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Talking It Over And Love Etc: Two Novels Written In The Space Of Time

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Abstract:

The novelist, Julian Barnes depicts conventional triangular relationship with original narrative technique and confessional style. Both prominent characters Stuart and Oliver contrasted as two lovers and a beloved. Story becomes poly and dramatic. The Characters raise interesting questions in three different voices. In the present novel, novelist used conversational form and reveal inner conflicts. The characters like Oliver, Stuart and Gillian analysed with themes of love, marriage, and jealousy enumerated.

'LOVE etc' The novel is sequel of 'Talking It Over'. The story of the major characters of 'Talking It Over' continues after ten years in England. The novelist used monologues is the technique. The past, present and future, exposed systematically. There is a fusion of fiction and drama. The characters speak directly to the readers. The new life in England unfolded and though matured, the characters still exhibit the basic passions. The themes of the novels are love and sex. The major themes is criticism of modern materialistic world.

KEYWORDS:

Love, Novelist, Relationship, Dramatic.

INTRODUCTION

Talking It Over (1991) is a novel written by Julian Barnes in fairly conventional triangular relationship but applies an original narrative technique. It was well received by reviewers and won the Prix Femina for a foreign novel in France in 1992. The novel tells story of two friends who are contrast in to each other their nature. It is another emotional drama by Julian Barnes like his earlier novels - Metroland and Before She Met Me .

The novel, Talking It Over, has a plot of deceptive simplicity with the conventional narrative technique and confessional style.

The novel contrasts two friends : dull Stuart, an investment banker, and brilliant Oliver, a teacher of English to foreigners. Stuart meets Gillian marries who with Oliver. Stuart is desperate and leaves for the United States while Gillian and Oliver move to the South of France and have a daughter.

Thus, despite Stuart's pessimistic reductionism about love. The novel is a tribute to the power of love. Love makes Stuart to change his life twice. It also makes Oliver renovate himself and become less an immature top and more like an adult man. In addition, love makes Gillian, the woman in dispute between them, act against her better judgement and against her will.

As mentioned earlier, Oliver and Stuart are improbable best friends, i.e. of different types. Stuart is a successful banker, while Oliver is an unsuccessful teacher of English in a squalid school. Stuart is a bit of plodder, unadventurous, shy, and earnest while Oliver is a dashing, quick, an ingratiating rogue. Stuart falls in love with Gillian and immediately marries her. But the three share very precious time of life together

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before Stuart and Gillian's marriage. At the wedding, Oliver is also in love with Gillian. He makes an all-out effort to win her back and fortunately he succeeds. Due to this, all of them get trapped in an emotional confrontation.

Like the previous novels like *Metroland & Staring at the Sun*, *Talking It Over* is simple in its technique. The novel is divided among three dominant voices instead of three interlocking sections. There are only three important characters, who not only enact the plot but also narrate it. Mr. Barnes has used the conventional triangle of love story – two lovers and a beloved. Merritt Moseley comments: The triangle is of a classic sort – a woman is “torn between two lovers” : one of them, Stuart, is kind, reliable, well employed, but fairly dull; the other, Oliver, is handsome, witty, cultivated, charming, but irresponsible. (Moseley : 126)

It seems that a deliberate attempt has been made to portray Stuart and Oliver as opposites. The story of the novel becomes poly and dramatic due to the dissimilarities in the nature of the two significant characters. The characters do not know themselves with certainty, but they play roles with each other and the reader. They wonder who is right and wrong and they view events through their own self interest.

There is a series of different voices that contradict, qualify, support and augment each other's accounts. They are seen making an unusual appeal to the reader for sympathy and agreement. The imagined relationship between reader and narrator in this novel is much closer. Each “talks it over” with the reader, or imagined listener. Each is aware that the others are also talking; each makes some appeal to the reader for help. The reader is figured as interacting with the characters. Stuart, for instance, starts to tell what Gillian looks like, then says “She ... Well, you've seen her for yourself, haven't you?” (p.37). Gillian admits that she is aroused by Oliver's phone calls : “And do you know what's started happening? As I put the phone down I feel wet. Can you imagine it?” (p.145). Such type of dialogues are not merely rhetorical questions but they denote that the narrative scheme of this novel is meant to be more interactive.

The characters in the novel raise interesting questions about the ontology of fictional creations. It is self-conscious fiction. Despite pretended struggles with scarves or smoking, despite what they reveal about what they have done and suffered, *Talking It Over* contains just voices. The author's ventriloquistic creation of these three very different voices – personalities is a matter of vocabulary, references, reticences, syntax, and cadence. The language of Stuart who has not been to any university for education makes uncles and unexpected comments. On the other hand, the voice of Oliver is entirely learned, precious and showy.

Zoe Heller comments on this pair of voices :

Stuart – a plodder, teetering on the edge of full – blown wallyhood – unknowingly speaks his vulnerability from the start, and it is his hidden reserves of toughness that take a while to emerge. Oliver is a clever dick – so well – read that he can afford to be wittily irreverent about art and philosophy. He makes much of his effortless glamour, but by the end of the novel his grooviness seems about as spontaneous as one of Stuart's soirees. (Heller, 1991 : 28)

It seems that Oliver's voice, though seemingly unreliable, is certainly the most memorable and entertaining as he is characterized by his erudition, flamboyance, wit and tendency. Oliver makes literary as well as musical allusions combined with the use of French, Latin, Italian or German words, all highlighting his pedantry and pretentiousness as well as wit and cleverness.

The absence of any authorial or authoritative voice forces readers to make their own judgement on the events described. The technique used for *Talking It Over* is very alluring due to which there is no intervention between characters and reader.

Talking It Over has been written in conversational form as the three of the major characters reveal their past, present and future course of action in their monologues. The mind of human being is the setting for this innovative and experimentative narrative drama. The characters are the narrators and through their narratives, events in their lives are described from their respective point of view.

Oliver, Hi, I'm Oliver, Oliver Russell. Cigarette? No, I didn't think you would. You don't mind if I do? Yes I do know it's bad for my health as a matter of fact, that's why I like it. God we've only just met and you're coming on like some rampant nut-eater. What's got to do with you anyway? (8)

The characters reveal the inner conflicts in their mind through the dialogues and that becomes a surface setting. The story of the novel is set in England and France. Stuart and Oliver are the childhood friends; their past, their youth and adulthood take place in England .

To the end of the novel, Oliver and Gillian move to France and decide to settle in France. France is an excuse for them as both of them have a sense of guilt for their betrayal.

An expatriate Englishman in his middle thirties, scraping along in provincial France with a wife and baby. They're out of the London property market now, and believe me, once you are out you never get back in.

(262)

Stuart Hughes is the next significant character in the novel . Talking It Over, He is a banker who has been successful in his profession. He is a bit of a plodder, unadventurous, shy and earnest. Due to the qualities, he wins over Oliver the heart of Gillian. Stuart introduces himself and gives much information about himself as :

My name is Stuart, and I remember everything. Stuart's my Christian name. My full name is Stuart Hughes. My full name : that's all there is to it. No middle name. Hughes was the name of my parents, who were married for twenty-five years. They called me Stuart. I didn't particularly like the name at first – I got called things like stew and stew-pot at school. (1)

Since the childhood, Stuart and Oliver have been best friends. As compared to Oliver, Stuart was better at maths, science and practical things. At the time of wedding, Stuart chooses Oliver to be his best man. After the marriage, Stuart is betrayed by Gillian and Oliver. Oliver wins over Gillian and after the affair, they marry. Merritt Moseley comments:

Stuart has his own idea about when he was definitely betrayed. He and Gillian have always been embarrassed by the way they met, which was at a singles gathering that they had paid to attend. They have a cover story they use to keep everyone and particularly Oliver, who belittled Stuart, especially about knowing the truth. (Moseley : 128)

When Stuart senses the growing intimacy between his wife Gillian and Oliver, he starts spying them helplessly. After the wedding of Gillian and Oliver, Stuart is obsessed. He feels enormous shame as a result of his marriage having ended after only a few months, which he believes will make people think he was sexually inadequate. Besides this, he is obsessed with enormous anger and disillusionment. He toys with various plans for revenge, but what he eventually does is much more like Oliver. He travels to France and rents a room near their home so he can watch them from his window, as Oliver used to watch him and Gillian. He is finally assuaged by a bit of theatrics arranged by Gillian to make it look as if she is miserable in her new marriage, which seems to make him happy.

The way Stuart duplicates Oliver's spying scheme exemplifies the pattern of reversal in this novel. If Gillian is the unmoving pivot, Stuart and Oliver are the moving parts that exchange position. The most obvious way is that Stuart is replaced by Oliver as Gillian's husband. They think that after their marriage Stuart will go on being their friend and that he will take on Oliver's abandoned role. Stuart also pretends to follow their expectations and attends their wedding.

The obsession of Stuart is reflected in his growing habit of drinking as his marriage dissolves. He develops this habit after his divorce and prefers paid companionship and thinks that love is an illusion and money can buy it. As a materialist, Stuart has come to think of love as an illusion, the value of which, like the value of money, is situated so long as everyone agrees to grant it a value; and inso has love just equals sex while money and love are equivalents in the market.

Gillian as another important character of Talking It Over because it is Gillian who is the woman in dispute between her lovers-cum-friends-cum-husbands, Stuart and Oliver. She acts against her better judgement and against her will. In other words, Gillian is a woman torn between two lovers. Her inclination to choose Stuart who is not so stupid is a proof of her womanliness. She confesses as :

I got married. Part of me didn't think I ever would, part of me disapproved, part of me was a little scared, to tell the truth. But I fell in love, and Stuart is a good person, a kind person, and he loves me. I'm married now. (4)

The real drama takes place in Gillian's life, when obsessed Oliver starts proposing Gillian even though she is the wife of his best friend. Gillian, at first, hesitates to respond these acts but later on she also starts thinking of Oliver. Whenever there is a sound of either telephone ring or door bell, she imagines Oliver to be there. At last they start dating each other. She takes a bold decision to divorce Stuart and marry Oliver. She does so.

Gillian's decision to divorce Stuart for Oliver is bold, and masculine. She loses interest in comparatively less romantic Stuart and chooses a regular womanizer Oliver. She does feel sad for breaking the relation but at the same time she is selfish enough to choose an interesting life.

Gillian's obsession with Oliver develops more slowly but it is a matter of enlarged permissions rather than crafty stratagems. She makes comparisons between the two persons. Stuart is charmless and he has a job to do. This vacuum of the day can be filled by making love with Oliver. She thinks, "despite the fact that I love Stuart, I seem to be falling in love with Oliver". (1991 :144)

In the last section, Gillian is seen living with Oliver in Frances. She asks the reader an interesting question as,

Just out of interest, do you think Oliver's been faithful to me since we were married? Sorry, that's neither here nor there". (270)

Oliver is the most colourful and interesting of the three major characters of the novel. It is because

of Oliver the novel has many twists to create dramatic events in the story. Oliver is an unsuccessful teacher of English to foreign students in a squalid school. During his childhood and teenage period, Oliver had been admired and praised by the girls. In other words, he has a quality to attract the girls and women. He is aware of this and has an ego for this. When Gillian chooses Stuart who is less charming compared to him, Oliver becomes jealous of Stuart for having an attractive and charming wife.

Oliver dares to betray his best friend, Stuart. He starts calling her on telephone and making visits to her flat in Stuart's absence. Merritt Moseley rightly puts the act of Oliver :

Oliver betrays Stuart by winning his wife away from him. It can be made more specific than that though Gillian who gives this more thought than the men, recognizes that she has crossed a border when she begins keeping secrets from her husband(s). It begins when Oliver turns up at the door just after Stuart has gone to work, hands her a large bouquet of flowers, declares his love and flees. (Moseley : 127)

To win Gillian from Stuart, Oliver rents a flat on the street where Stuart and Gillian live. His aim is to spy the movements of the couple. Whenever Stuart is out for his duty, Oliver is free to phone or visit Gillian. He begins phoning her to tell her he loves her. Though she hangs up, Oliver realizes that Gillian looks forward to the calls and presently stops hanging up. Soon, he begins spending his days with Gillian. He watches her work, talks with her & combs her hair. These romantic acts tempt Gillian and she takes him in her arms and invites him to bed. But Oliver is deeply in love with her, he refuses her idea by saying, "I want all of you, I don't want part of you, I want the lot ..." (p.150). According to Merritt Moseley: Oliver, who has a gift for metaphorical flights and who, from time to time, condescendingly tries to speak in Stuart's frame of reference – which he takes to be ignorant, materialistic, and mercantile – uses a financial conceit to explain his takeover of Gillian. (Moseley : 132)

Oliver rejects the analogy of love and money. Stuart, who always had more money, used to pay for these dates and give Oliver other financial support. Oliver depends upon Stuart's dullness and predictability and lack of sparkle to make him seem more interesting. Due to Oliver's worldly failures and bad habits, Stuart seems to feel more grown-up and realistic.

When Stuart's head collides with Oliver's head, Stuart says he had head butted. Oliver, on the other hand, tells the reader that it was an unfortunate clash of heads. In this way, Oliver is conscious that he has betrayed his best friend Stuart by taking away his wife from him. He seems to be aware of the fact that he may have lost enough quantity of sympathy due to his obsession for Gillian. To win back the sympathy of the reader, Oliver plays an humble lover.

Oliver's quality as a womanizer can be guessed in a commentary of Val, a woman used to be one of the lovers of Stuart. She calls Oliver as "queer for Stuart".

That's why he's always put Stuart down, laughing at how shabby and boring he is. He puts Stuart down so that neither of them will have to admit what's always been there, what might be there if they didn't play the game of Stuart being shabby and boring and such an unlikely companion for flash Oliver. (185)

When Oliver and Gillian settle in France, Gillian is still doubtful of Oliver to be a faithful husband. It is due to Oliver's past, Gillian thinks. It is also clear that Oliver's character shows the signs of whims, obsession, love, affection, jealousy, ego, passion and sympathy.

Apart from the narrative technique of interacting monologues which creates a polyphony of voices, what mainly attracted the attention of critics was Barnes's handling of the themes of love, jealousy and betrayal which he had already dealt with in his previous novels, notably *Before She Met Me*, *Flaubert's Parrot* and 'Parenthesis' in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*.

The theme of love is the main or central theme of the novel which is supported with other themes like jealousy and betrayal.

Love is a very complicated phenomenon discussed in the novel. Conventionally, a hero is a romantic, talkative, witty person having attractive physical looks. Stuart is opposite of this sort but still his shyness and sober nature sparks the love for Gillian. Gillian also seems to be aware of Stuart's nature but she falls in love with him. She confesses as :

You don't know exactly when you fall in love with someone, do you? There isn't that sudden moment when the music stops and you look into one another's eyes for the first time, or whatever. Well, maybe it's like that for some people, but not me. (73)

Gillian likes Stuart as he is different from other boys, not at all pushy. He even tends to stop kissing her first. He offers to cook her dinner. They have a candle light dinner one evening which itself is a romantic idea for Gillian to love Stuart. Stuart always thinks how he can keep Gillian happy and pleasant. It is the bond of love after their marriage which makes them to care each other.

Oliver is a different type of person. Unlike Stuart, he is bold, loquacious, attractive and experienced in handling affairs with several girls. After Stuart's marriage with Gillian, Oliver is attracted to her. He seems to be obsessed with her. All the time, he dreams of her. He uses to visit her in the absence of Stuart. Once he dares to tell her that he loves her. In fact, he loves her when Gillian and Stuart are in the

Registrar Office. He thinks of her as :

She was all pale green and chestnut, with an emerald blaze at her throat; I roamed her face, from bursting curve of her forehead to the plum-dent of her chin; her cheeks, so often pallid, were brushed with the pink of a Tiepolo dawn. (60)

His love for Gillian makes to cease his conscience that by proposing her he is betraying his best friend. His persistent proposals work and Gillian also gets influenced. She starts thinking about Oliver. She is caught between the - Stuart or Oliver. Whenever Oliver makes her call, at first, she gives him very formal response. Later on, after the phone call, the voice of Oliver uses to ring in her ears. Gillian confesses as : So what I have to understand is this : despite the fact that I love Stuart, I seem to be falling in love with Oliver. (142)

The love in Talking It Over is very complex and shocking as a beloved is seen shifting her loyalty to another man without regret.

The theme of love is supported by the theme of marriage. Actually, love and marriage are very curious concepts for Mr. Barnes. He has tried to discuss these two themes in his earlier novels like *Metroland*. Before *She Met Me*, *Flaubert's Parrot*, *Staring at the Sun* and *Talking It Over*. Do the married persons love each other in real sense is the topic of research for Mr. Barnes. Human mind has so many compartments of which he or is unaware of When a man and woman marry, they are supposed to love each other only. But in practical life, one is hardly able to guess the nature of his or her mate. To be in love and to stay together are different things. Most of the times, couples are seen living together because of the pressure of the society and responsibility of the children. There is hardly any bond of love between them. Sometimes there is enough love for each other; but the couple can not marry. In short, whom we love is different and whom we marry is another thing .

Stuart falls in love with Gillian. She also likes his simple, shly, and less aggressive nature. They have an arranged marriage. After marriage also their love is not reduced. When Oliver, Stuart's childhood friend, is in love with Gillian, there comes a twist in their married life. At first, Gillian neglects Oliver's proposals but later on, she eagerly waits for his phone calls. She also thinks seriously about Oliver's love. She is aware that she is married to a caring, straight forward and loyal husband but still she risks to keep relation with Oliver. Stuart, on the other hand, is aware of 'the growing intimacy between Gillian and Oliver.

Later on Gillian gets divorce from Stuart and marries Oliver. It is due to the flamboyant and aggressive character that Oliver wins over comparatively dull and shy Stuart. But the basic question remains unanswered and that is why Gillian marries Oliver. *Talking It Over* also shocks the readers as the characters dare to break the conventional frame of the institution of marriage. It also shatters the old proverb that marriages are made in heaven and celebrated on earth. In this novel, all the characters are earthly human beings. They marry, then they break the marriage later as one of them remarry to a friend of her husband. This means, like *Before She Met Me*, the theme of marriage is discussed by interpreting the shades of human mind.

Jealousy is also another theme in supportive role to the central theme i.e. love. Jealousy is the outcome of deep love. Oliver is jealous of Stuart as he has a beautiful and charming wife, Gillian. Oliver is a recognized and established lady killer and they been friends since their childhood days. As compared to Oliver, Stuart has very few qualities that may amaze a young and attractive girl but Gillian loves him and marries too. Oliver decides to win over Stuart like in a market or business competition. He proposes Gillian and tells Stuart that he is going to take her over. It is as if Gillian is an object and Stuart and Oliver have to try and arrange some exchange value that will allow the transfer of ownership. It is out of jealousy that Oliver enters the lives of Stuart and Gillian and takes her away from him.

Stuart is also jealous of Oliver when he suspects him of wooing his wife. He starts keeping an eye on both of them. It can be understood from his point of view that though he is a loyal and caring husband his wife has inclined to his friend. Stuart is aware of Oliver's past and his potential to win over the girls he likes. But as his wife is signalling him, he has no choice except to be the mute spectator in the development of new relation. He has an itching jealousy against Oliver as Gillian has not ceased to love him but Oliver's influence and flamboyant nature has haunted her and she gives him a divorce.

The love triangle mostly has a theme of betrayal. In this case the betrayal is severe and shocking as compared to the betrayal of Jack of *Before She Met Me*. In that novel he had an affair with Ann before she married Graham. But Jack wants to continue with the affair while she doesn't. In *Talking It Over*, Oliver is the childhood friend of Stuart, he knows the weak point as well as strong points of him. When Stuart marries an attractive young woman, Gillian. Oliver is jealous of Stuart. This attempt itself is an example of backstabbing the trust and belief of a friend. Oliver never cares for Stuart but only for himself. Due to this selfishness, he wins over the heart of Gillian. When Stuart comes to know about this, his reaction or state of mind can be seen in the lines of Patsy Cline :

Two cigarettes in an ashtray
My love and I in a small café
Then a stranger came along
And everything went wrong
Now there's three cigarettes in the ashtray. (1991 : 153)

Gillian can also be considered as a betrayer. She has no regret at first in starting an affair with Stuart who is shy, dull and straight forward. She also likes his nonaggressive nature as he doesn't take any initiative to kiss her or flirt with her. When Oliver proposes her, Gillian, for all her reticence and quietness, may be the most cunning of the three and the real manipulator, who seduces Oliver in the first place. It is a betrayal of a caring, protective and loyal husband who always thinks to please her. Why has she opted to divorce Stuart about which Gillian herself is unaware. Probably, she finds Oliver talkative, flamboyant and witty. But instead of making him and tempting him to be a lover, she could have been his friend. She could have an affair with Oliver without leaving Stuart. Instead of all these possible options, she betrays Stuart.

Talking It Over may be considered as a drama written in novel form where in three of the major characters appear on the scene and confess whatever their conscience tell them to. Interestingly, in this deviative form of narratology the past and present have been converted into the references of the events to relate the developments in the lives of the three protagonists. The reflections of the inner views of the characters have been done so appropriately.

The postmodern sensibility of the present generation is instable and flexible that can be seen in the mindsets of Stuart, Oliver and Gillian. In addition, the educated class has different definitions of morality and values. The characters feel guilty but they are not ashamed of doing anything objectionable in their lives. In this way the reflection of world view can be seen in the novel.

Love, etc is the ninth novel by Julian Barnes which was published in 2001, like his other novels Love, etc was also dedicated to Pat Kavanagh. It is a sequel of his earlier novel Talking It Over which was written in 1991. After ten years, in everyone's lives including the auther, the developments in the lives of the three major characters have been portrayed in the novel. The sequel of the previous novel means the story of the previous in continuation after novel ten more years.

The structure of Love, etc is similar to the structure of Talking It Over as Love, etc is also composed of dramatic monologues by the main protagonists as well as few secondary characters. The from of the novel most resembles a television play done in narration and voiceover. Love, etc has nineteen chapters which brings the story of the three major protagonists in harmony. The story of the novel begin where the story of Talking It Over ends.

After spending a decade in America as a successful businessman, Stuart returns to London and decides to look after his ex-wife Gillian. Their relationship had ended years before when Stuart's witty, reckless, former best friend Oliver stole her away. But now Stuart finds that intervening years have left Oliver's artistic ambitions in ruins and his relationship with Gillian on less than solid footing. When Stuart begins to suspect that he may be able to undo the results of their betrayal, he resolves to act.

Written as an intimate series of crosscutting monologues that allow each character to whisper their secrets and interpretations directly to the reader. Love, etc is an unsettling examination of confessional culture and a profound reflection on the power of perspective.

Love, etc has a similar technique as Talking It Over; but writing a sequel of a novel considering the mental state of the characters itself is an innovative experimentation in the narrative technique.

Stuart, Oliver and Gillian make their appearances through their monologues and the past, present and future are exposed systematically. The novel begins with Stuart's monologue as :

Stuart Hello!

We've met before. Stuart, Stuart Hughes. Yes, I am sure. Positive. About ten years ago. It's all right – it happens. You don't have to pretend. But the point is, I remember you. I remember you. I'd hardly forget, would I? a bit ten years, now I come to think of it. (3)

Like Talking It Over, Love, etc has been written in the epistolary form, Each monologue is preceded by the name of the protagonist who intervenes so that, to a certain extent, the novel resembles a play. Edward T. Wheeler, a renowned reviewer, has drawn attention to this generic blurring. He says, "The form of the book most resembles a television play done in narration and voice over" (Wheeler, 1992 : 23) The novel is assimilated to a television documentary in which the protagonists would be talking heads nuttering on and answering questions thrown at them by some off screen researcher. The protagonists are seen interacting with the readers. It is a way to narrate in which the protagonists talk to the reader like the actors in the present-day theatre address the audience.

Oliver, Have you noticed this change in Gillian? The way she puts people into categories? It's probably her French blood. She's half French – you remember that? Half French on her mother's side. (5-6)

The status of the narrative in fact hovers uneasily between fiction and drama, though a drama from which all stage-directions have been removed. The technique of juxtaposed monologues had already been developed before. In the first chapter of Love, etc, the three characters go on talking in monologues addressed to the reader but for once they hear what the others say, so that each monologue is a reaction to what has just been said by the others. The whole chapter sounds like a mock dialogue until Gillian reminds Oliver and Stuart of the agreed format :

Look, stop it, you two. Just stop it. This isn't working If we're getting into this again, we have to play by the rules. No taking among ourselves. (7)

Talking It Over and Love, etc are characterized by the narrative technique of 'Skar'. It is used to designate a type of first-person narration that has the characteristics of the spoken rather than the written word. In this kind of novel or story, the narrator is a character who refers to himself or herself as 'I', and addresses the reader as 'you'. He or she uses vocabulary and syntax characteristic of colloquial speech, and appears to be relating the story spontaneously rather than delivering a carefully constructed and polished written account. This method goes back to the novel in letter and the dramatic monologue in poetry. It can also be seen in the woodworms tale in A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters.

The narrative technique of monologues is an efficient device of characterization as the protagonists are revealed through the way they speak, their idiosyncrasies, their cultural references, their centres of interest. This plurality of voices and styles corresponds to 'polyphony'. Each voice becomes readily recognizable thanks to a specific vocabulary, syntax and rhythm, as may be perceived by analyzing the introductory words of each protagonists.

Love, etc has been written in the form of dramatic monologues. The three major characters Stuart, Oliver and Gillian express the inner as well as outer conflicts in their monologue. They are not seen in direct conversation with each other, instead the past, present and future course of action is narrated relevantly in their confessional dialogues. Like Talking It Over, the psychological mindset of the characters provides setting to the novel which has been written in dramatic form. The only difference between a drama and this novel is that, the drama has direct conversations and occasional monologues or soliloquies; but Love, etc has only monologues. The characters speak directly to the readers. In other words, the readers are bound psychologically and they are appealed to relate themselves to the lives of the characters. Terri Mind if I join you? I mean, is this a private thing or what? I could e-mail if you prefer. But I'll tell you one thing, I'm not having five years of my life tossed in the trash like that. I'm not going to be anyone's damn footnote. (33)

The setting of the novel covers the countries like England, France and USA. The novel begins where Talking It Over ends. To the end of Talking It Over, Oliver and Gillian settle in a small village in France. At the beginning of Love, etc, Gillian reminisces their past in that village. They live there for some time but return to London as Oliver can not succeed in his professional life. Gillian remembers this episode as :

So I was standing there like a scarecrow, like a madwoman. The blood was from Oliver hitting me with the car keys in his hand. I knew the village's eyes were on me. I knew we'd have to leave. The French are much more bourgeois than the British when it comes down to it. The properties matter. Anyway, I'd tell Oliver that being in the village was part of the trouble. (20)

Oliver and Gillian settle in London, they have their family and Gillian resumes her professional life, too, in London. The rest of the novel takes place in London. As Stuart, one of the major characters, also returns home. Before it, Stuart works as a greengrocer in USA and he has the memories of his life in USA. At the beginning of the novel, in the first chapter Stuart narrates his life in USA with every detail. He not only provides the descriptions of the outer life but he makes clear what he has felt.

Stuart : Some clichés are true. Like America being the land of opportunity. At least, a land of opportunity. Some clichés aren't true, like Americans having no sense of irony, or America being a melting pot, or America being the home of the brave and the land of free. I lived there for almost ten years and knew lots of Americans and liked them. I even married one of them. (25)

Love, etc is an emotional drama told in serious mood, the tone of the novel turns to be dark. The characters have very complicated relations and feelings for each other. Stuart and Oliver are seen in the exchanged roles unlike in Talking It Over while Gillian can not understand what relation she has with Stuart. This complexity has influenced the tone of the novel.

Love, etc takes place after ten years, the duration of time is symbolically reflected in the natures of major characters. They are seen more matured, practical and real life; but the basic shades of human nature like jealousy, envy, pity, compassion, affection, passion and love are still retained by them. which could be discovered in the behaviors of these characters.

Stuart Henderson used to be a successful banker; but personally, he is an unadventurous, shy and earnest person. He as in love with and marries Gillian. To his misfortune, his marriage comes to an end due to Oliver who is also in love with Gillian. Oliver undertakes a well planned, complicated, and expensive campaign to win her from Stuart and succeeds.

Stuart accepts this; but his heart bleeds deeply for Gillian. He goes to America to make an earning but actually it is an escape to alienate himself from his past life that he can not forget. He goes to America as he thinks that America is a place of opportunity and it is a land of the free mentality and ideology. He serves there with a bank in Washington for couple of years. Then he makes an inroad in business world and opens a restaurant with a friend. The style of the restaurant is fusion that is French, Californian, Thai. He sells the restaurant to his partner and moves to Baltimore and starts another restaurant. As he has become a partial American, he doesn't stick to the restaurant business. He starts the business of organic food distribution. This business also works successfully as there is increasing number of consumers ,most of them affluent enough and concerned enough to pay more for uncontaminated produce.

Stuart, being a successful banker, realizes that distribution and marketing of organic food gives him enough amount of profit. Then he comes to England for holidays but decides to set up.

In America, Stuart marries an American woman but as he is deeply attached to Gillian, the marriage succeeds for only five years. Stuart is aware of the people-talk that Stuart may have some sexual problems. He consistently visits to prostitutes for sex. It is a need of a lonely person staying away from home. On the other hand, the sexual experience is a reaction of the people-talk. It is to console his mind and soul he seems to hire a body for sex.

Stuart's returning home causes some shivers in the lives of Oliver and Gillian. When he meets Oliver, he thinks that there is no change within him Stuart says :

No, I haven't ten years older, hair gone grey, no longer wear specs, lost a stone and a half thanks to my exercise to programme, and dressed from head to foot in American clothes. Yup, same old Stuart. Of course, he may have meant internally, but that would have been a bit premature. (50)

Stuart is in no mood to forget his past. Oliver, on the other hand, talks freely and eloquently to him. Oliver thinks of him as the old-days Stuart who might have forgotten everything. Stuart knows that Oliver is not in a sound economic position. He lets him talk about everything; he does not mention Gillian.

Stuart scares the opportunity when everyone is asleep except him and Gillian and rapes her. The rape on Gillian is a reaction of his suffering for ten years. He thinks that he has committed a mistake by not being ultra possessive of Gillian. While raping her, Stuart ignores her threats and warnings and dares her to scream loudly. He wants her to bite him and scream so that everyone will know that Stuart can have sex with her and she has no problem with that. On the other hand, Stuart confesses that Gillian takes an initiative and let him sleep with her on sofa.

The sexual intercourse fulfills Stuart's long pending desire to sleep with Gillian and satisfy her. He makes up his mind to get the things that he want and does not waste time with what he doesn't want.

Oliver Russell is a dashing, dynamic, eloquent and womanizer friend of Stuart's. It is Oliver's obsession for Gillian that changes the soft and straightforward married life into a broken position. He has been considered unsuccessful in his earlier profession, that is teaching of English to foreign students. After stealing away the wife of his best friend, Oliver decides to settle in France; but his professional life does not stand there.

They come back to London and settle there. Oliver tries his luck as a screenplay writer and dreams of becoming a successful writer to win a Nobel Prize in literature. The failure in the professional life and dependency over Gillian, make Oliver frustrated and confused. He has deep passion for Gillian; but, now being a father of two, he is more interested in Sophie and Marie than Gillian. He takes care of his daughters in order to give enough space to Gillian who has been a source of earning for the family. Gillian says: Oliver and I get on well. I never expected him to be a nine to five when I married him. I encourage his projects, but I don't necessarily count on them coming to anything. He's companionable, he's funny, he's a good father he's nice to come home. He cooks. (24)

When Oliver was a child, his father would beat him up with a hockey stick, only because he looked like his mother. His father disliked him to the level that he didn't allow him to inherit his property; instead he made a will on the names of his grandchildren. The memories of childhood may have melted Oliver's heart for his daughters.

The sexual life of Oliver is satisfactory. Oliver and Gillian used to go for sex regularly that is three times in a week. For the other days, they use to fall into bed and don't have sex. But he is aware of Gillian's taste four sex. He is always ready to fulfill her desires. But after ten years of marriage, he has lost interest in sex.

Oliver likes the company of Stuart, his best friend. He is conscious that he has betrayed him by taking away his wife. Oliver expects Stuart to forget everything and be their friend. When Stuart returns to

London from America, Oliver pure-heartedly offers him a hand of friendship. They have many things in common, like their childhood memories, their habits and hobbies. Oliver talks about everything; Stuart also shares a healthy talk with him.

To the end, Stuart rapes Gillian and Oliver wins the sympathy of the reader. Oliver is fed up with his boring life. He has lost interest in everything, except for his two innocent daughters. He is depressed and looks at life from sympathetic view.

Gillian is a very colourful character in *Love, etc.* after giving divorce to Stuart, she decides to settle in France. In France, Oliver, her husband, is not successful in his profession. They settle in London; she starts her professional life by setting an office and appointing an assistant. Gillian knows that she has to be the major earning source of the family. She accepts that she has to sacrifice something for her love. She loves Oliver passionately and adores him for being a caring and protective father of their two daughters. She enjoys the company of Oliver in her bedroom.

Stuart's entry into Gillian's life makes her cautious, as being a mother of two she does not want her daughters to know about her past. She thinks as:

I thought it would be awkward. I thought Stuart would be embarrassed – he used to get embarrassed easily. I thought I might not be able to look him in the face. I knew I had to. (64)

At the dinner, Gillian appreciates Stuart for offering financial aid to Oliver's project. Later on she gives signals to Stuart's references about his love for him. He dares to hold her and rapes her. For Stuart, it is a mutual sexual intercourse between them, but for Gillian it is a rape. She tries to resist him but it doesn't work. She thinks:

If you're twenty and not having sex, you think about it most of the time. If you're forty and not having sex, you stop thinking so much about it and worry about other things instead. And you certainly don't want it like this. (209)

Gillian realizes that Stuart is still in love with her, passionately and wildly. Gillian of *Love, etc.* is more matured and thoughtful as compared to Gillian of *Talking It Over*.

There are the minor characters like Mme Wyatt, mother of Gillian; Ellie, an assistant of Gillian Terri, a friend of Stuart; Mrs. Dyre; Sophie and Marrie, daughters of Gillian and Oliver.

Love, etc. is a sequel to *Talking It Over*, the themes are also similar to the prequel. *Love* is certainly the main theme of the novel, *Love, etc.* It is supported by the other themes like sex, jealousy and betrayal.

The story of *Love, etc.* begins where it ends in *Talking It Over*. Stuart, Oliver and Gillian are seen to reminisce their past life and in their commentary and confessions, the triangle of love shows it self as strong as it is in *Talking It Over*. After accepting the betrayed union of Oliver and Gillian, Stuart goes to USA to test his luck. Meanwhile, Gillian and Oliver can not settle in France for long, they return to London. The real drama begins when Stuart comes on the scene. He returns back to London after spending ten years in USA. He marries in America but the marriage succeeds only for five years. When he comes back, he finds out Gillian at very ease as she serves as a painting restorer. He finds her in her shop as :

When she arrived, she just looked like one of those million girls in black who seem to have sprung up in England while I was away. Black sweater black trousers, square-toed wedgy-heeled shoes, little black backpack, hair dyed the sort of black that doesn't exist in nature. (72)

Due to his passion, Stuart cannot control himself. Although Gillian has betrayed him, he is very eager to meet her. But he is afraid of Oliver; so he meets him first. Then they meet at their home for dinner. He notices that the house is run with Gillian's expenses and Oliver is again unsuccessful. He offers him some financial support. This act can be analysed from Stuart's point of view and that is to give financial protection to Gillian why Stuart offers Oliver the financial aid.

Gillian, on the other hand, makes clear that she loves Oliver, although he has been unsuccessful in his career. But she also accepts that she loved Stuart. Her relation with Oliver is more complicated as Stuart and Oliver are friends. Oliver successfully takes away her from Stuart. She is aware of this, instead of cursing and abusing them, Stuart attends their wedding. Always there is this soft thorn in her heart. She confesses as:

I genuinely loved Stuart. I fell in love with him straightforwardly, simply. We got on the sex worked. I loved the fact that he loved me and that was it. And then, after we were married. (16)

Due to the vacuum and absence of romance, she is attracted to Oliver. Oliver tempts her but she also intentionally promotes him and encourages him to call her and visit her flat.

I fell in love with Oliver, not simply at all, but very complicatedly, entirely against my instincts and my reason. I refused it, I resisted it, I felt intensely guilty. I also felt intensely excited, intensely alive, and intensely sexy. (16)

Gillian's love for two people is the central element of the novel. She loves Stuart and marries him, and then she loves Oliver and gives Stuart divorce. But still, she accepts that she has genuine love for Stuart. *Love* is a complex phenomenon and in *Love, etc.* it appears in different colours and shades. It is a fact that

married men and women are seen involved in extramarital affairs in real life. Some times it is for sex, sometimes for fun, sometimes to show manly or womanly character, sometimes for an excuse, sometimes for an escape & sometimes for love, people are seen involved in more than one person. Ordinary people are unable to analyse the logic behind the move but Gillian strongly defends her love for Stuart and Oliver. She confesses:

The point is, you can love two people, one after the other, one interrupting the other, like I did. You can love them in different ways. And it doesn't mean one love is true and the other is false. That's what I wish I could have convinced Stuart. I loved each of them truly. You don't believe me? Well, it doesn't matter, I no longer argue the case. I just say: it didn't happen to you, did it? It happened to me. (16)

The central theme, love is supported by another theme that is the theme of sex in the novel. Sex is a spontaneous activity which takes place between two persons of opposite sex when they are in love. Secondly, sex which is a neurological by product that becomes a 'must' act to perform even if there is no love. Stuart and Gillian marry each other as they are in love. They are regular to enjoy their pre and post marriage sexual life. Stuart is a masculine husband but he is less romantic. Gillian loves Oliver; but his idea of sex is very different. He hasn't been consistent to perform sex. He thinks, they should lie on bed and do nothing. Gillian makes it clear her idea of sex:

Don't get me wrong. I like sex; so does Oliver and I still like sex with Oliver. He knows what I like and what I want. Orgasm is not a problem we know the best way to get there, for both of us. (60)

Gillian has deep love and attraction for Oliver, so that she enjoys sex with him. Sex becomes an act of 'trust, friendship, understanding, pleasure and love for both of them. They use to have sex in the same way, spending some amount of time, having same positions and they like it. She is aware that in a married life, after few years, you aren't allowed to do anything you haven't done before. She has read all those columns and articles about how to spice up your sex-life. But she knows that life isn't like what you read in those journals and magazines. She makes a personal confession about their sex-life as :

Our sex-life is friendly. Do you know what I mean? Yes, I can see that you do. Perhaps all too well. We're partners in the act. We enjoy one another's company in the act. We do our best for one another, we look after one another in the act. Our sex-life is friendly. I'm sure there are worse things. Much worse. (61)

After the divorce, Stuart goes to America to try his luck. During his stay in America, he has to try sex that is essential to keep himself psychologically, neurologically and physically fit. Stuart also knows that there is no love in the professional relation between a prostitute and her customer. In his case, sex is a necessary act or commodity like food and clothing. He confesses:

I don't remember if I told you at the time, but after my marriage broke up I started paying for sex. I'm not ashamed of it particularly. Other people should be ashamed for treating me the way they did. Prostitutes call their work 'business'. Doing business? The query used to go. I don't know if they still say that I'm out of that world now. (12)

The jealousy is another theme to support the theme of love. The jealousy comes out of betrayal in Love, etc. Stuart is deeply wounded for being betrayed by his wife Gillian and best friend Oliver. After ten years, Stuart's heart bleeds for Gillian. He can not understand why he has been left by Gillian. He had been a successful banker, good looking, caring and protective husband. On the other hand, Oliver had been an unsuccessful professional in his career. He is jealous of Oliver for something mysterious because of which he could steal away Gillian from his life. After spending ten years in America, he returns to London. In this way, the jealousy and betrayal go parallel in Love, etc.

The present generation has been going through different 'isms' and trends like globalization, privatization and liberalization. Basically, these are the terms related to Economics and Finance but their influence on the lives of the millions of people is conspicuous. The split personality and broken mindset are also the products of the above three economic giants. Stuart, Oliver and Gillian can be considered as the victims of the space they have got to live. Stuart loves Gillian and they marry. Oliver enters their life and the marriage breaks. He marries Gillian. It is as if Gillian is an object which is placed for auctioning and Stuart and Oliver are the participants. Greater the amount of the bid the object will be handed over to him.

Gillian also falls victim to the growing influence of the materialistic world. Instead of choosing a lovable, caring and romantic husband. She prefers Stuart who has been successful in his profession as a banker. As a result, the marriage cannot last as Gillian feels an emotional vacuum in her life. After breaking away from Stuart, they cannot settle in a village in France as Oliver can not stand as a teacher. They return to London for economic purposes. In London, she gives birth to two daughter. Being aware of Oliver's nature; Gillian takes an initiative to shoulder the economic responsibilities. She hires a small office, keeps an assistant and works as a painting restorer.

Stuart is able to influence Oliver and Gillian due to his successful American dollar with his return Oliver's failure in his professional life tempts Stuart to make a ditch of the hole but Gillian, who does not want to repeat the past, successfully, handles the situation. The triangle of love in Love, etc has a world view

related to economics.

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