

Vol II Issue IV Oct 2012

Impact Factor : 0.1870

ISSN No :2231-5063

Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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IMPACT FACTOR : 0.2105

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

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Julian Barnes: A Significant Contemporary Novelist

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Abstract:

Julian Barnes was born in Leicester, England's East midland, on January 19, 1946 in the family of a teacher. His father, Albert taught French at St. Clement Danes from 1937 onwards till his retirement in 1971. His mother, Keye, also taught French. His elder brother, Jonathan is now a Professor of Philosophy in Geneva. He married Pat Kavanagh in 1979, and now lives with her in North London.

KEY WORDS:

Novel, Writer, Researcher.

INTRODUCTION

Though he was labeled as Francophile, he has been English in analyzing scrupulously and skeptically his own country so that he may have less disappointment when something terrible happens. He loves beef-eating, English science, English uprightness and pragmatism and that is being English in the real sense. He has led the active life of 27 years in the field of writing and published ten mainstream novels, four crime novels under pseudonym of Dan Kavanagh, two collections of short stories, and a book of essays. Besides, he has been a TV critic and produced Television movies. He has also produced cinemas on three of his novels. Barnes is also a well known review and article writer who has commented on various subjects.

As mentioned earlier, Julian Barnes is a living writer whose ten novels have been published until now. Julian Barnes wrote 10 mainstream novels. *Metroland* (1980); *Before She Met Me* (1982); *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984); *Staring at the Sun* (1986); *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (1989); *Talking It Over* (1991); *The Porcupine* (1992); *England, England* (1998); *Love Etc.* (2000) and *Arthur & George* (2005).

In addition, to these ten mainstream novels, he has also written four detective novels centered around the central character. Duffy, however, for these novels Mr. Barnes has taken the pseudonym Dan Kavanagh.

There are Duffy (1980) *Fiddle City* (1981), *Putting the Boot In* (1985).

He has also written two collections of short stories entitled *Cross Channel* (1990) and *The Lemon Table* (2004).

In addition, there are three collections of essays based on his life in London.

They are *Letters from London*. (1990-95) *Something to Declare* (2002) *The Pedant in the Kitchen* (2003)

As a writer Julian Barnes has won number of awards in his career like Somerset Maugham Award for *Metroland* in 1981, Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize for *Flaubert's Parrot* in 1985 and Austrian State Prize for European Literature in 2004.

Besides, he has also won the French Awards like *Prix Medicis Award* for *Flaubert's Parrot* in 1986, *Gutenberg Prize* in 1987, and *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des lettres* in 1988.

In this way, Mr. Barnes has been felicitated in his own country and abroad. His greatness can also be proved in his successful attempt to receive the awards and prizes like *Shakespeare Prize* (Germany) in 1993,

Please cite this Article as :Gajanan N. Katkar , Julian Barnes: A Significant Contemporary Novelist : Golden Research Thoughts (Oct. ; 2012)

Commonwealth Writer's Prize (Eurosia Region, Best Book) for *Arthur and George* in 2006 and E.M. Forster Award (American Academy of Arts and Letters) in 1986.

Though he has not received the prestigious Man Booker Prize until now but three of his novels were short-listed for it, this may be regarded as a proof of his writing genius.

The comparison of Julian Barnes with the contemporary writer's and his concept of novel art form that made him one of the great novelists of this century. In dealing with the three sections, all of his novels and criticism of his novels in various reviews, critical books, and observations of the researchers are taken into account. Finally, the observations of David Diaches related to the development of English Novel are applied.

The researcher surveys, the observations made in the previous three chapters. It is opinion about the account and estimate of Mr. Barnes as a novelist.

After the analysis and interpretation of the novels of Julian Barnes from the point of view of structures, techniques, setting, themes, characterizations, imagery, symbolism and world view, the conclusion is drawn that Mr. Barnes, who has been writing novels giving attention to the form, has acquired significant reputation as a novelist among his contemporary writers. Julian Barnes, whose three novels had been short listed three times for the prestigious Booker Prize, has successfully formed his own individual style of novel writing.

It will be appropriate to place Julian Barnes among the contemporary writers like Peter Ackroyd, Salman Rushdie, Paul West, Martin Amis, John Fowles, Ian McEwan, Iris Murdoch, Harold Pinter, Graham Swift, Doris Lessing, and Arnold Wesker. Peter Ackroyd writes diverse fiction by blending past and present and fact and fiction. On the other hand, Julian Barnes has fictionalized the fact, in his novel *Arthur & George*; for instance, he has created fiction by using the biography of Arthur Doyle. Another novelist, Salman Rushdie, who is known for Magic-Realism, writes novels and stories in this genre often in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence. In comparison to Salman Rushdie, Mr. Barnes confronts the question, weighing the autonomy of the work of art against the expectations aroused by the methods and material of sociology.

Paul West has written about the contemporary themes like psychological abuses, unsuccessful relationships, societal inadequacy, self-discovery and survival. Another contemporary novelist, Martin Amis, has focused on the absurdity of human condition. Julian Barnes, as compared to the above two, writes about the intricacies in the human relationships by handling the themes like love, marriage, cuckoldry, sex, death, and religion etc. These themes have been influencing the contemporary world and the novels of Mr. Barnes reflect this aspect of life. John Fowles, another significant contemporary writer, focuses on the philosophical aspects related to morality in his novels. Ian McEwan, on the other hand, has established his own style in his fiction by reconstructing the past. In comparison to the above novelists, Julian Barnes has paid more attention to the technique rather than content. He has experimented with techniques in his novels, called novels of ideas.

Iris Murdoch has written about ethics and sex while Harold Pinter has tried to search the truths in art. Graham Swift, a significant contemporary novelist, has questioned the reality in the history in his novels. Doris Lessing, a Nobel Prize winner, has raised the issues related to feminism in her novels. Another novelist, Arnold Weskar, harsh realities in the society. Julian Barnes, on the other hand, has maintained a distinguished style by raising the problems of the contemporary generation writing in an innovating technique in his novels.

After interpreting the significance of Julian Barnes in the context of his contemporary writers, it will be relevant to draw conclusion about his attitude of writing regarding the structures, techniques, setting, themes, characterisation, imagery, symbolism and world view. As mentioned earlier, Julian Barnes is a novelist who is known for his experimentation in the technique of novel writing; the structure in the novel is also considered as an area of experimentation. In his first novel, *Metroland* (1980), there in a tripartite structure and story is set in chronological order. In another novel, *The Porcupine* (1992) there is an intertext which is relevant to the main story, but totally individual in content.

Mr. Barnes has experimented with technique like William Boyd. Mr. Boyd has written his novels in different forms. His novels *Brazzaville Beach* (1990) has two-fold narrative technique, while *The New Confessions* (1987) autobiographical form. Julian Barnes also has broken the chronological narration of history in his novel *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (1989) has, while in his another novel *Talking It Over* (1991) he has used dramatic monologue to expose the psychological states of the protagonist in different contexts. The art of Julian Barnes is mainly preoccupied with 'technique' and his will like his literary mentor Gustave Flaubert. His novels lack the preoccupation with 'form'. His novels *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* have been 'accused' of being stories and essays. The novel *Flaubert's Parrot* is accused of hybridization of genres, where as *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* has been denied the status of a novel. Julian Barnes is concerned mainly with style. He does not

seem to care for the 'form'. He accounts for hybridization by saying, it is the British Culture:

'The British literary culture is, after all, not monolithic or as genre-specific as the French equivalent. Compare Shakespeare with Racine. And we all – novelists and playwrights – descend from Shakespeare, where the Fool often speaks wisdom and the Wise Man speaks folly. Or – more truthfully – people are a mixture of both and get things wrong as often as they get things right.' (Vianu, 1999 : 5-6)

He accounts for looseness of form in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* by saying that history is a fabrication. It is his style that makes his novels the work of fiction. Julian Barnes deals with vagaries of human heart with irony and wit. According to Merritt Moseley:

'His work is distinguished by its intelligence and wit; its ready willingness to deal with important themes, and its versatility. Even aside from his detective novels, Barnes's novels demonstrate a continual freshness that is unusual. In scope, or ostensible scope, they range from the story of a man seeking the original parrot used by Flaubert while he wrote one of his stories, to a professed history of the world (these two books, *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, are probably his best known), though since he investigates the vagaries of the human heart in most of his novels, there is nothing miniaturist about *Flaubert's Parrot* or his other shorter works.' ("Essay on Julian Barnes." 2001:1)

In fact, irony is the soul of his novels. He points discrepancies humorously but intelligently. According to Nick Rennison, 'All his books show Barnes's sophisticated intelligence and wit at work.'

Julian Barnes interprets the past. He interprets it as reality of sadness. According to Anna Peel,

'Barnes himself, have paid to toll. The work starts with the same ironic and captivating humour of the past, but as it unfolds, the sadness of reality overwhelms the humour.' (Peel, Anna 2001:5)

It is natural for a novel to have conflict. The conflict in the novels of Julian Barnes is essentially the conflict between confusion, and clarity. But it is not treated as a theme. It is treated as narrative technique in the novels of Julian Barnes. Only in his novel *Arthur & George*, the conflict is indirectly treated as theme. According to Readers' opinion,

'With the law, George thinks, "there is a great deal of textual exegesis, of explaining how words can and do mean different things; and there are almost as many books of commentary on the law as there are on the Bible. But at the end there is not that further leap to be made. At the end, you have an agreement, a decision to be obeyed, an understanding of what something means. There is a journey from confusion to clarity.' (Readers opinions. "The Game's Afoot." :3)

However, confusion is integrated with spiritualism in *Arthur's case*, as it is integrated with law in *George's case*. *Arthur's case* is moral and, appropriately, spiritual.

In his narration, Julian Barnes uses decency even in comical scenes, according to Tom Pauline. There are several highly amusing comic scenes, a tight Cartesian style, and many sharp unexpected reflections. There is, too, a fundamental decency which plays against the sometimes arid effort at narrative geometry and pure style.

The characters' speeches do not follow with continuity. They are interrupted at several points. According to Jason Cowley,

'His books are all voice – his voice. He cannot refrain like a bossy headmaster, from interrupting his narrative, from speaking for his characters – indeed as if he were them.' ("Book: Autumn Fiction" 1998:45)

The narration is vast. The reader faces the danger of evaporating what he/she has read immediately after reading. According to Michiko Kakutani,

'Mr. Barnes relates these events with enormous narrative brio and elan. Though the story doesn't have the sort of intellectual afterlife of *Flaubert's Parrot* -- it evaporates from the mind almost the instant the reader has finished its last pages -- the book as a whole in a marvelously entertaining performance.' ("The Complete Review: Talking It Over." 1991:3)

In his novels, Julian Barnes treats hybridization as contemporary tendency mixed with wit and humour. He mixes authorial intrusion with irony. He presents himself as desperado of Witty fiction. According to Lidia Vianu:

The contemporary tendency which leads to a hybridization of literary genres, a mixture of fiction, poetry, essay, literary criticism, drama and all the rest in the same pot, in the same work, is brilliantly illustrated by him. The truth of life, which he so much cherishes, according to his own statement, plays second fiddle to witticisms, brilliant discourse and an unleashed sense of humour. (Vianu, 1999 : 8)

Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* is the most adversely criticised for its hybridization of genres. But for Julian Barnes, it is an effective narrative technique in his quest for truth and meaning in the past. According to Cristina Sandru and Sean Matthew,

Barnes's third and most widely acclaimed novel, *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), sets an intricate intertextual web of allusions; references and literary improvisation within the apparently realistic story of Geoffrey Braithwaite. ...unifying motif of the work, which evolves in the form of hybrid, subjective,

incomplete and contradictory collage of fiction, literary criticism, satire, biography, as well as medieval bestiary, 'train-spotter's guide' and even examination paper. This medley of prose genres subverts all conventional taxonomic boundaries yet, despite its textbook 'postmodern' techniques ('bricolage', unreliability of the narrative voice, linguistic self-consciousness), the novel remains relentless in its quest for historical truth, stressing the necessity of both acknowledging the irretrievability of the past and learning to cope with its present effects. ('Critical Perspective of Julian Barnes' 2002:3-4)

Julian Barnes was denied the status of a novelist for *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*. The main reason was hybridization of genres. But that made him 'a versatile expropriator' of several literary forms. According to Nick Rennison,

'Since the publication of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, Barnes has been a versatile expropriator of several literary forms.' (Rennison, Nick. 2005 : 3)

He has been innovative in narrative technique due to intertextuality in realistic story of Braithwaite in *Flaubert's Parrot*. According to contemporarywriters.com,

Barnes's third and most widely acclaimed novel, *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), sets an intricate intertextual web of allusions; references and literary improvisation within the apparently realistic story of Geoffrey Braithwaite. (Sandru & Matthews, 2002 : 3)

Julian Barnes considers writing as useful for the expression of morality or spirituality. According to James McCloskey,

'People are going to find that the realities of life afterwards different: not everyone who studies architecture is going to build a house. And even if, of those ten writers that I taught, none of them had gone on to publish anything, I think there's something morally and spiritually useful about spending a year or two years trying to write. If you end up having not published a book by the end of your life it doesn't mean you're a failure, it just means you didn't publish a book. It doesn't do anyone any harm to learn to express themselves, and to concentrate on expressing themselves, whether in a fictional form or autobiographical or whatever form.' ("Brooklyn Rail-Books" 2005:3)

The characters sometime speak directly to the readers. Julian Barnes seems to be innovative in this matter. In drama, this technique has been used while staging the play. But in the novels, this technique has been used in *Love*, etc. According to Nicholas Wroe,

'He also liked the idea of the characters speaking directly to the reader again. "The membrane between the character and the reader is minimised."' (Wroe, 2000:3)

Mr. Barnes, uses tasty pieces of wisdom, irony, sympathy and his own myths in his novels. Interestingly, his two novels *Talking It Over* and *Love*, etc. are the prequel and sequel respectively of the same story.

Julian Barnes, who has been writing novels in the contemporary vein, has basically highlighted the life in a Metropolitan city. The setting in his novels picturises the urban like which includes the outer setting that is about the inner world of the characters. In the novels of Mr. Barnes the focus is laid on the intricacies of the human relations; the passages describing the psychological states of the characters provide setting to the novel. His first novel, *Metroland* (1980), for instance, symbolically becomes a novel raising problems faced by the people of all Metropolitan cities. In his novel, *England, England*, the setting, plays a significant role as the novel is about the influence of Englishness on a replica of England on an island. His novel *Talking It Over* is set in England. France and America to give the setting a multinational colour.

The themes in his novels reflect the problems of the contemporary urban society. The globalisation has influenced the standard of living in general; it also has affected the emotional world of the human beings. The themes of the novels of Julian Barnes are varied. He is 'chameleon' of the British novel. However, some of his themes are recurrent. The recurrent themes are love, death, art, and the value of life. Nick Rennison has rightly said:

'Each of chapters in between these two points plays subtle and ironic games with the reader, circling around recurrent themes of love, death, art and the value of life without ever seeming pompous or pretentious.' (Contemporary British Novelists 2005:32)

However, the theme of love seems to offer several possibilities of life. It is persistent in his novels. According to Ryan Roberts:

Barnes's persistent concern--more than previous works of literature, more than experimentation with form, more than 'the modern condition'--is love. (Barnes, 2000:41)

In his novels, love is instable. It leads to triangular and adultery. It is dynamic instead of the static symmetry of marriage. According to David Leon Higdon:

'For Barnes, 'the unstable triangularity of adultery, rather than the static symmetry of marriage' is the inner dynamic generating his fictional worlds.' (Swift and Barnes, 1987: 33)

The theme of obsession leading to self-discovery and personal suffering seems to recur in his

novels. According to Daniel G. Marowski:

'Barnes writes clever, humorous novels in which he examines such themes as obsession, self-discovery, and personal suffering.' ("Contemporary Literary Criticism", 1987:24)

The personal ideas and personal life of Julian Barnes are so intricately woven that his novels appear to have the autobiographical element. But it is a fallacy. He himself states that,

'My novels divide into what are called novels of ideas and novels of the personal life. It is tempting, but ultimately fallacious, to think that they are about my personal life. It is observation and imagination. There is nothing easier to make up than a convincing private life. Much easier to make up a sexual life than a financial life.' (Wroe, 2000:3)

The theme of interrogation seems to be a recurrent pivotal. The questions asked in the novel seems to be common conundrum. They are unanswered; but they lead to further investigation which requires sharing. This theme of investigation leads to the notion of sacrifice. In *Staring at the Sun*, the frequent question is of the tenacious mints life, in *Flaubert's Parrot* it is the question of the genuine parrot. And the question of seeing at the end of the novel *Arthur & George* remains unanswered. According to Bill Greenwell,

'It's a common conundrum that captivates Barnes: to share is to sacrifice. His theme, if you like, is the silent siege laid by the self for the self.' (Bill, 1987:26)

The reflections of the contemporary society are seen in the form of the themes in the novels of Mr. Barnes. It is very difficult to point out a specific theme in his novels, as they deal with several themes. *Flaubert's Parrot*, for instance, deals with the theme like obsession with parrot and obsession of adultery, infidelity, truth, past, love, art and life. In his another novel, *Before She Met Me*, obsession of adultery, jealousy, revenge and murder are the significant themes. The chaos in the contemporary life is reflected in his novel *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*.

Julian Barnes writes novels of ideas. Life has no objective existence. It exists in the mind of a novelist. It is the novelist's consciousness. It is the novelist's art that shapes life. Julian Barnes finds the relationship between art and life. It is one of the ideas that Julian Barnes imposes on the novel. F. R. Leavis says,

'A novel should treat life as chaotic, and art as orderly.' (Leavis, 1948:15)

Julian Barnes's concept of the relationship between art and life is very close to what F. R. Leavis says.

F. R. Leavis conceived life as chaotic. He assumes that man is capable of knowing what if life. It is the art that gives it an orderly shape. Julian Barnes furthers this concept. He equates life with universe. According to him, the universe is knowable. He takes the help of history; he finds,

'History isn't what happened. History is just what historians tell us.' (*A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*. 1990:242)

He further observes that history is fabrication:

'We make up a story to cover the facts we don't know or can't accept; we keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them. Our panic and our pain are only eased by soothing fabrication; we call it history.' (*A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*. 1990:242)

Almost all the novels of Julian Barnes are about the urban life; so the characters in his novels are seen to represent the men and women of the cities. They are the victims of the influence of the pace of the present generation in order to achieve materialistic success in their life; for that, they are seen to make a number of compromises and adjustments in their personal lives. As a result of this, they are seen frustrated, directionless and confused in their sexual as well as domestic lives. Infidelity and cuckoldry seem to be a part of the modern metropolitan life and the characters in the novels of Mr. Barnes are involved in these two acts without any lament or shedding of a tear. Chris of *Metroland*, for instance, is obsessed with sex, while Thomas Trosser of *Staring at the Sun* is involved in World War II to come across Jean who is a lesbian. Stoyo Petkanov of *The Porcupine* is a deposed leader due to corruption charges against him. Graham Hendrick of *Before She Met Me* becomes a maniac due to his failed marriages and infidelity

Mr. Barnes has described the physical as well as the psychological worlds of his characters and imagery plays a significant role in the comprehension of the meaning in his novels. There are many images, which are blended appropriately by using abstract, as well as concrete, imagery. Julian Barnes uses figures of speech, especially simile and metaphor, to create imagery. There are the images like: he used references to the real world to create imagery. In the novel *Before She Met Me*, the following imagery explains the 'holiday' mood of Graham:

He felt as if he were going on holiday.

(Before She Met Me. 1986:16)

In the novel Flaubert's Parrot, imagery is used in Parenthesis to explain 'love'. In the novel Talking It Over, the imagery of currency is used to explain love. In the novel The Porcupine, the imagery of 'fox' is used to describe Stoyo Petkanov and also the imagery of monster is used to portray the character of Stoyo Petkanov and the imagery of 'whore' is used to present the television display of the trial in the court. In the novel Arthur & George, the imagery of dog-kennels is evoked by George when he sees the cells of prison at Portland.

Julian Barnes uses imagery and creates myths. They are illogical and victimized by scepticism. But Julian Barnes gives strangeness and recognition to myths. According to Tom Pauline,

'Myths, after all, are the ghosts of experience and they tend to elude a logical and trim scepticism—though Barnes's vision of an aesthete metamorphosing into a suburban Crusoe has that combination of strangeness and recognition which is essential to myth.' ("National Myths" 1987:25)

Julian Barnes creates images to weave them in the structure of the novel. But this symbolism is not imposed on the reader from outside. It becomes an intrinsic part of the structure of the novel. According to Bill Greenwell,

'The symbolism isn't thrust in the reader's face (as in, say, The White Hotel); it is gently persuasive. Moreover, Barnes's work is set down in a patch of simple reality, a familiar copse, not an impenetrable forest.' (Bill, 1987:26)

Mr. Barnes has written his novels by applying the myths, so his characters have the symbolic importance. Jean of Staring of the Sun stands for Icarus, who an ambitious mythological character. Martha of England, England symbolises a split personality. He has also used the objects in his symbols. In the novel Metroland, Several examples of symbolism may be cited. Chris and Toni call the shopkeeper 'tie-pin.' The father is called 'front-seat'. Uncle Arthur is called 'old sod'. In the novel Before She Met Me, he uses the symbols of horse and crocodile to explicate the victim and the victor. In the novel Flaubert's Parrot, Julian Barnes uses the conventional symbols. The 'head' is associated with intellect and 'heart' is associated with 'feelings or passions'. The novel Staring at the Sun also uses symbols. The sun in the title becomes symbol; it connotes death. In the novel A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters, climbing the mountain, flying aeroplane, surviving the catastrophe, and repeating tragedy these incidents become symbols. In the novel Talking It Over, money becomes a symbol as Stuart uses it repeatedly. Similarly, the credit card becomes the symbol of modern means of trading or using currency. In the novel The Porcupine, Julian Barnes uses the world 'fuck' to symbolise manliness. In the novel England, England, The Isle of Wight has theme park. It becomes the symbol of England. In the novel Love, etc., the 'Credit Card' becomes the symbol of American society and the Hare and the Tortoise are used as symbols to explain different realism. In the novel Arthur & George, the central symbol is the symbol of the door in the beginning of the novel. The door represents the opening of the novel.

The novels of Mr. Barnes have been given symbolic titles to signify the themes in his novels. England, England for instance signifies the replica of Englishness on an island to mock England in reality. A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters and Talking It Over also symbolic titles, as they denote the content in the story.

The novels of Mr. Barnes have been written from the global point of view, as the themes and characters in his novels are relevant to the contemporary world. In other words, the world view of Mr. Barnes is reflected in his novels. The life in the metropolitan cities, which is described in his novels, is symbolically about the life in any city in the world. Besides this, the mentality and the behavior of the characters in his novels also represent the contemporary urban life. Though Mr. Barnes' characters are from London, Paris or New York, they are match the sensibility and sensitivity of the urban generation of the world. The attitude of these characters regarding love, marriage, sex, infidelity, cuckoldry, politics and corruption is seen in the attitudes of the urban people in reality. The characters are seen to be jealous due to the disloyalty and infidelity of their partners.

History is chaotic. Julian Barnes's knowing it and thinking about it are based on his love for it. This is his truth to life. In all of his novels, he is loyal to it. For it is truth of art. His truth of life and his truth of art can be separated by the degree allegiance. He is more loyal to the truth of art than to the truth of life. His idea of life is based on his idea of love. We can be heroic or brave in love only. This he presents in all of his novels. This gives him opportunity to treat love in different perspectives. He seems to follow cubism in his treatment of love. He builds his world—the world of his novel in which he sees love. The different worlds in different novels treat love in different perspectives. These different perspectives are love in mercantile society (Talking It Over, Love, etc.), love in religious society (Arthur & George), romantic concept of love (Love, etc., and Staring at the Sun), love triangle (Flaubert's Parrot, Talking It Over, Love, etc.), and love as a means to understand the universe (Parenthesis in A History).

Thus, the ideas expressed in the novels of Barnes are the relation between art and life, the

knowability of the universe, the meaning of history, the dimensions of bravery, and the nature of love. According to Merritt Moseley,

'The ideas with which he engages are the important ideas—the relationship between art and life, the knowability of the universe, the meaning of history, the dimensions of bravery, the nature of love.' (Mosley, 1997:171)

The novels of Julian Barnes have been grouped in three different phases for convenience; but there is no philosophy or scholarly logic behind the grouping. The chapter second, The Novels of Early Phase, deals with the critical study of *Metroland*, *Before She Met Me*, and *Flaubert's Parrot*. These three novels have been written with great skill and care. Mr. Barnes, who might be considered as a budding novelist during this phase of apprenticeship, deserves the required attention as his novel *Flaubert's Parrot* had been short-listed for the Booker Prize.

The chapter three, The Novels of Middle Phase, is about the critical analysis of the next three novels namely *Staring at the Sun*, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, and *Talking It Over*. In these three, the improvement of Mr. Barnes is seen as novelist who has handled the contemporary themes. He has also experimented with the techniques in these three novels.

The chapter four, The Novels of Later Phase, includes the next four novels namely *The Porcupine*, *England, England*, *Love etc.*, and *Arthur & George*. In these novels, a further development of Mr. Barnes is seen in the use of techniques he has applied. He has successfully tried to point out the drawbacks of the present generation and at the same time he has raised several questions which are part of the life.

Julian Barnes is a living writer and the development of Mr. Barnes is seen from the critical point of view. In future, Mr. Barnes may write novels with broader vision and worldly attitude.

Thus, the critical study of the novels of Julian Barnes opens up the new possibilities of analysis and interpretation of his works from different aspects. The present study may invite attention to the writer of creative mind and genius from the world of scholars and critics.

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