless.

The absurdity which Kafka portrays in his nightmarish stories was, to him, the quintessence of the whole human condition. The utter incompatibility of the "divine law" and the human law, and Kafka's inability to solve the discrepancy are the roots of the sense of estrangement from which his protagonists suffer. No matter how hard Kafka's heroes strive to come to terms with the universe, they are hopelessly caught, not only in a mechanism of their own contriving, but also in a network of accidents and

incidents, the least of which may lead to the gravest consequences. Absurdity results in estrangement, and to the extent that Kafka deals with this basic calamity, he deals with an eminently existentialist theme.

Existentialism in literature is therefore typically focused on individual human lives and the inevitability of sufferings that one has to endure. It unmasks the conventions and social patterns with enormous effect. It was therefore an influential phenomenon of the 20th century which appeared as a revolt against systematic abstract thought, categorizations methods of traditional philosophy.

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Use of 'Rememory' and 'Slave Narrative' in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

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Toni Morrison is an African-American woman writer who has been conferred the Nobel Prize in literature in 1993 for her contribution to American literature. She was born Chloe Anthony Wofford on February 17, 1931, in the northern Ohio city of Loraine. "Among the legacies form her family that influenced Morrison's life and writing are a strong, black self-image, examples of maternal authority and equality in marriage; and the power of the Black community. Although bitterly racist, George Wofford imparted to his daughter a strong sense of black identity. Ramah Wofford, counselling her daughter against crippling hatred, became a model for the powerful and resourceful women in Morrison's fiction. From her maternal grandparents, John Solomon and Ardelia Willis, Morrison heard stories of the post-Reconstruction South; from the Black community's oral tradition, Morrison heard terrifying and inspiring stories about black history and the Underground Railroad."¹

This paper's objective is to substantiate the use of 'rememory' in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and how retelling of memories connects the present and the future. It also aims to highlight the difference between Toni Morrison's 'slave narrative' and its earlier practitioners. In *Beloved* she portrays the adverse effects of slavery on the black people, dehumanizing them to

the extent that anything 'white' seemed ghastly to them; this 'whiteness' blackens their future and Sethe, the protagonist, refuses to propagate her species and slashes her two year old child to death. Death assumed a better prospect than a future life in slavery. "It is Toni Morrison's ambition to create a form, and a storytelling, that keeps alive the struggle to remember, the need to forget, and the inability to forget."² 'Rememory' is a process by which Morrison presents the story of Sethe by retelling the episodes of her devastating past. Even though Sethe wants to forget about the infanticide, she is not allowed to. *Beloved*, first, returns to Sweet Home as a two-year old ghost and later as a full fledged twenty year old woman (the age she would have been had she lived); and *Beloved* becomes the manifestation of Sethe's conscience. 'Rememory' enables her to 'remember memories', to remember the past, no matter how traumatic and brutal the past was, "If a house burns down, its's gone, but the place - the picture of it - stays, and not just my rememory, but out there in the world."³

Morrison's use of the 'slave narrative' is different from the earlier ones. The earlier slave narratives like Fredrick Douglass's *Narrative* (1945) and Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) invokes memory as monologic, contained mere description of facts and incidents of a slave. They wrote about the cruelties of the slave owners and the sufferings and escapades leading to freedom. "Morrison uses the trope of memory to revise the genre of slave narrative and thereby making the slave experience it inscribes more accessible to contemporary readers. She uses memory as the metaphorical sign of the interior life to explore and represent dimensions of slave life that the classic slave narrative omitted. By doing so, she seeks to make slavery accessible to readers for whom slavery is not memory but remote historical fact to be ignored, repressed or forgotten."⁴ In *Beloved*, Sethe is 'institutionalized' by slavery, she finds it hard to cope

up with 'free life'. She could live only twenty-eight days of 'unslaved life' even though she is not captured again in consonance with the 'Fugitive slave laws'. It is experience and interaction with one's own community that leads a person to exercise his / her freedom and hence develop one's 'subjectivity'. Sethe is only used to taking orders as a slave, not to use her discretion but the process of 'rememorying' leads her to 'self-actualization'. "For Sethe, *Beloved's* central character, self-actualization, or the development of subjectivity, can be realized only outside the limits of a colonial discourse and within a collectively defined alternate discourse signifying individual empowerment. This alternative discourse, I argue, is found in the free black community to which Sethe flees".⁵ But her subjectivity is realized only when she becomes a full member of her community.

But in Morrison's text the past is significant, the past speaks for itself and Morrison defies the linear time sequence, jumping back and forth connecting the past to the present as well as the future. She might have thought that the narrative would be more convincing if the narrator is a slave as well as a woman. More often than not, earlier slave narratives had a male slave protagonist but Morrison chose to place a woman instead of a man. Among Morrison's several literary influences are William Faulkner, Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen, Alice Walker to name a few. Alice Walker is known for her explicit portrayal of violence, whereas there's a hint of celebration being a black in Hurston's works especially *How it feels to be colored me?* "Hurston praises and celebrates the linguistic prowess and cultural greatness of her people, even as she also points to efforts by white artists to adapt distinctively African-American styles and expressions in language and, especially, in music and dance."⁶ In this essay, she celebrates her uniqueness rather than penning something about inequality. "Nella Larsen's two novels, *Quicksand* and *Passing*

(1928 and 1929) look other problems (the sexual desire of black women; the 'passing' of African-Americans as whites) into haunting, fabular tales of identity... For African-American writers the identification and articulation of their specific cultural identity became a central project. Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset created a fiction whose discourse is closer to cultural anthropology than to the political pamphlet; the tracking of local rituals and customs forms a fictionalised investigation of ethnic identity."⁷

Beloved is a post-modern novel whose narrative deviates from the contemporary scene. The novel is set after the end of the second World-War during the Reconstruction period. The 'Emancipation Proclamation' of 1863 turned out to be a bad joke to the African-American community as slavery continued to flourish and violence against a black person was still rampant which is beyond literary representation. The Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery and the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed equal rights and protection to the blacks but their implementation would need another hundred years and in 1963 Martin Luther King would clamour for their fundamental rights as bona-fide citizens of America in his sad but passionate speech 'I have a dream'. "Martin Luther King fitted the traditional mould of Southern black leadership... he was in touch with world opinion on race, specifically with Gandhian doctrine of non-violent resistance... he quickly came to symbolize the negro's new-found freedom."⁸

The history of the South would be totally incomplete without a mention of slavery which started roughly about 1680s and continued until the start of the 20th century while the rest of the 3rd world were basking in the new found freedom. Such atrocity upon a race of people is unheard of; the massacre of over 60 million people which is ten times the genocide of Holocaust. "It is only in terms of the slave and slavery, we believe, that creation,

existence and demise of the old South are finally to be understood..... between 1619 and 1860 some 400,000 blacks were transported from Africa..... this was not a large number compared with the total Atlantic slave trade which carried around 9.5 million negroes to the New World, most of them to the sugar plantations of Brazil and the Caribbean." ⁹ The black people were engaged in chain gangs, sugar plantations, as domestic slaves, and worst of all, women were also used as a product of sexual fantasy, and hence were 'doubly colonized.' "Slaves could be regarded as renewable capital goods to be exploited to their maximum and then replaced." ¹⁰ In *Beloved*, Sethe represents the 'racial' as well as the 'sexual' other. She is 'commodified' like any other enslaved black woman, and is used as a product of 'desire' and 'lust' by the School Teacher and his nephews as if she is something to gorge upon. The school teacher witnesses Sethe's rape and makes it a mere discursive act. "For Sethe, the fetishization of her body by the school teacher and his nephews causes psychic fragmentation that continues to thwart the development of her subjectivity after she leaves. "Sethe wants to concentrate on her future; however, her commodified status, dramatizes fetishistically, forms a barrier which prevents her from resisting objectifying colonial influence". ¹¹

While Morrison was editing *The Black Book* (a collection of memorabilia which contains 300 years of black history), she came across the story of Mrs Garner who kills her child, that would become the basis for *Beloved*. "Indeed on the tenth page of *The Black Book* is a copy of the news article, 'A visit to the slave mother who killed her child' that documents the historical basis for what would later become Morrison's most challenging fictional project." ¹² The text contains not only Sethe's story or version but also of the other characters, Paul D, Denver, Baby Suggs as well as Beloved. The memories are evoked when the characters retell their stories in their African-American oral

tradition. "Ms Morrison blends a knowledge... in many traditions, the dead cannot return from the grave unless called, and the passion of the living that keep them alive." ¹³ Sethe wants to conceal the story of Beloved and tells her only a part of it. "Sethe gave short replies or rambling incomplete reveries." ¹⁴ Sethe seemed unmindful of the past and locked in the memories of her escape from slavery and Halle's failure to come up at the planned spot. It was not until Paul D arrives at 124 Blue Stone, Sethe delves deep into her past by sharing her memories, stories and experiences. "Memory (the deliberate act of remembering) is a form of willed creation. It is not an effort to find out the way it really was-that is research. The point is to dwell on the way why it appeared and why it appeared in that particular way." ¹⁵ Toni Morrison's concern here is not what history has recorded but what history has omitted. Her concern is not to speak for abolition of slavery but to rectify what is wrongly accounted. "Morrison acknowledges the selectivity and subjectivity of historical accounts, presenting gaps and absences as necessary elements of any history and thereby questions the validity of any claim to completeness of a history of slavery." ¹⁶

The tension arises between remembering and forgetting when Sethe and Beloved tries to call upon the ghost of Beloved. When they don't come across the ghost, Denver grows impatient and Sethe tells her, "You forgetting how little it is... She wasn't even two years old when she died." ¹⁷ Denver suggests that maybe she (the ghost of Beloved) doesn't understand and Sethe replies, "Maybe. But she'd only come, I could make it clear to her." ¹⁸ Thus Sethe's manifestation of guilt is countered by her love for Beloved; if only Beloved would return Sethe could explain what prompted her to take that horrible decision and her presence is always missed. Sethe's declaration of love for Beloved takes her back to a time when she selects a tombstone for her daughter she killed. It floods her mind with ambivalent emotions of grief, love,

angst, guilt and consolation. It entangles her memories and she thinks about the shameful circumstance in which she had had engraved on her daughter's tombstone the words 'Beloved' in exchange for ten minutes of sex. "In this memory, the reality of gender and oppression converge... she also remembers that for ten more minutes, she could have gotten the word 'dearly' added... this memory raises the issue around which the entire novel is constructed and which is the consequence and / or responsibility that she must carry for her actions." ¹⁹

Sethe is made to remember her past through scars, physical as well as psychological. That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. ²⁰ " (*Beloved*, Pg-252) When Sethe thinks about Beloved she can't stop thinking about Halle and Baby Suggs. Halle had toiled hard even on Sundays to earn extra bucks so that he could buy freedom for his mother, Baby Suggs. Baby Suggs, torn and battered by age and scars of slavery, took to preaching. She had decided that because slave life had "busted her legs, back, head, eyes, hands, kidneys, womb and tongue", her only functioning organ left was her 'heart'. It was also a silent protest against the canons and principles of Christianity, an institution primarily followed and controlled by the white chaps. "It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women... In the silence that followed, Baby Suggs, holy, offered up to them her great big heart. ²¹

Denver seeks to frighten away Paul D when he arrives at Sethe's home on 124 Bluestone by telling him that they have a 'lonely and rebuked' Ghost in their house. It suggests the return of belated, the return of the repressed. Paul D's reunion with Sethe triggers them to talk about the past. They remember Sweet Home with ambivalence as "it wasn't sweet and it sure wasn't home." The stories Paul D shares are fragments of history Sethe is unprepared for. Years ago her husband had witnessed the white

boys forcibly take milk from her breasts, but had been powerless to come to her rescue or stop them.

Sethe tries to keep Denver away from the experience of slavery. So by keeping Denver from the reality of the past, Sethe is preventing her from experiencing the trauma of slavery. But eventually, Denver is awakened by the past as she is forced to take responsibility for saving her mother from the same past that her mother tried to save her from. Through Denver's going out into the community and the exchange of food, she and the home become open to change and community intervention. "The story contained in *Beloved* unfolds this process of memorialization and change, a process too complex to be easily diagrammed or mapped. The story itself, as complex and unavoidable as whether, embodies a system and process by which houses, which are born out of violence and trauma, which preserve memory and history, can be transformed into homes where violence need not be the only source of connection." ²² At the end of the novel the community helps Denver rescue her mother from Beloved's ferocious spell. Sethe convalesces and undergoes psychic healing but her declaration that 'this is not a story to pass on' lends an ironic overtone to the entire novel. Even though they were able to exorcise the ghost of Beloved but they never could remove 'it' from her mind - "It's never going away."

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WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Wordsworth and Coleridge were the two pioneers of Romantic poetry. Both have carved a niche in the annals of English poetry and literature. As contemporaries they gave a new impetus and direction to the Romantic Revival. Their meeting in 1797 in the village of Racedown in Dorsetshire at Nether Stowey was momentous in the history of English poetry. This was a memorable meeting and it sowed the seeds of a close friendship between Wordsworth and Coleridge. Wordsworth's companionship helped to ripen Coleridge's poetic genius. The first fruit of their close association, the publication of "Lyrical Ballads" in 1798 was a landmark in the history of English poetry. It brought about a sea-change in poetry and a new line of poetic thought.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge influenced each other. Wordsworth owed to Coleridge human tenderness and speculative and critical thought. Wordsworth taught Coleridge a strong and confident acceptance of the faith in the joyousness and joy-evoking power of Nature. Wordsworth and Coleridge had much in common. Both were country-born and early orphaned. Both in their early short adult lives had been determinedly independent and original. Both resided in the country. While Wordsworth had

a garden, orchard and every other convenience, Coleridge with rustic ideas did not receive proper attention. The political sympathies of the two were also similar, though Coleridge had been inflamed with real enthusiasm for the French Revolution about two and a half year later than Wordsworth.

There are many aspects common to the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge appreciated Nature. Wordsworth saw the divine spirit of joy in Nature. Coleridge also noticed the spirit of God permeating the objects of Nature. Wordsworth felt the divine spirit pervading the objects of Nature. Wordsworth continued to believe throughout his life that the spirit of God lived through the objects of nature and formed a fountain of joy for humanity. Thus Wordsworth writes in "Tintern Abbey" :

"... and I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused"

But there came about a transformation in Coleridge's attitude towards Nature as a result of his study of German Idealism. After his return from Germany he started believing that Nature has no life of its own, nor is there a soul moving through the objects of Nature. He believes that it is we who invest Nature with life and Nature simply reflects our own moods. Thus he says in 'Dejection: An Ode' :

"O Lady! We receive but what we give,
And in our life does Nature live,"²

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge could describe the very spirit of Nature's phases in the utmost simple and homely language. Wordsworth describes Nature in a lucid language which can be found in his "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" where he

elucidates :

"There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light
The glory and freshness of a dream"³

Again, in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" there are certain lines which are very vivid and striking and remind us of Wordsworth :

"The Sun came upon the left
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right,
Went down into the sea"⁴

The study of the "Lyrical Ballads" shows some similarities and contrasts between Wordsworth and Coleridge as poets. Wordsworth studied the simple objects of Nature and imparted to them the colour of his imagination. It was his business not to make excursions in the world of supernaturalism. Wordsworth did not leave the earth. He wrote about the simple life of the peasants, shepherds, leech-gatherers and innocent village girls. He spoke of the Herculean tasks that Michael undertook in his poem "Michael" :

"... He had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists"⁵

But Coleridge revived the element of mystery and wonder in poetry. His poems "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel" express the aptitude for supernaturalism. He created an eerie atmosphere of wonder and mystery by going to the Middle-Ages. Thus in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" Coleridge reiterates,

"Through utter drought all dumb we stood,
I bit my arm, I sucked my blood,
And cried, A sail! A sail!"⁶

Thus whereas Wordsworth sought to give to the objects of Nature that colour of his imagination, it was left to Coleridge to make the supernatural look natural. So he aimed at representing perfectly that side of the romantic imagination which seeks to lose itself in dream and the marvellous.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge were guided by the feeling of humanitarianism. They were full of the milk of human kindness for all human beings on this earth which find expression in their poetry. Wordsworth's love for humanity is present in almost all his poems of human life. His temper was essentially democratic. As he says in "The Prelude" :

"... we were brothers all
In honour as in one community
Scholars and gentleman"⁷

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge also dreams of the political regeneration of mankind and hoped that humanity would advance on the path of nobility and virtue. His love for humanity is expressed in "Reflection on Having Left a Place of Retirement" where he bids farewell to his cottage in order to go to the city and work for the relief of human distress. He condemns those theoretical lovers on mankind who do nothing practical for humanity.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge accept Nature as moral teacher. For Wordsworth, Nature is his friend, philosopher, nurse and guide. According to him, Nature exercises upon the mind of man a purifying and healing influence and enables him to probe into the reality of life. Thus he says in his poem "Tintern Abbey":

"The anchor of my purest thoughts,
The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul,
Of all my moral being"⁸

Similar is the view of Coleridge who felt that Nature is the great Universal Teacher who will mould the spirit of his son. Thus he writes in his poem "Frost at Midnight" :

"Great Universal Teacher! He shall mound
Thy Spirit, and by giving make it ask."⁹

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge loved music. Montgomery describes the poetry of Coleridge as like electricity "*flashing at rapid intervals with the utmost intensity of effect*" and contrasts with that of Wordsworth, like galvanism "*not less powerful, but rather continuous than sudden in its wonderful influence.*"¹⁰ Coleridge was a master in sounds and he excelled Wordsworth in melody. Coleridge was called by Wordsworth as '*an epicure in sounds*'¹¹. He was adept in producing music in his poetry by subtle changes in the position of accents and vowels. His poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" illustrates the uniqueness of his music. It contains a series of cunning sound patterns and is essentially rhythmic. We are captivated by its scintillating music as he uses onomatopoeia :

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound".¹²

But Wordsworth's ears were not ripe for music and hence his poems are not so musical as those of Coleridge. He could never attain that fine and enchanting music as exhibited by Coleridge.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge were didactic poets. Both

of them had a tendency to generalise their experiences and to draw moral lessons from them. Wisdom, truth, joy and peace are qualities that exist outside man and may pass into life from Nature, if he approaches it in mood of wise passiveness. Thus Wordsworth reveals in his poem, "The Tables Turned",

"One impulse from a vernal wood,
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can".¹³

Similarly, the main idea that lies behind the poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge is to teach man to have love and reverence to all the creatures of God. He says through the voice of the ancient Mariner :

"He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast ...
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all".¹⁴

In certain respects, Coleridge had a better flowering of genius than Wordsworth. Coleridge's imagination was stronger and bolder than Wordsworth. Coleridge was idealistic whereas Wordsworth, sought his inspiration among the things of everyday life.

Coleridge differs from Wordsworth in his attitude to metre and diction and to poetry in general. According to Wordsworth, "There neither is, nor possibly can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition."¹⁵ Wordsworth believed in the simplicity of diction and brought poetry to the level of ordinary speech. Coleridge disagreed with Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction and considered that the kind of language that Wordsworth sought to employ for poetic composition was not the fitting medium for poetic thought.

Coleridge had a very high opinion of poetry. To Coleridge, poetry was "best words in the best order."¹⁶

Thus, we can conclude that Coleridge and Wordsworth had many things in common. Both reacted against the eighteenth century modes of poetry. Both loved simple language and had a high sense of imagination. Both loved Nature and humanity with their heart and soul and were the true founders of Romanticism in English Poetry. For both, the Universe was alive and mysteriously divine. To the beauty of the landscape both were equally sensitive, Coleridge with more delicate voluptuousness and Wordsworth with more penetrating fidelity. While Wordsworth was attracted by simple human nature, the common growth of Mother Earth, Coleridge was allured to rarer and remoter aspects of humanity. Wordsworth was more penetrating in his imaginative faculty whereas Coleridge was more dream-like.

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T. S. ELIOT'S PRUFROCK : A PORTRAYAL OF MODERN MAN'S DILEMMA

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The general picture of the period 1890-1918 is one of uncertainty and experiment, of a desire for the establishment of a tradition but of doubt about where it is to be found. This further gave way to disillusionment and despair in the twenties and thirties. A new awareness of sociological factors enabled the writers of this period to perceive a disintegrating culture with no positive values to replace it.

Modernism was the one art that responded to this chaotic scenario arising from the destruction of civilization and reason in the First World War. This was a world that was changed and re-interpreted by Marx, Freud and Darwin, a world of capitalism and constant industrial acceleration and of existential exposure to meaninglessness and absurdity.

The time was ripe for the writers to do away with Nature, harmony and fulfillment as the leitmotif of their writings. The scene after the War was of chaos, obscurity and disillusionment, isolation and loneliness. The neo-classical period had laid emphasis on society and in the Romantic period, on individuals because of their uniqueness. But in the Modern period, 'society',

crumbles down and an individual loses his sense of 'self'. Thus pessimism, disillusionment and a loss of faith set the tone for modern poetry.

It can be said that poems are not exhausted by any discussion. T. S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is one extraordinary poem which seems more inexhaustible than many others. Nevertheless, an attempt has been sought here, to provide an analysis of the poem as portraying the dilemma of modern man in an urban setting.

T. S. Eliot's poetry reflects the loss of faith of modern life in an age of rapid change that had seen the collapse of traditional beliefs about the universe and man's place in it, the nature of man himself; an age of breakdown, disorder and tension. Eliot believed that a true poetic response to the confusion must necessarily be 'difficult'. The quest for stability is central to Eliot's work.

Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is seen as one of the masterpieces of the modernist movement. The poem dramatises the state of mind of Prufrock, a tragi-comic figure. The theme of the poem is a personal dilemma, a failure of nerve by a man who recoils fatally from real experience. Though this is his "Love Song", he cannot make a declaration of love. Neither does he dare to do or say anything else of any significance.

Eliot starts the poem with an epigraph from the 14th century epic poem "Inferno" by Dante. The lines are spoken by Guido de Montefeltro, one of the damned in Dante's 'Inferno'. Guido reveals his "identity to Dante only because he mistakes Dante for one of the damned for whom there is no escape from hell... Prufrock is willing to speak only because he believes that his 'love song' will be heard by any body else since he and his creator are both imprisoned in hell.¹ The epigraph sets the tone of the poem and informs the reader for further perusal.

Although the title "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and the first two lines "Let us go then you and I / When the evening is spread out against the sky"² suggests a romantic possibility, the third line abruptly cuts off any such possibility: "Like a patient etherized upon a table". This image of the evening as an etherized patient suggests the suspended state of Prufrock's consciousness.

The effect of that chaotic period on modern man is very telling in the use of this imagery. It insinuates a "world view" affected by "disease" and inactively and "waiting for recovery"³

The first stanza also depicts a drab neighbourhood of cheap hotels and restaurants, squalor and unease. The insecurity of modern man also finds expression in the external urban imagery of the city.

Prufrock moves forward to ask the "overwhelming question" which remains unstated and indeterminate. He imagines himself beside the lady he wants to have as his beloved while at the same time he is searching for a proper beginning to start the "overwhelming question". This "overwhelming question" suggests not merely a proposal of marriage but a larger question as to the meaning of life itself.

The visit which is made by Prufrock is to a room where women come and go and "talk of Michael Angelo". The talk reflects the "ineffectual nature of conversation in a highly urbanized life."⁴

Prufrock's inability to communicate his desires with its consequent problem of isolation makes him articulate his desires only through irony, parody and negation. In the words of Manju Jain :

At different stages in the poem Prufrock assumes various roles which serve as disguises for the dissimulations and duplicities of desire- Guido, John the Baptist, Lazarus, Hamlet. This is so even when he

takes on a role only to reject it, for negations in poetry function in a complex and paradoxical manner. As Freud discovered, negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed without being an acceptance of it. If Prufrock says he is not a prophet the negative is a sign of his repressed aspiration to the role ...³

Prufrock parodies the famous quotation from the Bible by saying that there is a proper time for everything. In fact, the phrase 'there will be time' has been repeated five times between lines 23 and 36 which in turn, serves to highlight his hesitation and delay.

Prufrock is acutely conscious of his middle aged appearance, his baldness, his thinness. He tries to cover all this up by dandyish clothes - by wearing the bottoms of his trousers rolled and parting his hair behind in contrast to the decorously correct morning coat, collar and neck - tie.

Finally, Prufrock retreats himself from that overwhelming question and his mind is now diverted towards the memory of a vision of romantic beauty rising from his buried self. He imagines himself taking a walk on the beach, where he sees mermaids singing to one another. He feels that it is "more suitable to 'drown' inside his own imaginary world".⁴

Images of paralysis, fear and inactivity pervade the poem. Apart from the images already referred to, there are a few more significant images. George Williamson observes that the image of the fog as cat is "another reflection" of Prufrock's "mental state : desire which ends in inertia." ⁵ The image of coffee spoons and cigarette ends sum up Prufrock's dull days. The final sea imagery is one of Prufrock's feeling to escape.

It has already been mentioned that an individual loses his sense of 'self' in the modern period. Eliot's pre-occupation with the nature of the self is central to a reading of 'Prufrock'. As

Manju Jain says :

The poem questions the notion of the self as a unified entity. At every stage in the poem the self that Prufrock reveals appears to be fragmented and elusive and to dissolve into an assumed role ... In order to construct a sense of himself he tries different roles and styles of language and draws upon several allusions from the literature of the past.⁶

It is worth quoting Peter Childs here :

... the shift in the poem from 'I' to 'we' to 'us' involves his dispersion and loss of identity in the crowd. In such ways, Prufrock appears as split being, another instance of the fragmented Modernist self split off from society, caught in language, neuroses and psychological self doubts.⁷

Thus, Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" can be seen as portraying very aptly in English poetry, the alienated and confused Modernist subject in the figure of Prufrock.

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The Eighteenth Century Novel : Its Emergence, Role and Scope

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Eighteenth Century novels constitute the early and truly formative phase of the novel as a genre of prose fiction. This study makes an attempt to provide an overview of the trajectory of the novel in the 18th century. In doing so, it will also try to highlight the novel's role and scope in the 18th century.

The English critic, Arnold Kettle in his book "Introduction to the English Novel- I" has given a working definition of the novel as - "A Novel is a realistic prose fiction complete in itself and of a certain length".¹ It can therefore be said that a novel is a fictitious narrative or tale presenting a picture of real life. The idea we have of the novel comes from the 18th century. Before that, there had been forms of long and continuous narrative prose, but it was only in the 1720's that we begin to see the emergence of a recognizable 'Novel' i.e. concerned with the realistic depiction of middle class life, values and experiences showing the development of individuals.

Fictional narratives can be found almost as far back as we have written records, but these lack many of the characteristics that today we associate with the novel. Firstly, they are normally in verse rather than prose. Secondly, they do not concern themselves with the real life of past or present time but portray

the life of gods or mythical heroes whose lives can hardly be said to resemble 'real life'.

The novel is distinguished from the Novella which is a shorter fictional prose work. The greater length of the novel, specially as compared with even briefer prose works such as the short story and the tale, permits authors to develop one or more characters to establish their motivation and to construct complex plots. The stories recounted in novels are usually products of the imagination despite the presence in many novels of historical facts, events and figures.

Quite a few factors were responsible for its development in the 18th century. They are as follows -

- * Rise of the Middle class
- * Rise of Literacy
- * Printing
- * Increase in readership.
- * Emergence of Democratic government.
- * Rise of the Periodical Essay.
- * Decline of Drama.
- * Development of a Market Economy
- * Rise of Individualism
- * Growth in female Readership.

During the 18th century, the novels experienced a mixture of both experimentation and consolidation. This was achieved through the exploration and working out of new possibilities in the hands of Daniel Defoe and thereafter the main architects - Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Laurence Sterne.

Defoe's novels convey a world of commerce and middle class life. The novel serves as a mirror for this new middle class audience, a mirror in which they can see the dilemmas of their own life reflected. Such novels tended to be realistic and secular. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) suggests a move towards secular

experience, towards showing the world in terms of class, social mobility, family and possessions. In *Robinson Crusoe* the story is of someone making their way in the world. The novel makes it clear that there is more to it than being just a realistic account of Crusoe's experiences. The story portrays Defoe's character being shipwrecked on a desert island looking after himself, gaining a companion in Man-Friday and eventually, as other people arrive on the island, establishing a community and asserting his role as leader. Defoe's second novel *Moll Flanders* (1722) deals with a young woman making her way in life. Beginning as a servant made pregnant by her employer's son, Moll then has to fend for herself even if this involves stealing and selling her body. By the end of the novel, she has adopted a pious religious tone, as she looks back on the wicked life she has led. Historically, *Moll Flanders* is an important step in the development of the genre of the novel. Both these novels by Defoe emerged from the phase of experimentation. One of the prolific writers in the 18th century, Defoe's works include captain *Singleton* (1720) *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) *Colonel Jack* (1722) and *Roxana* (1724).

Samuel Richardson adopted the epistolary technique while writing his novels. Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) concerns a servant girl who resists the advances of her employer and eventually becomes his wife. In his next novel *Clarissa* (1747-48) Richardson widened the circle by engaging multiple perspectives as there are four different letter writers. Unlike *Pamela's* fortune and rise in the social scale, *Clarissa's* fate is tragic as she ends up being fooled by her lover, and is made a victim of mercenary interests by her family. Thus it is clear that *Clarissa* is a far more complex novel. While the story in *Pamela* ends happily, the ending of *Clarissa* is tragic. Although *Pamela* does hint at complex issues, it does not prepare us in anyway for the psychological depth and emotional intensity of *Clarissa*. The

difference between Richardson's two novels indicate how the potential of the novel began to be fully appreciated in the course of the 18th century. Richardson can be credited with the starting of the Novel of character.

The main tradition of the English Novel as it was commonly written until well into the second half of the nineteenth century derives from Henry Fielding. His first novel, *Joseph Andrews* was a satire on *Pamela*. His *Shamela* (1741) was a parody of *Pamela*. Fielding's work was "the most powerful artistic expression of the social conscience of the age"² He was both a moralist and a satirist. In his words, he was writing what he termed "the Comic epic" in prose.

"... its action being more extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents and introducing a greater variety of characters ... of inferior rank ... of inferior manners ... by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime"³

Fielding's greatest achievement was *The History of Tom Jones*.

Laurence Sterne is a pure humorist and a pure sentimentalist. There is no satire in his humour and the laughter his characters provoke is of the gentlest. *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) for all its whimsicality and mechanical trickery, contains some of the most effective character studies in our literature and sparkles with a rare humour that is warm and genuine because of the human feeling it contains. He is actually interested in the new emphasis on human psychology. But he is also acutely aware of the role of the novel as a genre in constructing a new way of thinking and feeling. *Tristram Shandy* professes to be the autobiography of Tristram but from the beginning there is a disruption of the linear and progressive pattern that we might expect. It is replete with digressions and actually takes the best part of three volumes

before Tristram is born. He employs tactics such as the use of a black page when a death occurs. *Tristram Shandy* inevitably reminds us of the Stream of Consciousness novels which came up in the 20th century.

Tobias Smollet was another notable novelist. His use of the picaresque method enabled him to portray the harsher aspects of the merchant economy of the 18th century. For instance, his *Roderick Random* offers an 'Unblinking view of the brutality, inhumanity and rapaciousness of 18th century life' ⁴

Another significant aspect of the 18th century novel was the unprecedented level of female participation in the emerging literary genre. Aphra Behn was a major pioneer of the novel in the previous century. Notable women novelists of the 18th century included Frances Burney, Eliza Haywood, Sarah Fielding, Frances Sheridan, Charlotte Lennox, Anne Radcliffe and Charlotte Smith. Jane Spencer in her study on the women writers and the 18th century novel suggests that female novelists of the 18th century "shared certain concerns; with the idea of romance as a way of approaching historical truth; with women's relationship, as family members and by extension as authors, to the patrilineal inheritance patterns of their society; and with the creation and examination of a female public role." ⁵

The scope of the 18th century novel in terms of being a developing literary genre was quite wide. This was because it encompassed varied forms like the picaresque, epistolary, novel of incident, novel of character, novel of manners, sentimental novel and the gothic novel. In terms of readership, the scope of the novel was even more wide. It was not just the merchant class who comprised the readership, the range also covered clerks, tradespeople, a considerable number of domestic servants both men and women as well as people who had learned to read for pleasure. The "characteristic feature" of novel readership was

therefore "its social range which was not its confinement to a particular class or group but the way its appeal spanned the social classes and traditional divisions of readers although different kinds of readers probably read novels with different needs in mind and with different results." ⁶

Novelists repeatedly addressed situations in which large numbers of readers had a vital interest. As such, novels occupied a significant place in people's lives of 18th century England.

J. Paul Hunter in his study "The novel and Social / Cultural History" ⁷ suggests some probable answers to the question as to what readers sought and found in novels. They are listed below:

1. The first and foremost was Pleasure - of a well told and carefully built story as well as joy as the reading provided a means of escape from drudgery and routine.
2. The fact that novels usually portrayed human beings in the midst of ordinary human crisis led readers to identify with characters who faced and often mastered difficult situations. This was combined with the satisfaction derived in seeing outcomes and even solutions in the recognizable situations of daily life.
3. Young readers who were on the verge of making important life decisions about love or career or both found pleasure in these recognizable situations.
4. Such content also meant that basic cultural facts were available about courtship, decision making and about the practical consequences involved in the choices one made about career, marriage partner and way of life.
5. These 'facts' provided a ready form of instruction about conventions, social expectations, community opinion which proved useful guidance for the young inexperienced readers. Again, because of the persistent and steady migration of the young to London, novels appeared to provide

information and act as guides to many practical decisions about life.

From these observations, it can be gauged that the novel in the 18th century played quite a substantial role in the lives of the people.

References :

1. Arnold Kettle : *An Introduction to the English Novel I* (New Delhi, B.I. Publication 1978) P - 26.
2. Walter Allen : *The English Novel : A Short Critical History* (Penguin, England 1954, Pelican Books 1958, rpt 1975) P - 54.
3. *ibid.*, p-56.
4. John Peck and Martin Coyle : *A 'Brief History of English Literature* (Palgrave 2000, sept 2004, 2008, 2009) p-143.
5. John Richetti ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* (U.K. Cambridge University Press, 1996, 4th rpt, 2002) p-233.
6. *ibid.*, p-19.
7. *ibid.*, pp 22-23.

Poetry Section

Me By Myself

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Trying to discover me
I looked at myself through the eyes of a friend
I saw the good, warm and beautiful me,
I peeped at myself through the eyes of my parents.
I saw the sweet and mischievous me floating
in the Pacific of love, care and luxury.
When I looked at myself through the eyes of my teachers.
I saw the regular and responsible me racing for success,
And then when I looked at myself through the eyes of an enemy
I saw the bad, ugly and evil me.
When I threw a glance at myself through the eyes of a competitor
I saw the powerful me with the smaller to smallest weakness in
me.
But when I looked at myself through the eyes of a stranger,
I found a mysterious me and a hundred questions rising behind
those hazel eyes,
And then to answer those questions,
I looked at myself through my own eyes,
I saw both the good and evil me,
Irresponsible and irregular me,
I saw the successful and happy me
Unique, Uncommon, Unpredictable...
I discovered the real me through my eyes.

THE MODERN MAN

Mampi Barman
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Like a machine
People without heart
Living in busy cities
Days fly by.
Grow physically only
But their thoughts!
resemble lifeless things,
Have no existence.

Bondings, sans sympathy
Engaged with the self only
Becomes the Lord
of the entire universe.

Each and every second
manipulating how to exploit
Others' happiness and peace
Minds filled with schemes strategies

This is the world
We live unhappily,
These are the qualities
Modern Man possesses.

Season

Amrita Swargari
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The spring flowers are beautiful
But the image seems upside-down
As I perceive, when you are not with me.
I see nothing in this world that matters
So now I'm sitting in the darkness
Missing the light that you brought to my life.
I'd rather have a rainy day with you than see the sunshine alone
Or have a hundred days of winter with you in my arms
If I could find you !
Now everytime I see a beautiful shine
I just remember your smile
I'm just picking up your pieces
I'll meet you in the midst of vague memories.

I AM

David Mochahary
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I am not a poet, nor a writer
But my instincts make me write
Neither have I learned
From Shakespeare, nor from Wordsworth;
But I have learned from my drawbacks,
Experiencing life day by day.

I am a silent observer
And a slow learner.

Drowned underneath my little thoughts
My pen and paper stand by me
And I go on writing
My feelings inside me
The wisdom of the world fails
Yes... I have seen.

I have seen the quarrel between
The father and the son
I have seen the fight of
The poet with the author

Well... I am just a silent observer
And a slow learner.

O this world, so strange...
I cannot describe it in entirety
It is easy to understand
The love of a lover
But not the love
Of a mother.

They sell their trust in exchange to fulfil
The lust of the flesh
The wicked enjoy under the shadow of tears
But still their life is desolate
O this World
Yes ! This is our world.

The elites
Know how to achieve
Know how to earn
But they never know how to share
The good deeds smell like rotten wounds...

I am not a poet, nor a writer
I just go on writing what I feel inside
But my instincts make me write
And this is what I am...

