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POLITICS OF FORM AND THEME

INDRAJIT PATRA

Master of Arts from Burdwan University



ABSTRACT

In this paper I attempt to describe the various processes by which political influences describe and define not only the form in which any work is to be presented but also its contents. The greatness of the artist lies in his/her ability to present to us as an implied critique the dehumanizing and often undemocratic spirit of many such political processes which rob us of much of our vital qualities by dint of which we have become human in the course of a long and arduous journey which we call the evolution. Political processes besides helping any genre or form of art to come into being often influence the publicity and popularity that any such work enjoys, but in the process they also take from the creation and its creator the power to criticize and give birth to any great revolutionary change for the greater good. So this discourse between politics and literature is an endless, dynamic and very vital process which point towards the way our present-day artistic evolution is heading in its quest of attaining that unparalleled sense unity and enlightenment which will once and for all herald the arrival of an era when art and life bound in a most perfectly harmonious embrace will establish a most imperturbable equilibrium.

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INTRODUCTION

Man is a political animal. His aspirations, aims and ambitions are often realized most fruitfully within the bounds of a politically organized social structure. A politics is a game played with fire, it consists of executing some very subtle moves, maneuvers, tricks and techniques by which the fire can be controlled and contained to give definite shapes to the desires of the greatest number of individuals by those who have been popularly or despotically given privileged access to the use of that firepower. Political influence is thus a Promethean heat. The sole use of fire is to keep the wheel rolling so that some things never stop assuming certain forms. Here is the importance of form. A form can be a spontaneous, emotionally genuine and pure attainment of expression for many of us, but it can also be an instrument of control, a confinement, an authoritative outline, a prescribed norm, a pre-defined boundary, a line of restraint beyond which any movement would be looked upon with a frowning and even negativity. So this boundary, outline or prison will be most effective only when the greatest number of people can be convinced about the significance and validity of such superimposed restrictions, criteria and boundaries. So the forms are modes or carriers of one's impressions, emotions, doubts, apprehensions and distractions which if let grow uninhibited, will proliferate with such abundance and power that it can very effectively render any superstructure superficial, can make

any dominant mode of exercise of power seem so faulty, repressive, regressive that the need of an immediate reorganization would be automatically evoked in the minds of common people. So a full, unfettered type of freedom to the practice and experiment with forms can introduce unforeseen elements in the power structure at any given time, so it becomes necessary to control this form to keep our expressed emotions subject to some restrictions, regulations and boundaries. In this process form inevitably becomes an ensemble of some vital codes in which not only the essential nature and condition of one's political and social milieu get embedded but also the repressed desires of the mind of the creators in which its certain powerful urges long to be expressed, form an undercurrent of apparently unassociated but intrinsically significant pattern which in some later period can get discovered and be given proper form by another artist; in fact the form becomes an entity which derives sustenance, validity and recognition in proportion to its efficiency of conducting an interaction with the social, historical and political matrix of its particular time-frame to which it owes its origin. That is why the social novels came into full bloom during the period of social and political upheavals following the Reform Act of 1832. Similarly, Victor Hugo's 'Les Miserables' and the realist fictions of Emile Zola and Leo Tolstoy became attempts by the artists to take control over the form to generate and boost political consciousness among the audience which will be in vein similar to their own. The form is often thus a package upon which the desirable structural and hierarchal patterns of the dominant and defining class of any time within which the forms develop get reflected. Even in a futuristic work like George Orwell's '1984' which dystopically depicts the deplorable condition of some future society, the political factors which had inspired him to create such a work can easily be traced to the contemporary totalitarian reigns in Spain and Russia, growing influence of Communism as an alternative to capitalism and democracy, the beginning of Cold War and emerging bipolarity in global power structure etc. A form is also container of a message which needs to be conveyed to the masses or the audience and it is only under the aegis of a truly great artist that it can transcend the barriers of immediate socio-political influences, dabbling too much in which can delimit the universal quality and aura of an artistic endeavor. So the packaging can easily be interpreted essentially as an expression of acceptance and acquiescence to the dominant norms, trends and patterns of any particular time. Here lies the conflict – among many different forms of expression in the realm of art literature is one. So if any such form of art wants to convey any serious message under the guise of entertainment to their audience on a large scale and with the highest success it should inevitably succumb to the needs of dominant trends in pattern and design in which the greatest number of audience and the ruling powers want the creator's vision to be presented. The reward becomes maximum when you conform to it, while on the contrary if you break the norm you run the risk of getting rejected to oblivion. Now the questions is whether the demands and desires of the public are naturally inculcated and evolved from within or are they merely some byproducts of an artificial politico-cultural implantation program which has already defined the nature and scope of their desires only to indirectly force the artists to cater to these predefined tastes and collect rewards for themselves. Some degree of autonomy is always allowed but only to such an extent which would not violate but rather reinforce and boost the current trend and tendency in the prevalent political and economic system. Maybe this is the reason today for which the grand works of poetry or narratives in epic form have ceased to exist because that would demand the people to exert a much greater proportion of their imaginative and intellectual prowess than what they are doing today while enjoying pulp fictions and bestsellers which in turn would divert their mental and spiritual energy from being utilized for the purpose of profiteering activities under the state power. The spotlight is now most intense upon our abilities to exert mind power for scientific, numerical, quantitative processes which would usher in calculable and tangent benefits rather than being on the practice of classical and epic art for the latter would not help boosting the predominant materialistic tendency of immediate gratification of senses. So the authors are not anymore the divinely gifted or intrinsically talented independent creators, rather they are fast reducing to a cog among many in the relentlessly revolving great wheel of capitalistic production. Naturally it is the form first which is shaped, guided and powered by the prevalent currents of any time. The novel came into being after a great socio-political change in the general pattern of lifestyle and modes of production. When the democratic temperaments become dominant and the 'nouveau riche' assumed control over the cultural scenarios the need for a new form of literature was felt which would fulfill their sentimental demands and appetite for enjoying a story centered around the realistic struggles and evolution of a not-too-heroic, mundane, middle class and

moderately intellectual protagonist. Thus novel came into vogue. In the Elizabethan Age, Drama as the most prominent literary form came into forefront as a result of the interactions between many social and political waves of change. The newly liberated spirit of the renaissance individual aware of his unbound potentiality seeking to take everything under its control and hoping to gain power in the form of knowledge found expression in the plays of that time, particularly in the Marlovian tragedies. In the plays of Ben Jonson the rebellion, the defiance against the established traditional and political authorities are present in a much milder manner where all his plays aimed at curing the moral disease by ridicules. Shakespeare on the other hand shaped his early dramas more on the popular trends and tastes of his time when spirit of joviality, abundance of hope and vigor were present plentifully in them as there was an air of amity and cordiality among royalties, nobilities, middleclass, gentry and a part of landed nobility. But later with the ascension of James I the disintegration with the earlier lifestyle and trend of society became obvious and the dramas stopped glorifying the romantic and beautiful at the expense of the more unpleasant realities of real life. He started depicting the grimmer, darker aspects of life which define our struggle for existence. The plays of Elizabethan age often in their forms adhered to the classical Aristotelian predicaments of dramas which were concerned more with the external formalities and conditions than any formula of following an inner spirit, even though some writers often tended to express their dissatisfaction and dissonance with the contemporary social set up yet the general trend was of respecting the tradition and classic culture as well as the King and his God-given position at top of the hierarchal food chain.

It is evident that the chief obsession of any shrewd and mature political authority has always been with the form, because it is by assuming a total control over the form and structure that the outcome of any future event can be measured, forecast and even regulated. A form has its significance only in its relation to a specific period of time; for time is a fluent, dynamic stream with a life and momentum of its own; form is like a piece of rock standing undetermined which shape to assume and it is the steady course and power of time's flow which cuts, shapes, puts together the pieces giving a definite shape to the rock before a time-bound observer. Now the flow and direction of that stream cannot be changed, but its power and magnitude of impact can be enhanced or eliminated by taking some stances, e.g., building barrages, dams etc. to control, regulate and channelize the flow of time. Here the various forms of authoritarian institutions and apparatuses come into play to guide, control and manipulate the pattern of thoughts, action and behavior of the masses who in turn will choose to unknowingly reinforce the culturally, politically and socially dominant influences of their time by giving assent to the mainstream trends and criterions as devised by the elitist section for the purpose of determining the quality or merit of a work of art.

If form is the exterior design molded by the forces of time then the content or the themes are even more than just effective tools to effect revolution and to engender radically different types of discourse to what is relevant at any given time.

#### **DISCUSSION AND ELABORATION**

In the field of literature there are major books which have created a lasting impact in our social, political, economic and philosophical outlook and ideals. But these books are written primarily to address issues of political, economic and philosophical significance. For example in Plato's 'Republic' many ideas such as philosopher-kings, Theory of Forms, and thoughts on immortality of the soul have been discussed, 'The Communist Manifesto' by Karl Marx describes a process for the working class to rise up and eliminate class struggles; Thomas Paine's 'The Rights of Man' states that the government's role is to protect the rights of its citizens; and when the government cannot do so, it should be overthrown; 'The Prince' by Machiavelli offers advice on how an aspiring prince can obtain the throne and how an existing prince can avoid overthrow; J.S.Mill's 'On Liberty' contains the crux of all modern democracies with a call to moral and economic freedom from the state; Adam Smith's 'Wealth Of Nations' advocates a free-market economy and herald the arrival of modern economics. But all these works are motivated by political and socio-economic considerations and not by any desire for story-telling or providing artistic entertainment to the readers. But there are also many such works which are not treatises, but rather works of true literary merit but still have managed to describe issues related to socio-political processes while providing some implicit or explicit critique and commentary on the most important political and social factors which design and deform the life and vision of billions of individuals across the planet.

In Chaucer's work we get the glimpse into the power struggle and political tension in the form of a conflict for superiority between two distinct language styles – one is the Teutonic style and the other is the French style. The former, i.e., the Teutonic style was the medium in which the masses and the commoners expressed themselves while the latter, i.e., the French was adopted by the higher and intellectual section of the society. In this way there was a tension which Chaucer's genius tried to bring to equilibrium for the greater good of the English language.

In Dante's writings too we get the picture of an ideal state which is in the tradition of Plato's 'Republic', More's 'Utopia' and Campanella's 'City of The Sun'. Dante in his writings commingled politics and high level of philosophy when he describes the vision of an Heaven-sent Emperor who will unite everyone and deal justice and establish one supreme ideal thus freeing the state of all conflicts, fights, dissonance and discords. He envisioned a true Roman and Christian empire in the tradition of ancient great ruler Augustus. In literature as in society there are often two ways to look at the influence and effect of political ideologies and influence – in positive and negative way. Thus in literature we often come across the glorification as well as a strong criticism of the ideals and values of any particular or the entire prevalent political and economic structure and ideals.

In 'Gulliver's Travels' thus we see Swift criticizing the government systems, administration and pettiness of human in general who love engaging in quarrels over minor issues and are often blind or reluctant to see the true nature of the problems which affect the lives of the greater number of people. Swift here explicitly expresses his disbelief in the existence in any form of an ideal state. Also he criticizes the optimism as is found in abundance in Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe' which presents the individual as a survivor, a fighter, a warrior and a hero. Swift satirizes the political, social, religious meanness of the individuals and parties in his time. In this way we can find examples of numerous works which by their implicit or underlying criticism of the political and cultural milieu of a time have changed the way the world dreams, desires, thinks and aspires after any ideal.

Shakespeare in five of his 'History Plays' (*King John, Richard II, Henry IV, Parts I and II, and Henry V*) have dealt with political issues in a wide-ranging and compelling manner which is relevant even today to the modern audience. He has not only dealt with themes like political morality, ambition, legitimacy, tradition in a masterly manner but has absorbed the Machiavellian political ideas without drowning himself in his cynicism. Shakespeare's treatment of sex and marriage, friendship and family often reveals the tensions where the conflict is woven often within the division between government's rule and its process of demarcation of the boundaries which it thinks should appropriately define the public and private sphere while subduing the interests of the latter to the former. In 'Coriolanus' we find the wretched condition of the lives of the Plebeians which has been depicted where they are forced to serve under the Patricians for whom the only will is the will of the state and the only duty of living beings is to show an unconditional obedience to the state and its ideals. The values like individual liberty, individual identity, desire, ambition have no meaning in such a state where even the food-grains are distributed by the upholders of the monarchical authority only as a show of gratitude and not as returns for the services provided by the Plebeians. Not only that but also often in plays like Hamlet and Macbeth we get to see how the feminine ambition and desire for achieving of ultimate supremacy and power can throw the state into utter chaos and turmoil. In Macbeth the entire crisis stems from the desire of Lady Macbeth to assume royalty by adopting insane and murderous means, while in Hamlet frailty rules and ruins everything and enters into the very fabric of administration when Gertrude treacherously partakes in the murder of her husband to marry Claudius thus helping the alter to assume the crown. In Macbeth, a purely fantastical prophesying of future kingship leads Lady Macbeth to convince and help her husband to commit unpardonable treason by butchering Duncan and claiming the crown while 'Hamlet' depicts the murder of a monarch by his brother and the subsequent marriage of this brother Claudius to Queen Gertrude thus assuming royal authority. This union then throws the power of the crown in dispute between Hamlet, the King's son, and Claudius, now husband of the Queen Gertrude. In both of these plays, women's actions lead to political instability, and the natural harmony and order gets hurled into a terrible vortex of confusion and disorder. Although neither play is a direct commentary on Elizabeth, each drama reflects social anxieties which have risen as a consequence of years of rule by a female authority. A deep and thorough study of these plays reveals their specific correlation to the Renaissance world and especially the concerns surrounding the

leadership of Elizabeth. So here the implicit political desire of the Elizabethan age to return to a patriarchal rule gets embedded. But again we have to remember that while we as readers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are analyzing and re-interpreting the text perhaps our own judgments are clouded and tinged by some currently burning issues regarding freedom of women, feminism etc. Perhaps Shakespeare wanted to portray the need of giving voice to a woman's aspirations for partaking in political processes and decision makings; perhaps he had been supporting their cause of coming to the forefront. It is only to be acceptable to the public and stay popular on the stage that he shows the downfall of the princes and the emperors as a result of the royal women's ambitions and wish-fulfillment.

In King Lear we find the disastrous consequences that human folly can give birth to when one assumes that the natural world and the order of things should work according to our own set of prescribed rules and norms which control our civil and socio-political life. 'King Lear' also shows how when authority gets into wrong hands terrible chaos and disorder can ensue. In 'Romeo and Juliet' we find the ideas like doubleness, ambiguity, value system all are put to question and are explored while presenting the readers and audience with the picture of conflict and crisis that threatens to destroy the love of Romeo and Juliet. Here also the ideals as to what should be considered a true masculinity have been explored in the presentation of the conflict between Mercutio's extrovert, powerful, feisty, pugnacious, challenging attitude and Romeo's effeminate love-melancholic disposition. The political authorities seem to be supporting the type of masculinity that Mercutio so flamboyantly displays. In 'Julius Caesar' much of the play's tragedy stems from the characters' neglect of private feelings and loyalties in favor of what they believe to be the public good. Furthermore the characters fail to maintain any appropriate division and equilibrium between their private and political or public self thus immolating the former at the altar of the latter, while transforming themselves into ruthless, dehumanized political instruments. Brutus rebukes his wife, Portia, when she pleads with him to confide in her; forcefully deluding himself in to believing that he is after all acting on the people's will, he marches ahead adamantly with the plan of murder of Caesar, despite their intimate friendship. Brutus puts aside his personal loyalties and avoids all thoughts of Caesar the man, his friend; instead, he acts on what he believes to be the public's wishes and murders Caesar the rightful leader of the state. Cassius can be seen as a man who has apparently left no stones unturned to cultivate and strengthen his public persona. Caesar, never trusts Cassius because of the latter's unwillingness to give any heed to his private life and finer sensibilities. Just preceding his death, Caesar also refuses Artemidorus's ardent pleas to converse with him, saying that he gives last priority to his most personal concerns. He thus invites his own downfall by believing that the power and dynamicity of his public self will safeguard his private self too.

Another master John Milton has also built his master pieces around political connotations. Milton has always believed that the social hierarchy that actually existed in his day was basically quite corrupt, and he has directly challenged the authoritative prowess of Charles I, the king of England during most of Milton's lifetime. Milton argument has been that Charles was never fit to lead his subjects because he has never possessed the gifts of superior faculties or virtues.

It is in his magnum opus 'Paradise Lost' that he illustrates his belief regarding the way in which true leaders should act, and the process by which they should be selected, through the actions and speeches of Satan in Hell. In Book I of *Paradise Lost*, Satan standing in the newly constructed palace in the newly erected republic of Hell says "Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heav'n/ Did first create your leader, next, free choice,[...] Established in a safe unenvied throne/ Yielded with full consent," (l 18-24). Satan then explains the logic behind his being chosen as leader which lies in the fact of his having undertaken the greatest amount of pain, sufferings, losses and sacrifices as opposed to Heaven, where God is left to be thought of as ruling without the consent of his subjects, placing the burden of any sort of hard work and sacrifice upon the shoulders of the others. Milton presents Hell as a damned and utterly persecuted yet far more rational, intelligent place than Heaven when, in Satan's speech, he writes "With this advantage then/ To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,/ More than can be in Heav'n," (l 35-37). This portrayal of Satan as a leader speaking to the demons of Hell is of particular significance in unraveling the underlying political assumptions of the great poem. Cast into eternal torment for their rebellious course of action against what they viewed as pure tyranny, the reader is forced to choose the better of the two alternatives – whom to choose as the ruler, the one with absolute power demanding total loyalty or one who is ambitious and hard-working but neither loyal nor

absolute powerful. The similarities between Milton and the Satan he creates are huge and worth pondering. But, we should be very careful about drawing a definite conclusion about any such resemblance as Milton has been a very serious Christian whom we are trying to identify completely with Satan and his wingmen. Now the examples of great books portraying explicitly or implicitly events and characters with obvious or underlying political implications are simply just too many to even mention, let alone illustrate and elaborate. So now we shall be narrowing our focus to few great works which have delighted generations not just with the presentation of beautifully crafted stories but also with the depiction of characters and mixing of upsetting censorship.

Geoffrey Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales' is simply not just a collection of few tales but they also provide very artistically critiques about the contemporary condition of Churches, State and general public life. By the late fourteenth century, the Catholic Church had become extremely wealthy. The Church governed England, Ireland, and the entire continent of Europe. The cathedrals around shrines of the saints' relics were incredibly expensive to build, and the amount of gold that went into decorating them and equipping them surpassed the riches in the nobles' coffers. In a century of death, disease, plague, famine, and scarce labor, the sight of a church adorned with unused gold seemed unfair to some people, and the preaching of the Church against the materialistic tendency of ours to accumulate and amass great wealth seemed nothing but a pure undisguised hypocrisy especially when the religious leaders were all in possession of endless wealth and assets. This apathy for the excesses of the riches of the Church helped in the birth of stories and anecdotes about greedy, irreligious churchmen who accepted bribes and indulged themselves sensually, while ignoring the poor, starving, struggling peasants begging at their doors.

As was generally expected at that time the main religious figures in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* all deviate in one way or another from what was supposed to be their traditionally accepted standard. But the characters are not simply satirical versions of their stereotypical roles; they are living, breathing individuals and cannot simply be taken as wooden, flat and one-dimensional representation of the practitioners of some particular professions.

The Monk, Prioress, and Friar are all members of the clerical estate and live in convents. Both are depicted as figures who seem to prefer the aristocratic to the typical religious or devotional life. The Prioress's highly meretricious bejeweled rosary seems more like a love token than something expressing her devotion to Christ, and her dainty mannerisms revealed before the readers her inner urge to follow the superficial rules by which the women could make themselves appear even more attractive to men. The Monk enjoys hunting, a pastime of the nobility, while he holds any pursuing of intellectual activity in utter disdain. The Friar was a member of an order of mendicants, who made their living begging around, and accepting money to hear confession. Friars are represented as beings of lecherous type, as the Wife of Bath describes in the opening of her tale. The narrator here thus portrays with tolerant Catholic humor the faults in upper clerical and religious characters. Chaucer always conforms to the tradition and never presents any sharp critique of the politics of his time. But he has examined the various aspects of the lives of people of his time especially in relation to their performance of the traditionally accepted duties in holding certain posts and profession.

In D.H.Lawrence's 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' we get the rebellious, iconoclastic attitude of the author towards sex, love, masculinity, femininity, and critique on society and political milieu that deprives men and women of their true instinct and power. Lawrence is never shy of expressing the hatred towards aristocracy and the intellectuals, but what is even more contradictory he hates the working classes even more. Mellors, though is from a coal-mining background, but rises above his circumstances. Connie and the narrator of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* both insist that he's really nice unlike those other coal miners. Clifford says a lot of mean things about the working classes, but Mellors is right there with him, condemning them as imbecile, fickle, shallow and frivolous. It can often appear to us that what Lawrence really wants is a feudal society with a noble overlord and hard-working, unassuming, vivacious peasants who will be always happy with their share and workings. Also Lawrence here explicitly condemns the mechanical culture which has reduced man to just another cog in the money-making wheel of production, rather he urges the men to indulge in physical and labor-intensive manual activities. He often blames the mechanical culture and socio-economic condition of the contemporary world, especially of Europe after World War I.

In 'Things Fall Apart' by Chinua Achebe Okonkwo's resistance of cultural change stems mostly from his own personal fear of losing his arduously acquired societal status. He realizes that he is only that much worthy which the society thinks him to be. This system of evaluating the self inspires many outcasts of the village and clan to embrace Christianity. These outcasts which have so far been humiliated and scorned find in the Christian value system a refuge from the Igbo cultural values that place them below everyone else. In their new community, the converts enjoy a more elevated status.

The villagers in general are caught in the maelstrom between resisting and embracing change and they face the dilemma of determining how best to adapt to the winds of change. The villagers have been described as enthusiastic about the new changes, arrivals of new techniques and opening of hitherto unexplored vistas of wonder and opportunity. But this European influence, however, threatens to extinguish the need for the mastery of traditional methods of farming, harvesting, building, and cooking. These traditional methods, once crucial for survival, are now gradually getting reduced to dispensable process. Throughout the novel, Achebe shows how dependent such traditions are upon storytelling and language and thus he uses language to express and give shape to an underlying tension which has been threatening the common masses for such a long period of time. Achebe uses the power of the formal language of the Igbo to bring forth the potentiality of an African language to delve deep and explore the depths of imaginative power. In this way Achebe emphasizes that Africa is not the silent or incomprehensible continent that books written by European masters so far has made it out to be. Rather, he shows how the power of Igbo language eludes the grasp of European colonialist framework to translate it into something comprehensible and logical. Achebe also illustrates the diversity and complexity of African linguistic tradition: the villagers of Umuofia, for example, make fun of Mr. Brown's translator because his language is differs from their own.

Achebe's aim behind using the English as the language to write the novel was to critique and emend the portrait of Africa that was painted by so many writers of the colonial period. But it is with his brilliant and carefully planned inclusion of proverbs, folktales, and songs translated from the Igbo language, that he managed to capture and convey the spontaneity, rhythms, structures, cadences, and melody of the Igbo language.

Herman Melville's '*Moby-Dick*' the traditional associations of color symbolism get reversed. Whiteness, to Ishmael, is horrible because it represents the unnatural and threatening: albinos, creatures that live in extreme and inhospitable environments, waves breaking against rocks. These examples reverse the traditional association of whiteness with purity. Whiteness conveys both a lack of meaning and a confounding, perplexing and often threatening unreadable excess of meaning that puzzles the interpreters. Moby Dick is the pinnacle of whiteness, and Melville's characters cannot objectively understand the White Whale. Ahab, for instance, believes that Moby Dick represents evil, while Ishmael tries hard but fails miserable in the end to explain the true fundamental nature of the White Whale. Again at first glance, there seems to be a fresh air of equality and fellowship blowing peacefully in the midst of a racist, hierarchically structured, battle-torn world. The ship's crew includes men from all corners of the globe and all races who seem to get along peacefully. Ishmael though uncomfortable at first with Queequeg, he quickly realizes that it is better to have a "sober cannibal than a drunken Christian" for a shipmate. Additionally, the conditions of work aboard provide everyone with a certain taste of spirit of egalitarianism, since men are promoted and paid according to their skill. However, it is in the work of whaling that the class division and partition get revealed by means of various exploitative activities—buffalo hunting, gold mining, unfair trade with indigenous peoples—that has been the typical features of the general American and European territorial expansion.

The dystopian novel '1984' by George Orwell describes life in a totalitarian regime that has deprived the people of their priceless fundamental rights. The themes in this novel have become a major part of modern culture, as have terms such as "big brother" and "doublespeak" (resulting from Orwell's term of "doublethink"). Here Orwell portrays the perfect totalitarian society, the most extreme realization imaginable of a modern government with an absolute power. Here by the use of methods like psychological manipulation, information adulteration and control, physical assault, use of technology and language as tools of influencing and capturing individual's thought processes etc the government has established a total dictatorial reign. One of Orwell's most important messages in this novel is that language is of utmost significance to human thought because it structures and limits the ideas that individuals are capable of formulating and expressing. By

controlling and manipulating the use of language the authorities can render a human incapable of even expressing certain thoughts which would mean disobedience and criticism of the government, because there would be no words with which one can think of them. This idea manifests itself in the language of Newspeak, which the Party has introduced to replace English. The Party is constantly changing, redefining and modifying the Newspeak, with the ultimate goal that no one will be capable of conceptualizing anything that might question the Party's absolute power.

These ideas about language as a tool to control one's flow and pattern of nurturing thoughts have been in later ages adopted and modified by the critics to answer problematic questions like resisting and answering to the challenges of legacy of Colonialism. During colonial times, foreign powers took political and military control of distant regions and, as a part of their occupation, instituted their own language as the language of government and business. Postcolonial writers often analyze or attempt to redress the damage done to local populations by the loss of language and the consequent loss of cultural and historical inheritance.

Another dystopian novel, 'Brave New World' by Huxley is often considered one of the great novels of the 20th century. Huxley's novel looked unfavorably on the loss of an individual's identity through technological advancements. Some of the developments Huxley wrote about have become startlingly accurate as the future he predicted in 1931 has come closer to reality. 'Brave New World' warns us of the dangers of giving the state control over new and powerful technologies. The danger manifests itself in the procedures for establishing control of reproduction through technological and medical intervention, including the surgical removal of ovaries, the Bokanovsky Process, and hypnopaedic conditioning. Also by the use of entertainment machines the populace gets reduced to the state of mere receivers or consumers of passive entertainment and their leisure time which gradually takes from them their ability to express their inner sentiments, dissent or ability to reflect on their condition or ponder on their self-improvement which gradually helps the state-power to solidify its base more strongly. This novel depicts a dystopia in which an all-powerful state controls the behaviors and actions of its people in order to preserve its own stability and power. A major difference between the two novels '1984' and 'Brave New World' is that, whereas in '1984' control is established, strengthened and maintained by constant government surveillance, secret police, and physical torture, power in 'Brave New World' is maintained through technological interventions that start before birth and last until death, and that divert the course of people's desire, their actual wants and needs. The government of 'Brave New World' retains control by making its citizens happy and superficially fulfilled unlike in '1984' where force and intimidation speak last. In the presence of such huge state control human values like dignity, self-respect, artistic impulse, creativity, novelty, tenderness, trust, independent thinking all get eroded beyond recognition.

So how bad can politics shape, determine and delimit the dimension of our thought, individuality and capacity of free-thinking and rationalizing have been most relentlessly described in those two dystopian novels.

Charles Dickens is another such novelist whose novels are always replete with social and political commentaries and undercurrents. Though he always caters to the Victorian sentimentalities of his time yet they provide some noteworthy critique on various social, political issues of his time; so they are never lame or subservient to the tradition but often very merciless in their portrayal of some really dehumanizing grim realities of life. In 'Pickwick Papers' Dickens creates a utopian and to a great extent a nostalgic vision of pre-Victorian and pre-industrial England prior to a rapid industrialization and urbanization. Although structurally the novel is intended to be a comic one, it is not at all devoid of Dickens's characteristic social commentary, which would become more emphatic in his later novels. Dickens's more mature novels contain some of his most trenchant pieces of social commentary. Beginning with his second novel, 'Oliver Twist', through 'Nicholas Nickleby', 'A Christmas Carol', 'The Chimes', 'Dombey and Son', 'Bleak House', 'Hard Times', and ending with 'Little Dorrit' Dickens repudiated the claims of classical economics and his moral concern for the upliftment of the underpaid, poorer section of the society and overall social well-being of the nation is clearly reflected. His early novels expose isolated pictures of the suffering and shortcomings of individual beings, whereas his later novels contain a more comprehensive diagnosis of the incurable evil lurking inside the Condition of England.

Oliver Twist (1837-39), which represents a radical change in Dickens's themes, is his first novel to carry a social commentary similar to that contained in the subsequent Condition-of-England novels. According to Louis Cazamian, "the success of Twist confirmed Dickens' determination to write on social topics, and the



inception of Chartism means that the burning social issue of the day was the problem of the working class ” (164). Dickens explores many social themes in *Oliver Twist*, but three are predominant: the abuses of the new Poor Law System, the evils of the criminal world in London and the victimization of children. The critique of the Poor Law of 1834 and the administration of the workhouse is presented in the first few chapters of *Oliver Twist*. Dickens depicts in the most uncompromising manner a grim picture of the Victorian workhouse, which was run according to a regime of prolonged hunger, physical punishment, humiliation and hypocrisy. The novel ‘*Nicholas Nickleby*’ contains a serious social commentary on the conditions of schools where unwanted children were maltreated and starved. Dickens’s novella, *A Christmas Carol* (1843), is an anti-Malthusian work. The author shows disapproves of the Malthusian principle of uncontrolled population growth. Dickens’s novel ‘*Bleak House*’ exposes the abuses of the court of Chancery and administrative incompetence. Apart from the criticism of the Chancery courts, Dickens also criticizes slum housing, overcrowded urban graveyards, neglect of contagious diseases, electoral corruption, preachers; class divisions, and neglect of the educational needs of the poor. In ‘*Hard Times*’ Dickens creates a Condition-of-England novel, which directly and very successfully engages with contemporary and social issues. Coketown, the city of hard, cold and calculable facts, foreshadows the emergence of a monstrous mass urban society based on rationalism, anonymity and a complete all-pervading shadow of dehumanization. The dominant feature of the town is its inherent ugliness. Its inhabitants are representatives of a generation which lack individuality and are the product of an inhuman, materialistic society.

Like many modernist writers, T.S.Eliot wanted his poetry to capture and convey the fragile psychological state of the disillusioned humanity in the twentieth century. The passing of Victorian ideals and the trauma of World War I challenged cultural notions of masculine identity, causing artists to question the visionary and prophetic powers of an inherently gifted divine poet capable of effecting revolution and enlightenment by means of verses alone.

From the above discussion it is clear enough that literary forms evolve as a result of a interaction of socio-political forces after periods of intense interaction among various cultural, economic, and political factors over a long period of time and though the immediate effect of introduction and evolution of any particular form of literature can convey a sense of freedom and breaking away from the age-worn, traditional modes of expression and narration in the long run it is the theme which successfully and regularly bring winds of change into the fabrique of literary creation thus keeping the force alive for expressing the inexpressible, articulating the incomprehensible and predicting the unthinkable. But both the form and the theme can be made to serve the willpower of one dominant political power if they fail to evolve and adapt. A writer’s greatness often lies immanent in how much he is able to introduce any novel and revolutionizing ideas even while conforming formally to the established rules and norms, in how far he is able to go beyond the limited scope and vision of a generation and timeframe which defines his physical and mental makeup. The works themselves are products of minds who have consciously and unconsciously imbibed and absorbed the value system of a particular time but it is in transcending the barriers of one’s own capacity of thinking and feeling and in the ability of one’s identifying himself with the soul and spirit of countless others whose vision, aspirations and ideals differ from those of his own that one is able to enlarge and ennoble the scope of one’s work which forms the first step of striving towards an even more ambitious ideal of effecting a revolution.

## **CONCLUSION**

What we believe or choose to belief, what we think of as ours or like to be think as ours, to what we adhere or are taught from childhood to adhere are often in a moment of true enlightenment appear before us as constituted of thoughts, perceptions, ideas and desires of others. We find ourselves restrained and captured by our inability to see the unseen,. Think the unthinkable and going past the barred vision. It is in this moment that we realize that that all forms and ideas have been but a shadow of shadows , a by-product of a political and social authoritative control which has been teaching us the ways to see, define, and criticize ourselves which would be most beneficent for the higher authority to sustain and stabilize its political power. The entire political power structure is but a narrative, the historical lessons are inscribed upon the walls of the narrative, but often if we deconstruct carefully each and every element present in that structure we shall find certain glimpses of bravery of individual creators in the past who despite many prohibitions and restraints had managed to shine light into the darkest recesses of some incredible and uncomfortable truths about the life of

ours and the world in general. Literature should never aim at fostering nihilistic feelings though, rather it should inculcate in us a spirit of endurance, patience, tolerance and secular and liberal outlook which would in some later time prove to be the bedrocks of an universal and enlightened democracy.

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