CHAPTER III

THE THEMES
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The novels of B.C. Jyrwa show that certain themes have been chosen by him for each book. It is relevant to examine those themes.

Love as a theme has been used by Khasi story tellers, singers, poets and others from very ancient times. Love as a theme is very popular through great love stories, like the story of "Ka Sohlyngngem", "U Manik Raitong", to name just a few which have found expression in various poems by different authors. According to C.S. Lewis,

Love in our sense of the word is as absent from the literature of the Dark Ages as from that of classical antiquity. Their favorite stories were not like ours, stories of how a man married or failed to marry a woman. They preferred to hear how a holyman went to heaven or how a brave man went to battle.1

He further adds that,

French poets in the eleventh century, discovered or invented, or were the first

to express that romantic species of passion which English poet were still writing about in the nineteenth. They effected a change which has left no corner of our ethics or imagination, or our daily life untouched and they erected impassable barriers between us and the classical past or the oriental present.2

Love is understood by all people irrespective of colour, caste, creed and culture and it is the most popular with poets, dramatists and novelists yet Lewis explained that "in ancient literature love seldom rises above the levels of merry sensuality or domestic comfort except to be treated as a tragic madness".3

In the modern times the theme of love occupies a very important place. This is the main theme of all romantic novels. But according to Rachel Anderson,

"Over the last decade, popular romantic fiction went into a decline. Sale of novels, though still enormous compared to other standard of reading matter, dropped. A recent look at the news-stall on London's main stations showed that although there were plenty of thrillers and novels of violence and of the supernatural, there was no straight popular romantic fiction.4"

Modern times is the time of great achievements in the field of science and technology. Modern man has

2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Ibid.
got plenty of amusement that he can make use of in his leisure time. He can choose from a number of entertainments provided by cinemas, televisions and films that he can watch at home. In spite of this fact,

Alan Boon, director of Mills and Boon, is optimistic about predicting the future prospect of romance: I think that of all categories of fiction, romantic fiction is now the most popular. This is not only in the U.K., but it extends all over the world ... (They are) most successful than any category of British fiction, surely that entitles them to the esteem of people. There are no comparable writers in the world compared to the best of most successful romantic novelists. I think a good romantic novel has to be sincere and also have a wonderful technique. This technique is really impossible to define, but which we can see or recognise when we see it.

Woman's Hour - BBC

Denise Robins, called the 'Queen of Romance' by one of her publishers also remains optimistic:

No matter what winds of change have blown through the world, romance has never changed. At the root it is unalterable. Its source lies in the heart of every human being. The outward presentation may alter at times as fashions do - but it is rather pleasant today for us to realise that there is a definite increase in the demand for romantic literature and that the ugly pornographic vicious trend is fast coming to an end.

Alex Stuart Comments:

I am certain that the romantic novel has a future .... After all, the student protest marcher of today is the responsible
parent of tomorrow; the public must eventually tire of naked sex on stage and printed page, and the 'eternal verities' will still be there for us to write about. Their appeal has endured since the first book was printed.

Rachel Anderson explains:

Popular romantic fiction offers the reader more than just the 'eternal verities' whatever they are. It offers escapism into a rose-coloured world, vicarious experience wishfulfilment and for the bored young mother, even justification for her way of life stuck at home with small children. She is living the 'happily ever after' of falling in love that the romantic novel promised.5

E.M. Forster feels that too much importance is given to love in novels. He writes:

Love you all know how enormously love bulks in novels, and will probably agree with me that it has done more harm and made them monotonous .... If you think of a novel in the vague you think of a love interest - of a man and a woman who want to be united and perhaps succeed. If you think of your own life in the vague, or a group of lives you are left with a different and more complex impression.6

So according to E.M. Forster, novels become monotonous as they go on repeating about love. In real life people may experience moments of passion "but not this constant awareness, this endless readjusting, this ceaseless hunger

5. Ibid., pp. 261-262.
is only the reflections of the novelist's own state of mind while he composes.  

Gilbert Frankau believes that a novelist has a positive duty to write about love:

I hold that love — using the word in its accepted sense — being the forerunner of birth, cannot possibly be excluded from any novel or any story which attempts to depict life whole.

I hold that it is the novelist's duty — even if it be not his pleasure, for there are many things which I personally find far more interesting to write about — to depict love as he sees it at work on the lives of others, and as he feels it at work in his own.

I believe that the novelist who does not study, and constantly, the peculiarly intricate relation between mental and physical aspects of love will never succeed in creating living characters; and his work will be unconvincing, the very worst fault which any literary craftsman's work can display.

Bethea Creese says:

I do believe that people read for entertainment and to get out of their own lives. I think that's one of our purposes. But I think we have another purpose. We can put over good living, and I myself try to do my little bit in a very subtle way to bring people to think of Christ. And Christianity. And I don't do that at all.

7. Ibid., p. 63.
obviously. I do it by — perhaps I might send my heroine to church or make her sing in the Church Choir, or the hero. Well, it might just occur to some girls or some youngmen reading it that it wasn't a bad thing to do.9

What is Love?

In the 'Symposium', Plato has Aristophanes to describe that:

Love is a search for one's other self without which man cannot become whole. Man's original body has been cut in two, each half yearned for the half from which it had been severed. When they met they threw their arms around one another and embraced in their longing to grow together again and they perished of hunger and general neglect of their concerns, because they would not do anything apart.10

Human beings always make an appraisement of one another, ascribe their value by saying that a woman is beautiful and a man handsome. We measure individuals according to our own interest.

The valuative terms that lovers use — "wonderful", "marvellous", "glorious", "grand", "terrific", — bestow value in themselves. They are scarcely capable of describing excellence or reporting on appraisal.11

9. Ibid., p. 275.
Man is always looking for a woman who is perfect for him. As one of Rousseau's character says: "Love did not make me blind to your faults, but it made those faults dear to me".  

Maurice Valency writes:

Love was a madness. A lover's mind could not function properly because the inner image of the beloved absorbed his attention to the exclusion of everything else. Therefore lovers could not be expected to act quite rationally. They might lapse suddenly into a kind of coma, totally abstracted from the world. "Many times", wrote Folquet de Marseille, "people speak to me and I don't know what they say; they greet me and I hear nothing". In the same way Lancelot in the Roman de la Charrette "totally forgets himself and he knows not whether he is alive or dead, forgetting even his own name".

Irving Singer believes that, "for most men it is easier to bestow value upon a beautiful rather than an ugly woman". Considering this fact, love and beauty is synonymous. So if love is synonymous with beauty it means that anyone who is beautiful is love. Almost in every corner of the earth the same standard is used in measuring beauty like for a man he must be fair, tall

12. Ibid., p. 18.
and handsome and for a woman she must look like a fairy. With due apology to Hans Christian Andersen who according to Edmund Gosse was 'the man of genius'. The standard to measure beauty was popularised by the fairy tales of Hans Christian Anderson who always described his princes as tall, fair and handsome and his princesses as beautiful as fairies. This standard of measurement is not confined only to the realm of fiction and imagination but even in real life people try to look for their prince charming or their fairy in accordance to Anderson's description which always proves to be an illusion.

Time and again it has been proved that an angel is always a devil in disguise, so what is seen by our eyes is not real, it is always an illusion. In this case if we say 'seeing is believing' we are totally wrong because whatever we perceive by our eyes is just an illusion. Like at night when we are afraid we may see a snake when in reality it is only a piece of rope. In the same way if we conclude that love is synonymous with beauty we would be disappointed, as beauty fades away with time. So what will happen to love?

The Khasis also employ the same standard in measuring beauty. A handsome young man is always compared to u Nai Khatsaw Synnia\textsuperscript{16} or u sher-Syngkai-bamon-thoh-lai-teng.\textsuperscript{17} From these descriptions it shows that the Khasis also worship beauty. As the physical appearance differs from region to region or from place to place it is a fact that the same standard of measurement cannot be accepted. This fact has clearly been pointed out by P.R.T. Gurdon.

The colour of the Khasi skin may be described as being usually brown, varying from dark to light yellowish brown according to locality. The complexion of the people who inhabit the upland is of a somewhat lighter shade, ... The people of Cherrapunji village are especially fair, the Syntengs of the Jaintia Hills are darker than the Khasi uplanders. The Wars who live in the low valleys are frequently more swarthy than the Khasis. The Bhois khave the flabby-looking yellow skin of the Mikirs and the Lyngngams are darker than the Khasis.\textsuperscript{18}

To conclude that the Khasis worship beauty or to say that the Khasis believe that beauty is love is very wrong as it is a proven fact of life that beauty


\textsuperscript{17} Frank M. Pugh, Ka Prosidi Bad Ka Retorik, (Shillong, 1984), p. 85.

always fades away within a very short time but love does not end as soon as beauty fades away. To the Khasis beauty does not mean only a beautiful face as they believe that a beautiful face often hides a wicked heart. So they appreciate the inner beauty which is the beauty of the soul.

Irving Singer explains:

When the lover tells his sweetheart it is not that she is fair or true or has golden hair and eyes of blue, he announces that he loves her as a person. He does not love her for the sake of her beauty or goodness.... Neither has he reason himself into loving her, as an aesthetician might give reason for finding her beautiful, or a moralist for calling her good or noble. His love is an emotional attachment, imaginative bestowal over and beyond appraisal. But all this is quite different from saying that he loves the lady because she's she. That makes it sound as if the delicacy of her complexion and the blueness of her eyes had nothing to do with his loving her, which is not unlikely. In the world of human beings, affections are casually related to the search for values - even though they cannot be defined in terms of it. Sometimes the values are objective, sometimes individual; they vary from culture to culture and person to person; but they are all a function of some need or desire and underlie whatever bestowals eventuate in love. A pretty face naturally disposes us toward the person who is lucky enough to have it. If a lover denies its attraction, he is probably deceiving himself. Perhaps he means to play down the beauty of his beloved in order to glorify her good heart and lovely disposition. That makes sense, since these are generally more valuable than the features of a face.19

He further adds.

If all those endearing young charms were to vanish and fade away, would not the greatest of human loves vanish with them? We have every reason to think so — unless the lover cultivated new needs and desires, interests that could be satisfied by attributes of the beloved other than those that have died in the hourglass. 20

But beauty is not the same thing as love, while beauty fades away love is everlasting. Beauty therefore does not necessarily mean love. Love is not infatuation as this is not everlasting, it is only an imagination that soon passes away. True love is a kind of love which endures even when beauty fades away. Robert Seymour Bridges explains:

Love from whom the world begun,
Hath the secret of the sun.
Love can tell and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own.
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life, and sweet is breath. 21

According to Sir Walter Scott:

True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
The silver link, the silken tie.
Which heart to heart and mind to mind
In the body and in soul can bind. 22

20. Ibid., p. 150.
Love is a feeling that comes from the heart and it expresses itself through words and actions. It inspires hope and fills the young hearts with emotion. Love is a force which inspires and energises someone who loves to achieve greater deeds irrespective of social standing. "True lovers know", wrote N'At de Mons in a typical passage "that through love the haughty became humble and the base are ennobled, and the lazy become skilled, and the simple, wise."\(^{23}\)

Plato defined "love as a desire for the perpetual possession of the good".\(^{24}\)

He outlines several stages through which the ideal lover must pass. In the symposium he enumerates five of them.

At the outset the lover, being young, will apply himself to the contemplation of physical beauty. He will fall in love with one particular person, whose outward form he finds especially attractive. But attractive how? sexually? visually? Plato does not say, but the relationship cannot be merely sexual. For he speaks of the young lovers begetting noble sentiments, "fair thoughts", in the company of one another. In any event, the tie of love is ephemeral at this stage. By moving


from one beautiful person to another, the lover comes to see that physical beauty is not limited to anyone beloved. He will then become a lover of physical beauty in general, much as a painter might be. Not that Plato is interested in the growth of aesthetic sensibility for its own sake. He directs the lover toward all the occasions of physical beauty in order to liberate him more effectively from anyone of them. The man who loves all physical beauty "will relax the intensity of his passion for one particular person, because he will realize that such a passion is beneath him and of small account."

At the next stage the lover comes to realize that beauty of the soul is more valuable than beauty of the body. This will enable him to appreciate men who are good and beautiful even if their external appearance is unattractive. In the company of these virtuous souls, the lover will move on to a still higher stage, which is the level of social and moral beauty. Here we will contemplate the beauty of institutions and noble activities. This in turn will lead him to the study of science and acquisition of knowledge. At this fourth stage he will finally free himself from any undue attachment to an individual instance of beauty—whether of body, soul, or society. In his love of wisdom the man who has advanced this far will bring to birth "many beautiful and magnificent sentiments and ideas, until at last, strengthened and increased in stature by his experience, he catches sight of one unique science whose object is the beauty of which I am about to speak."

That beauty is absolute beauty. It culminates the mysteries of love as it also reveals the nature of the universe. Words cannot do it justice, and yet:

This beauty is first of all eternal; it neither comes into being nor passes away, neither waxes
nor wanes; next, it is not beautiful in part and ugly in part, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in this relation and ugly in that, nor beautiful here and ugly there, as varying according to its beholders; nor again will this beauty appear to him like the beauty of a thought or a science, or like beauty which has its seat in something other than itself, be it a living thing or the earth or the sky or anything else whatever; he will see it as absolute, existing alone with itself, unique, eternal, and all other beautiful things as partaking of it, yet in such a manner that while they come into being and pass away, it neither undergoes any increase or diminution nor suffers any change.25

In our age Platonism survives in the philosophy of George Santayana. For Santayana, as for Plato, all love worthy of the name must have an 'ideal object'. Lovers seek in one another the embodiment of "an ideal form essentially eternal and capable of endless embodiments".26

The idea of love as a religion had preoccupied Shakespeare as early as Romeo and Juliet. Their death brings peace among those who had felt only hatred for one another. Romeo and Juliet become saints to their coun-


26. Ibid., p. 26
trymen. The suffering of the young couple serves as a Christ-like sacrifice eliminating evil by means of love.  

Shakespeare further explains that beauty is not eternal.

It occurs as a happy accident in nature and lasts within a sharply delimited period of time. Love is an ideal for him not in discovering a beauty that never dies but rather in awakening a constancy of attachment that survives despite the inevitable loss of beauty.  

He went on to describe that:

Love involves constancy in two respects: first, in remaining faithful although the beauties of youth — "rosy lips and cheeks" — are cut down by time's destroying sickle; and second, in not altering even when alteration has occurred in the beloved's affection.  

So love is not merely satisfaction of the instincts as it is not its base or zenith. Henry Fielding explains:

That there is in some (I believe in many) human Breasts a kind and benevolent Disposition which is gratified by contributing to the Happiness of others. That in this Gratification alone, as in Friendship, parental and filial Affection, as indeed

29. Ibid.
in general Philanthropy, there is a great and exquisite Delight. That if we will not call such Disposition love, we have no Name for it. That though the Pleasures arising from such pure Love may be heightened and sweetened by the Assistance of amorous Desires, yet the former can subsist alone, nor are they destroyed by the intervention of the latter. Lastly, that Esteem and Gratitude are the proper Motives to Love, as Youth and Beauty are to Desire, and, therefore, though such Desire may naturally cease, when Age of Sickness overtakes its Object, yet these can have no Effect on Love, nor ever shake or remove, from a good Mind, that Sensation or Passion which had Gratitude and Esteem for its Basis.30

So, according to Fielding, love is a feeling of satisfaction which comes from the contribution to the happiness of others and it is based on gratitude and esteem not on sex alone. Love affects all aspects of human life, his relationship with God as well as his relation with the environment.

Love in a wider sense is a force which binds together the emotions, thoughts and souls of two individuals or more in spite of all complexities and individual differences. Love may result from affection and tender emotion towards fellow beings, animals and things. It manifests itself in different forms according to the different

situations with its varying degree of intensity. So we may say that love is made up of many things. As the popular song says 'Love is a many splendoured thing'.

Encyclopaedia of Psychology explains that:

Most researchers agree that 'love' comes in different forms. Zick Rubin (1973) distinguishes between liking and loving. "Romantic love comprises such elements as responsibility for the other, tenderness, self disclosure and exclusivity. In contrast, liking is an attraction for the other that includes respect and the perception that the other is similar to oneself".31

In my attempt to examine love as a theme used by B.C. Jyrwa in his novels, special attention will be devoted to:

1. Romantic love.
2. Platonic love.
3. Marital love.
4. Filial love.
5. Brotherly love.

Romantic Love

Romantic love is a feeling of tenderness between a boy and a girl or a man and a woman. Webster Dictionary

defines romantic as "having no basis in fact: imaginary". 32 So this type of love is not a real love or true love. It may come to an end at any time when it meets any obstacle. Out of the four novels understudy one of them clearly highlights this theme. In U Khain Bad Ka Ngen, the author depicts a romantic love between the hero and heroine. Love at first sight has attracted both of them. The lovers meet at the market place and subsequently it is on their meeting by the river side that they reveal their love for one another. They then decide to inform their respective parents. The love that these young people have is cut short by the opposition of Khain's parents as Ngen is the only daughter of a poor family.

One night while relaxing with his parents Khain expresses his love for Ngen. The idea of marriage is turned down by his mother who feels that it is too early and moreover Ngen is a poor girl.

He further states, so next morning Khain was sent off with his father to look after their property at War area. 33 In reality parents seldom stand in the way of their children's happiness because of the difference in

financial position. But Khain's mother very un-Khasi like puts an end to their love just because her son loved a girl belonging to a poor family. According to the Khasi custom, a marriage can materialise only when the Kur and the Kha* consent. To the Khasis marriage is sacred, it cannot take place in private as children born out of this union would be looked down by the society.

Platonic Love

The Everyman Encyclopaedia defines Platonic love as the affection between two persons that is free from sexual desire that is a striving after the infinite and a lowly adoration of the perfect beauty.34 In the novel U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai, Jyrwa describes this kind of love. Bhakupar the hero who is a doctor is closely associated with a lady doctor who is working at the same hospital. Both of them are employed in Roberts' Hospital. For two years they have been working together helping and understanding each other. The affection they have is free from any physical involvement. Though the author has not described any physical relationship yet love is the basis of their relationship. This type of love is known as

* In a Khasi society, which is a matrilineal society the children belong to the family of the mother known as the kur, their relation with the kha or the blood relatives of the father's side is considered sacred in the society.

Platonic love. The idea of marriage between the two comes from the foster parents of Bhakupar (p. 114). Though the Khasis do not believe in arranged marriage but to receive the consent and blessing of the parents is in conformity with tradition. The author propagates the idea of Platonic love as a strong base for a lasting marriage.

Marital Love

By marital love we mean the love which begins by mutual attraction of person of opposite sex. A kind of love that can only be fulfilled by marriage. In U Pyrkhat, Jyrwa describes this kind of love. It is love at first sight which attracts the hero and the heroine. Pyrkhat the hero meets Bakor, a medical student for the first time at the end of a college function. The love that they have for one another continues to grow even though they have to separate temporarily to pursue their respective studies. Their love is kept alive by the love letters they exchange. After having completed their studies they get married. The author writes:

In the month of December of that year Pyrkhat decided to get engaged, with the consent of his parents, uncles and relatives. Their main aim was to get ample time to prepare for the wedding which they proposed to hold on January the following year when it would be convenient for all. (p. 137).
This practice of choosing one's life partner is in accordance with the Khasi philosophy. The couple have the liberty to choose one's life partner as they are the ones who would have to spend their entire life with one another. The intervention of the parents and the relatives comes only to prevent the couple from committing acts strictly forbidden as ka sang ka ma. Through this novel Jyrwa is trying to propagate this type of marriage.

In the same novel the author mentions that the hero, Pyrkhat, has already loved a girl belonging to a poorer family. He left her as soon as he meets a girl from a richer family who would soon become a doctor so that he could enjoy a happy married life. The author also mentions that Pyrkhat's mother is against the idea of her son marrying a girl from a poorer family.

As a preacher of Khasi philosophy Jyrwa wants to preach to his readers that whatever God plans it will be. So the mortals on their part whatever precautions they may take will not be able to change His plan. That must be the reason why the author makes the hero suffer by the untimely death of his wife.

In U Kynjri Ksiar, the author describes a very rare life experience where Sharai the heroine meets Juban the hero shortly after her husband's death and after a brief meeting she becomes his wife. The author compares the fall of Juban to that of Samson in the hands of Delilah (p. 32). Jyrwa justifies his view that though the couple were driven by animal passion yet their marriage is their need for one another.

Jyrwa, a true believer in Khasi philosophy believes that a marriage cannot materialise without the consent of the parents and the relatives so he separates both of them. Juban the hero is jailed on the charge of theft because Sharai dare not claim him as her husband. The reason is: they are not properly married. The author mentions that in so doing Sharai does not get any peace of mind as her guilty conscience pricks her. It is through her guilty conscience and by the help of her uncle that Juban gets back his freedom. The author's comment: "Grief stricken Sharai turned towards her uncle and seeing him wiping his tears broke her. She confessed that she had betrayed a good and honest man" (p. 68). As soon as Juban becomes a freeman and with the consent of Sharai's relatives once again they live happily as man and wife. The author remarks: "As soon as the visitors left, the couple
sat down to recall the bygone days and started a new life right from that night" (p. 76).

**Filial Love**

The theme of filial love can be seen in all of Jyrwa's novels. Filial love is a love from children towards their parents or those having a similar status. As parents love their children so children should reciprocate their love. Filial love is a lasting love. Through his novels Jyrwa aims at propagating the value of good morality and wants the children to obey their parents.

In *U Khain Bad Ka Ngen*, the hero and heroine have to sacrifice their love for one another in order to fulfil Khain's parents wish. The author vividly describes that both of them spend the rest of their life in pain and sorrow as they had to part forever as a result of parents opposition. The author writes:

> One night when Khain and his parents were relaxing Khain told them about his feelings for Ngen. To this his mother told him that she had heard about it but it was too early to think about marriage and felt that he should think in terms of building up the family wealth. At the same time she showed her displeasure because Ngen was the only daughter of a poor family. (p. 110)

He further states, "So the next morning Khain was sent
off with his father to look after their property at War area" (p. 113). Though heart-broken Khain does not oppose his parents' wish and as a true Khasi gentleman prefers to live a secluded life rather than break the solemn vows that he had made to Ngen.

The parents believe that what they had done was right but it never occurred to them that in so doing they had lost their son forever. From the time he goes to Ri War, or the southern slopes of Khasi Hills he does not try to meet his close friends or his beloved Ngen. Ngen's parents advise her to forget the richman as he may look down on her. Tortured by unexplained absence of Khain and her parents opposition makes Ngen shut herself away from the world.

In *U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai*, Bhakupar the hero of the novel has a harmonious relationship with his foster parents. He is a loving son who is always obedient, grateful and polite. This has been proved by his letters from Dibrugarh Medical College and his attitude towards them at home. He shows great love and respect for his aunts and uncles (p. 78). The knowledge that he is only a foster son to Sbun and Hajar comes as a shock to him, at the same time he cannot believe that his own mother could abandon him.
This infuriates him as he believes that it is impossible for a mother to do such a dreadful thing. The foster parents pacify him and go on to explain the circumstances which led to his adoption by them (p. 90).

He then expresses his desire of seeing his real mother and they all agree to put in all efforts to trace her whereabouts, as many years had gone by (p. 91). Eventually it so happens that it is in the same hospital where Bhakupar is born and abandoned, later works as a doctor and finally meets his mother (p. 148). Great joy prevailed in the reunion between the mother and son. Though his mother did not offer any excuses for her act yet they are content to forget whatever had happened in the past.

It is the moral duty of Bhakupar to look after his sick and aged mother. At the same time it is also his duty to look after his foster parents and to solve this problem he sends his own sister to look after them.

In U Kynjri Ksiar, the author describes a close relationship between an uncle and a niece. No mention is made of the parents or close relatives of either Juban the hero or Sharai the heroine of the novel. However, in the court scene the author says that the relatives of Sharai warn her not to defame her family and her clan.
by admitting that she knows him and that he is her husband (p. 63). So out of fear she denies in front of the law that Juban is her husband, whom she loves and married secretly on the night shortly after her late husband was murdered (p. 32). The court condemns Juban to ten years imprisonment but Sharai does not get any peace of mind as her conscience pricks her and she loses all appetite for food and drink. Her behaviour worries her relatives and they intimate her senior uncle, Shot, whom she loves and respects.

In U Pyrkhat, the hero Pyrkhat and the heroine Bakor have a very close relationship with their parents. Both of them are obedient, polite and loving. The author mentions that the hero has to leave his girl friend because his mother is against the idea of her son marrying a girl from a poor family. Eventually he meets a girl from a rich family. As soon as both of them complete their studies, Pyrkhat decides to get engaged, with the consent of his parents, uncles and relatives (p. 137). They then wed with the consent of their relatives.

Instead of saying that 'they lived happily ever after' the author goes on to describe that soon after the wedding Bakor became sick and after a brief illness, expired.
Jyrwa as a propagandist of good moral conduct at the same time warns the children not to submit blindly to their parents' wish but use their reasoning power as well. He also warns parents not to use wealth as an important criteria in deciding the happiness of their children. To clarify this he gives a clear description of the suffering that Khain and Ngen had to undergo just because they submitted to their parents' wish.

In the same way Pyrkhat also had to suffer in the death of his wife even though he had submitted to his parents' wish.

Brotherly Love

By brotherly love we mean kindness, generosity, selflessness, self denial and understanding that binds every individual closer to one another. In *U Kyrdoh Mawlynnaj*, Jyrwa describes about the brother-sister relationship. Bhakupar the hero of the novel has two sisters though they are not from the same father, yet love binds them together. Bhakupar is responsible for their welfare and well-being and it is their moral responsibility to submit to his guidance and command. He is obligated to look after his foster parents in their old age but the problem arises with the appearance of his own mother and sisters on the scene. As he could not leave his own mother and sisters
he sent one of his own sisters to look after his foster parents (p. 149).

Suffering

Suffering is another theme that has been used by Khasi story tellers, singers, poets and others from the very beginning. Suffering as a theme is as popular as love in all great love stories. Great love stories are also stories of suffering as it has been proved in "Ka Sohlyngngem", "U Manik Raitong", "Ka Saia, Nongum", "U Tngam Bad Ka Wanduh" by various writers. Love and suffering are the two sides of the same coin. S. Miri observes:

If love is the ultimate meaning of human existence, then the indissoluble connection between human beings will invariably broadcast, throughout the whole web of life, messages of pain and suffering as well as of joy and well being. If God had made each human being separate and isolated from his fellows, men would have been spared much suffering but they would also have been deprived of the depths of fellowship in which lies the ultimate meaning of blessedness.36

Suffering is universal, it appears in many forms in all living beings and even animals suffer in their own way. C.S. Lewis explains, "The creatures cause pain by being

born and live by inflicting pain and in pain they mostly die". According to Lewis, suffering is life and life itself is full of pain and suffering. According to S. Miri,

In man, the most complex of all creatures, a quality called reason appears whereby he is enabled to foresee his own pain which henceforth is preceded with mental suffering. Animals lack the awareness that anticipates suffering and death. (This accounts for the fact that, animals, even when they are capable of pain, do not have the problem of pain. It is for man that the problem of suffering exists, and as long as man thinks of animals as self-conscious creatures the problem will be generated for them as well).38

So, according to this explanation every living being suffers; but the pain that accompanies suffering varies with the degrees of awareness. Suffering is more intense in man as he is a rational animal. Now the question arises — when did suffering come into existence? To answer this question, S. Miri explained that, "The problem of suffering is as old as human existence".39 Suffering is an experience which may affect man at any stage. S. Miri explains:

38. S. Miri, op.cit., p. 11.
Suffering, being a mental state, is a personal experience. There are however, two senses in which this can be understood. Taken in one way, it merely expresses the logical fact that the notion of a mental state can be identified at all only by reference to the particular person whose state it is. But taken in another way it is a specific statement about the notion of suffering. Suffering is a "Self-fish" state, when we suffer we are full of ourselves and want other people to think of us in pity and kindness.40

Human suffering may be 'physical pain' or 'mental pain' and this again varies in intensity. It affects all irrespective of age, class, sex and religious belief. Very often we come across cases were grown ups suffer less than small children and where the innocent suffer more than the guilty. These are questions that we always try to get an answer. S. Miri observes man may be characterized as a being in quest of a meaning of life in spite of failures and frustrations he continues to be haunted by that irresponsible quest. Suffering reveals the inadequacy of the world. All historic faiths and all deep personal faiths spring from a realization of this inadequacy. Linked closed with the fact of suffering is the concept of salvation or liberation from misery. Religious consciousness particularly springs from the realization that it is the unfinished and unsatisfactory nature of the world that

40. Ibid., p. 10.
gives man his clearest sense of God. A somewhat similar idea was expressed by C.S. Lewis as follows:

"Until the evil man finds evil unmistakably present in his existence in the form of pain he is enclosed in illusion; once pain has roused him he knows that he is in some way or other up against the real universe; he either rebels or else makes some attempt at adjustment which if pursued will lead him to religion." 41

So according to this explanation, man must suffer so that he can come closer to God. If there is no suffering in this world man will not try to attain salvation or liberation from misery. Suffering exists with the permission of God. S. Miri observes:

"The value of suffering as discipline is one of the major themes of the Book of Job. Sinners suffer as punishment for their sins, but saints must bear affliction as the design of an inscrutable providence to test and strengthen the quality of retribution." 42

This explains that even the saints are not free from suffering rather they suffer more. Leibniz explains:

"It is a false maxim that happiness of rational creatures is the sole purpose of God. If that had been so, there would, 41. Ibid., p. 16. 42. Ibid., p. 19."
perhaps, have been neither sin nor unhappiness, not even as concomitants. God would have chosen a set of possibles from which all evils were excluded. But he would have fallen short of what is due to the universe, that is, what is due to himself.... It is true that one can imagine possible worlds without sin and without suffering, just as one can imagine romances about utopias or about the sevarambas; but these worlds would be much inferior to ours. I cannot show this in detail; you must infer it as I do, since this world, as it is, is the world God chose.... Virtue is the noblest quality of created things, but it is not the only good quality of creatures. There is an infinite variety of others that attract the inclination of God; it is from all these inclinations taken together that the greatest possible sum of good results; and there would be less good than there is, if there were nothing but virtue, if only rational creatures existed....43

Referring to the above study on suffering I will examine how far the theme is reflected in the novels of B.C. Jyrwa. First of all I will examine how the innocent people suffer for no fault of their own.

In U Khain Bad Ka Ngen the main characters suffer. Khain and Ngen who love one another have to part because the parents of Khain are against the idea of their son marrying the only daughter of a poor family. Instead,
they want their son to build up their family wealth and to marry someone from a rich family (p. 110).

The suffering that Khain and Ngen had to undergo is imposed on them by Khain's parents. The author describes them as spending the rest of their lives in pain and sorrow as they had to part forever.

The sorrow of Ngen is further revealed by the author when he describes the situation she is in and the circumstances that prevent her from attending her best friend's marriage. Even though Ngen is able to hear the merry making at her friend's house, which is close by, her mind is occupied in recollecting events of the past which drives her even further into despair and pity. Her suffering continues for weeks and then months and eventually she shuts herself away from the material world (p. 136).

The suffering of Khain is revealed during the conversation between Rang, Dit and Reit. Rang tells them about his last meeting with Khain when he had gone to visit the latter to secure his assurance to be the best man at his wedding. It is in this meeting Rang tells them, that, even he as a man, got carried away when Khain expressed his feelings and true love for Ngen but which unfortu-
nately does not meet with his parents' approval. He added that Khain seemed to be in a different world altogether while talking about Ngen, which clearly shows the state of his mind (p. 137).

This sort of suffering is meaningless and serves no purpose for the hero and the heroine except to show that they are heart broken and undergoing mental suffering. Suffering is a mystery as Donald A. Lowerie observes:

> There is evil that cannot lead to good, there is suffering of the innocent, the tragic fate of the just, of the righteous; in this world and prophets are stoned to death and the evil triumphs ... Is God's Providence active in this world? This is reason's question ... suffering is a mystery.44

Considering the fact that the setting of this novel is in the rural areas of ancient times with old values it is doubtful that this sort of opposition could have taken place at that time. The reader may accept this point if this novel is set in the urban area of the modern times when this sort of opposition can occur as a result of cultural contact. In the Khasi society the parents seldom stand in the way of happiness of their children just because of the difference in material wealth. It seems that the

author is influenced by the story of "Ka Sohlyngngcm". H.W. Sten explains:

Sohlyngngem literally means the imperial pigeon found in the Khasi Hills. The bird is personified so as to possess the qualities of man. Sohlyngngem is the only daughter of her parents. She is depicted as modest and correct till she meets Rynniaw (a black bird with long feathers) with whom she falls in love. Both the young birds love each other and go steady for some time. Occasionally they visit quiet places where they share their secrets and decide to get married some day. As a docile daughter, Sohlyngngem tells her mother of her plan to marry her boy-friend. Neither of her parents is happy that their daughter should marry a son of rich parents lest he ill-treat her later. This breaks the heart of the daughter and makes her cry. One day she tells this to her beloved. The boy takes a decision quickly which is that he does not like to displease the girl's parents. They kiss each other, and the boy flies upward proudly announcing what he has done with the girl.

In *U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai* and *U Kynjri Ksiar*, suffering manifests itself in a different form. Though in these two novels, as it happens in the case of *U Khain Bad Ka Ngen* suffering is imposed upon the characters from outside yet the sufferings of the characters in *U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai* and *U Kynjri Ksiar* do not last long as Jyrwa shows that

after some time their suffering comes to an end and once again they enjoy a happy life.

According to S. Miri:

Virtue grows to its maturity because of its discipline through pain. If there is no suffering and evil, it is urged, there would be no victory over evil and no character, only animal behaviour and instinctive action. If the world was so created where the natural laws were continually adjusted for the avoidance of all pain, the more heroic virtues would have never been evoked.46

In U Kynjri Ksia the suffering of Juban the hero is imposed upon him by Sharai's relatives who make her deny her beloved in court. Juban suffers now mentally for such an eventuality. If at all he deserves it, it may be because of the haste he has taken to marry her while riding in a pony cart. The author can very clearly clarify this. To describe Juban's suffering, the author writes:

At that particular moment Juban is so shocked that he loses all sense of awareness. As he cannot challenge the court without proper witnesses he is sentenced to ten years imprisonment on the belief that he is one of the murderers of Sharai's former husband or he may be the thief who went to sell the golden necklace. (p. 63).

Sharai also is made to suffer. The author writes:

The moment Sharai leaves the court house her appearance changes because her conscience accuses her. She has no appetite and cannot sleep (p. 67).

It is through her guilty conscience and the help of her uncle that Juban gets back his freedom. She confesses to her uncle that she has betrayed a good and honest man. As soon as Juban becomes a free man, and with the consent of Sharai's relatives, they once again live happily as man and wife. The author writes:

As soon as the visitors leave, the couple sit down and recall the bye-gone days and start a new life right from that night (p. 76).

In this case the suffering of the lovers is temporary; only for 15 years. In the first edition, the work ended with Juban staying in jail. After the author visited his fellow author, H.W. Sten in 1985, and after listening to Sten's argument, Jyrwa freed Juban from jail only in 1986. The sequence of time has not properly been recorded in the novel. It is unfortunate for the generations to come that Jyrwa fails to record the reasons of changes in the novel.

In U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai, Bhakupar's mother suffers
because her husband is a drunkard and an irresponsible man who neglects his wife. This is revealed by her during a conversation with fellow patients in the maternity ward (p. 9). Her husband did not even care for his wife and continues in that style even at the time of childbirth when he prefers to get drunk rather than look after his wife and child. The author writes:

Adkar's elder brother who is the woman's husband wants to pacify his friend who has left in a hurry and eventually it so happens that they end up in a bar at Jaiaw Langsning (pp. 3f).

The authors further adds:

The hours and days go by yet the husband does not visit the hospital. One day the senior nurse tells the woman to inform her relatives. With the permission of the senior nurse she goes to her own and her husband's relatives to request for assistance, but since everyone refuses, though heart-broken, she does not go back to the hospital. At the same time she remembers the incident about the abandoned female non-Khasi child told by the senior nurse and she thinks that that is the only possible way left for her. She knows that it is not possible for her to earn a living and to look after the child at the same time. Yet people are going to label her a woman of loose character, while others might even call her a heartless woman with selfish motives. Alone in her world of suffering she has no one to turn to. At last she reaches the house of a close friend who filled with surprise and pity lets her stay with her (pp. 1ff).
But her sufferings do not last long as the author shows that they are atoned by the flow of events that take place later in her life.

First, when her son is being taken for baptism by the foster parents. The author comments:

As soon as they step out of the car the spectators move nearer to get a closer look while the photographer takes pictures of the smiling child. The mother who stands with the onlookers gazes lovingly with a feeling of remorse and it fills her with tears of joy. Some of the spectators who happen to see her are surprised and one of them even remarks to her friend that she may be the real mother of the child (p. 34).

Another incident which changes her life is when she marries another man who takes care of her and she bears him two daughters. The author writes:

To make the long story short — after working in Bhoi area for sixteen years, they bought a paddy field, built their own house there and lived happily with their two daughters (p. 46).

The final event is when she becomes sick and is admitted to a hospital. There she is treated by a doctor who happens to be her own son. The author writes:

Bhakupar introduces his foster parents to his real mother. Then his mother thanked them for raising him to his present position. (p. 148).
In *U Pyrkhat* and *U Kynjri Ksiar*, Jyrwa depicts suffering in the form of death which is inevitable for all living things. Death may come after a long suffering or it may come suddenly in the form of an accident; but it always affects those who are near and dear as a void is created and they are filled with grief and sorrow which takes a long time to heal. The book of Romans assures —

> that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.47

This assurance removes even the acute pain of death.

In *U Pyrkhat* the hero suffers when his wife becomes very sick and eventually dies. He is left only with his infant son. The author comments: "Grief stricken and heart-broken Pyrkhat could not even cry". (p. 164).

In *U Kynjri Ksiar* the author highlights the suffering of Phylla as well. According to the novel, Phylla possesses supernatural powers that enable him to foresee future events but cannot do anything to stop them from taking place. In this story Phylla suffers as he foresees his son's death but cannot prevent it. The author reveals the suffering of Phylla through a conversation with Juban.

Phylla tells Juban with a heavy heart (about the event that is going to take place) that whatever is going to happen will be a heart break to his family. But as Juban wants to know he discloses it to him and hopes that he accepts it and keeps it to himself. (pp. 12f).

Thus, we find in the four novels examined that human suffering is of the following nature: (1) suffering predestinated by God against man from which man is a helpless sufferer, (2) suffering imposed by other persons on the victims, which in the novels examined are mental in nature. There is no evidence of suffering as being self-inflicted.

Power

According to The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 'power' means 'influence', 'control', and 'domination'.

R.H. Tawney defines 'power' as:

The capacity of an individual or group of individuals, to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups in the manner in which he (the power holder) desires.

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Power manifests itself in various forms and situations. Examples are when an employer discharges an employee for misconduct; or when a politician influences the course of election or public policy and legislation; or when an army general or revolutionary leader overthrows the established government and sets up another government; or when a 'great power' influences the policies and actions of a small nation through the use of economic and other pressures or the threat of force. In a society people are always subject to political and social power.

Political power means the power used by the State apparatus and those who have this power are the real rulers who have control over the government. They have the authority of making the decisions and policies of the government.

As a society is made up by a group of people who come into contact with one another naturally conflicts and contradictions may arise. To resolve them and to maintain peace and harmony in society the need of power arises. Ajit Roy states:

The State which is a political power in the developed form arises only in the course of the rise of the classes and of the struggles among them. Refuting the Hegelian idealist view of the State as 'the reality of the ethnical idea'
or 'the image and reality of reason', Engels showed that it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonism which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society become necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of keeping it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the State.50

The state carries out its functions and purpose through the machinery of the government. Government enacts, interprets and executes the laws of the state. A branch of the Government, called the Legislature, makes enactments which are known as 'laws'. These enactments deal with the various aspects of the social life of the citizens which are meant to secure the common good of all. When these laws are formulated and passed by the legislature, they are put into action by another branch of the Government called the Executive. Anyone who disobeys the laws are tried and punished by another branch of the Government.

called the Judiciary, which safeguards and interprets the laws. J.W. Garner writes:

In all countries the judicial tribunals are of two kinds: first, those which may be called the ordinary or regular courts whose normal function is the decision of legal controversies between individuals and the trial of criminal cases; and second, those which may be classified as extraordinary or special courts. In the latter category may be placed the administrative courts, military, commercial and industrial courts, labour and arbitration courts, courts of claims, conciliation courts, probate courts, customs courts, courts of impeachment, consular courts and various others. A good many of those in this latter category exercise only what is known as voluntary or non-contentious jurisdiction. 51

In U Kynjri Ksiar, Jyrwa mentions about the political power when he describes that the C.I.D. are on the look out for the suspects. The author writes:

The C.I.D. on getting information from the village, spy on their movements, before they could prove whether or not they are the suspects (p. 53).

The maintenance of peace or law and order depends on the efficient working of the police. The police has two branches: the uniformed police and the C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) in plain clothes. The main function

of the CID is to investigate serious crimes and activities of the individuals, secret groups and associations. The C.I.D. helps the ordinary police in locating the culprit. J.C. Curry explains:

C.I.D. is to deal with organised crime and with modern forms of crimes. These are both beyond the power of police force organised on a purely local basis that is to say on the basis of the police station....52

The author further describes that as soon as Juban, the hero, goes to sell the golden necklace he is caught red-handed and jailed. The next day he is tried in the court; as he does not convince the court with proper witnesses and because Sharai, the heroine, denies that he is her husband he is sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

Here the author points to the law and order situation prevailing in the state. Every member of the state must abide by the rules laid down by the government and anyone who goes against the rules is liable to be punished. The judges try cases in their courts and on the basis of their judgement lies the fate of the wrongdoer who may become a free man or remain in prison.

In the same novel the author mentions about the

people who possess supernatural power. These people are
supposed to be able to make a prophesy. Chamber's Twentieth
Century Dictionary defines 'prophesy' as, "Power to fore­
tell, to predict, to exhort to expound religious sub­
jects". 53

According to the Mysteries of the Unexplained,
"Prophesy is usually thought of as being inspired by God
or gods or other spiritual beings of an elevated kind
...."54 To employ the supernatural, Jyrwa gets the idea
from the English Romantics. Coleridge in the Lyrical
Ballads (1798) writes:

In this idea originate the plan of the
Lyrical Ballads; in which it was agreed
that my endeavour should be directed to
persons and characters supernatural, or
at least romantic; yet so as to transfer
our inward nature a human interest and
a semblance of truth sufficient to procure
for these shadows of imagination that
willing suspension of disbelief, which
constitute poetic faith. 55

Jyrwa mentions about Phylla and Kyrmen as people
who can make a prophesy but he does not explain how they

53. Rev. Thomas Davidson (Compiler), Chamber's Twentieth
Century Dictionary, (London: W & R Chambers Ltd.,

54. Carrol C. Calkins (Project Editor), Mysteries of the
Unexplained, (New York: Readers' Digest Association,

55. S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, (London: Every­
acquired such power. Juban remarks that he could not help wondering as to how everything came to pass just as Phylla had predicted. He is convinced that Phylla could foretell the fortunes of any person that he came across just by talking to him or by looking at his forehead (p. 3).

Phylla directs Juban to go to Kyrmen if he wants to know more about his future. He describes him as the owner of a blacksmithy workshop situated at Mawkdok (p. 4).

Social Power

Social power is an important aspect of social interaction. It plays an important role in determining the relationship among the members of groups. In groups, some members are more powerful than others. According to H.M. Johnson:

Power is the ability to get one's wishes carried out despite opposition, if any. In any process of interaction, some participants usually have more power than others.56

So in every society there is always a class distinction accompanied by status, prestige and power. The possession of wealth determines the class that a person occupies in the society. Ogburn and Nimkoff explain:

As material goods increase in volume, however, conditions become more favourable for the creation of classes. Accumulated wealth is not distributed evenly, but accrues to some more than to others. Wealth means power, that is command over services and goods and is accompanied by respect and influence.57

In U Pyrkhat, the main character, Pyrkhat, is a lawyer. The writer remarks:

In the month of November, Pyrkhat was extremely busy with the unending visit of people with court cases which sometimes compelled his mother to remind him of the time for food. Friends and neighbours never got a chance to visit him. So his father, one day reminds him that he should economise his mental and physical powers lest it affects his health (p. 117).

Pyrkhat's wife, Bakor, is a lady doctor. This is revealed by the heroine herself when the people come to enquire about the doctor (p. 114).

Regarding Pyrkhat's father, the author does not mention clearly about his occupation, but it seems he held a high post. This is mentioned by Pyrkhat's father himself when the teacher on a visit to their house enquires why he arrive home so late. The father replies that his work takes a lot of his time as he has to work from morning

till night. To this the teacher replies saying that it is necessary for those holding a high post (p. 110).

The author clearly shows that the marriage between Pyrkhat, the hero and Bakor, the heroine, is a marriage between two equals in social standing. H.M. Johnson writes:

The decisive mark of class equality between families is the fact that they will accept one another's children in marriage without feelings on either side that the match is socially inappropriate. 58

To prove this point Jyrwa describes the feelings of Pyrkhat's mother when she opposes the love that her son has for another girl belonging to a poor family. The author's description:

I feel he has taken the right decision instead of marrying into a poor family where he would have to struggle alone, like yourself (the father). Can you imagine your own son in such a condition without remorse? (p. 104).

In U Khain Bad Ka Ngen, the author shows another example of how class difference affects the lives of the people. Khain, the hero, is the only son of a rich family. The author writes: "It is here (Mawngap Market) that Khain, a son of a well-to-do family visits and falls in love with Ngen" (p. 2). The author further points out the

difference in material wealth between Khain's and Ngen's parents by showing the grand celebration at the winnowing of paddy. The author comments:

One week from that day Khain goes to invite people to the winnowing of paddy which would take place in his field. This annual occasion used to be celebrated by killing one or two pigs. So that year also they celebrated by killing two large pigs. (p. 97).

The author describes Ngen as the only daughter of poor parents who helps with the housework as well as in the field. The author writes: "One fine morning Ngen went to the field a bit late after completing all the housework" (p. 20).

In this novel the author clearly shows that the rich always look down upon the poor. Khain's parents put an end to the love that their son has for Ngen. The author writes:

One night while Khain and his parents are relaxing Khain tells them about his feelings for Ngen. His mother's reply is that she has heard about it but it is too early for him to think about marriage when he should be thinking in terms of building up the family wealth. At the same time she shows her displeasure because Ngen is the only daughter of a poor family (p. 110).

He further states: "So the following morning Khain
goes with his father to look after their property at War area" (p. 113).

As a result, the young people had to spend the rest of their lives in pain and sorrow. The parents of Khain believe that by sending away Khain to War area he would forget Ngen in due course as the popular saying goes 'out of sight is out of mind' and some day they would try to arrange for him someone from a well-to-do family (p. 141). But it seems that Khain's parents did not know their son properly, for he had given all his love to Ngen and there would be no other to take her place and in his last days he decided that he would just vanish so that no one would ever know of his whereabouts (p. 140).

In U Kynjri Ksiar, the main character Juban is a pious village youth. The writer describes him as a devout Christian of Siah Pongdeng village. He works as a messenger of God and preaches from village to village and accidentally reaches Shillong (p. 1). The writer further describes him as an orphan who has no brother or sister or close relatives (p. 62). From this description one can gather that the hero does not come from a well-to-do family.

In contrast the relatives of Sharai, the heroine, are well-to-do people. The author narrates that the rela-
tives of Sharai warn her of dire consequences if she ever goes against their counsel (p. 62). For this reason Sharai is made to deny Juban before the law; and that he was lying when he claimed her to be his wife (p. 63). It was the fruit of criticism which made Jyrwa reunite them; otherwise the work ended with separation in the first edition.

Through this novel the author shows that the rich people have an influence not only on the poorer people but even on the law. The relatives of Sharai try to break her love affair with Juban. This may be for the reason that he does not come from a well-to-do family. In the same way the author points out that even the verdict of the court can be changed if only someone has influence. As seen in real life people who can influence are always people who are well-to-do. The author clearly points out this fact by stating that the court sentences Juban to ten years imprisonment on charges of theft and murder (p. 63), though he is innocent and yet it takes only one day for Shot, Sharai's uncle, to free Juban from prison in the revised edition of the work (p. 71).

Ogburn and Nimkoff aptly explain this fact while answering the question:
What are the chances of the lower class obtaining justice in the courts? Much is made of 'equality before the law' in our culture, but such equality exists in principle rather than in fact. Since it costs money to ask for justice, notwithstanding the legal aid bureaus available to the poor in a few places, the poor are less likely to seek redress for wrongs. If charged with criminal offences, a poor man is under substantial handicap. Except in extreme cases like murder, the rich man so charged will be summoned, then released on bail. The poor man is likely to be arrested, and in default of the bail which he cannot furnish, will be remanded in gaol — not the best place to build up a defence against the charges. Studies in the Southern District of New York indicate that over one third of those required to post bail of $ 500 or less were unable to do so, and those who cannot make bail are more often convicted and receive stiffer sentences than those who can.59

The writer ends the novel by showing once again the influence of Sharai's relatives, who after freeing Juban give their consent for them to live happily as man and wife. The author remarks:

As soon as the visitors leave the couple sit down to recall the bygone days and start a new life right from that night (p. 76).

In U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai, the foster parents of Bhakupar are well-to-do people as their names imply. The author remarks:

names the foster mother Hajar which means 'wealth' and the father Sbun which means 'kindness'. The adopted son is named Bhakupar which means 'lucky'. The names given to the characters indicate that they are rich people and the child they adopt will be a lucky child. The foster parents of Bhakupar treat him as their own son. They meet all his needs from childhood till he becomes a doctor and gets married. The author's comment: "Before the child's second birthday he is adopted by a well-to-do childless couple" (p. 21).

The author further adds:

Before the arrival of the appointed day the couple bought plenty of clothes, food and toys. They also engaged an experienced nurse to look after him at home (p. 21).

To show that the foster parents are rich the author describes the festivity of the baptism ceremony where they invite everyone. The author writes:

They were busy the whole week along with the help of relatives. The snacks they ordered from the shops and bakeries cost more than two thousand rupees besides chickens and pigs which nearly cost three thousand rupees without counting the number of sack loads of rice which they took from their own stock. Firewood by the truck load, paid workers to look after the refreshments and the invitees. Even water was brought in by the municipality (p. 33).
That the foster parents provided everything has been revealed by the author through a comment made by Bhakupar's friend regarding a letter. The friend remarks:

That while going through the letter he finds that everything has been provided for by the parents whereas in his case he has to fend for himself (p. 50).

The novel ends with the description of the grand celebration of Bhakupar's marriage. The author writes:

The arrangement for the occasion is so great that the whole town is busy along with Bhakupar's relatives. On the wedding day the courtyard and each and every room is filled with people (p. 149).

In the three novels, U Kynjri Ksiar, U Khain Bad Ka Ngen and U Pyrkhat, the author shows that the well-to-do parents are against the idea of their children marrying someone from a poorer family. In the case of U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai, there is no opposition from the hero or heroine's side as both of them are doctors. This clearly shows that it is a marriage between two people of equal social status. Though the Khasi society is a classless and casteless society where the members of the society are not placed into different categories or status yet there is a difference between the 'Haves' and 'Have nots' and this classification is usually made on the basis of wealth. Wealth
means 'economic power'. 'Economic power' according to Marx:

\[ \text{gave the wealthy the resources and the authoritative control over men which enable them also to exercise political power, for if production was a highly cooperative social activity, appropriation of the surplus was a highly anti-social act, resulting from private ownership.} \]

Through his novels Jyrwa tries to project the idea that the rich influence the poorer sections of society in all spheres. However, in Khasi society there is no such law or custom that forbids people belonging to a higher economic status from marrying someone from a lower economic status yet the author, a true believer in Khasi philosophy seems to stress the fact that economic power should not stand in the way of marriage. Modern Khasi society is made up of people who come into contact with people of different cultures; as such very few people attach importance to the idea of marrying into equal social status. Economic power comes into conflict with Khasi culture.

Culture

Culture, according to E.B. Taylor is,

that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.61

Ellwood defines:

Culture is transmitted socially, that is, by communication, and gradually embodies in a group tradition of which the vehicle is language. Thus culture in a group is a matter of habits of thought and action acquired or 'learned' by interaction with other members of the group. Culture includes all of man's acquired power of control over nature and himself. It includes, therefore, on the one hand, the whole of man's material civilization, tools, weapons, clothing, shelter, machines and even system of industry: and on the other, all of non-material or spiritual civilization, such as language, literature, art, religion, morality, law and government.62

Merrill and Eldridge explain:

The material aspects of culture include those human products that can be experienced with the senses ... the wide variety


of these material elements may be partially grasped by examining the catalogue of a mail order house. Here are displayed thousands of individual components of the most materialistic culture the world has ever seen. The non-material culture includes the group expectations, the folkways, technicways, mores, values, traditions, and all the other psychological elements that arise out of social life. The fundamental basis of culture is found in the minds of men, not in the external manifestations. Ideas are the real foundation of culture. 63

According to H.W. Sten,

Culture concerns itself more with the intrinsic values than with the extrinsic ones and is less susceptible to change and development. This is particularly true of tribal cultures. 64

As people differ in their physical and mental make up they also differ in their culture. So culture differentiates one society from another, in the same way Khasi culture also differs from the cultures of other societies, their beliefs, customs, traditions and even their ways of thinking is connected with religion. H.W. Sten observes:


With the spread of Christianity the traditional Khasi beliefs and form of life were somewhat eclipsed and forgotten. The native Christians were aping western culture so much so that they nearly forgot even what is good in their own.65

It is against the Khasi religion and custom to have marital connection within the clan as this is an evil deed of heinous nature known as Ka Sang Ka Ma.66

Jeebon Roy comments:

As per Khasi religion intermarriage within the clan is a taboo which cannot be absolved. Those guilty of incest are excommunicated and socially rejected from the clan generation after generation. Religious belief became different and the incestuous along with their future generations are debarred from keeping the bones of the dead in the same shrine and also forfeit their right of inheritance.67

As the Khasis believe that marriage is sacred they observe this traditional custom very rigidly even in the present time. This strong belief is expressed by H.W. Sten as follows:

The natives who upheld their traditional faith had reasons to be critical of the new religion, that is Christianity, for some priests seem to have spread a strange teaching which confused even the native

65. Ibid., p. 140.
Christians. The Catholic Church on the other hand scandalised the Khasis by their view on marriage. Marriage ceremonies were performed by all religions but what irked the natives was the idea the leaders of the Catholic Church told that marriage could take place in the same clan, meaning that a person can marry his distant blood relations. The Khasi religion regarded such a marriage as a taboo and the couple were rejected socially and religiously. But the Catholic point of view on marriage prevailed. As recently as 1939 the following lines found place in an important publication of the Church:

Of the taboo in marrying in the same clan, we all understand. The difficulty of making the Khasis understand that as long as they belong to the same clan, it (marriage) is prohibited it is a taboo. The oft repeated reason has been that the parties came from the same mother. This is true that all people in the world descended from the same parents Adam and Eve. We are all brothers and sisters hence no marriage can take place at any time. This is not an adequate law, and we are surprised that the Khasi Catholics still regard it as a taboo, against the teaching of the Church.68

Jyrwa, a believer in Khasi Philosophy, advocates his belief in traditional Khasi custom as reflected in U Kyrdoh Maw-lynna. According to the novel, though the idea of marriage between the hero Bhakupar and the heroine, the lady doctor comes from the foster parents of Bhakupar (pp. 111-114)

yet it could not be performed as it was not known to which clan he belonged. This has been revealed in the conversation between the foster parents of Bhakupar (p. 115). The foster parents with the help of their friends made frantic efforts to trace the whereabouts of Bhakupar's real mother so as to find out his clan and to ensure that he does not marry in his own clan. In Khasi society every individual belongs to a clan of its own and no one can adopt another clan without proper rites and rituals. So Bhakupar also could not adopt his foster parents' clan as in so doing it would be against the Khasi custom.

In U Khain Bad Ka Ngen the parents of Khain oppose the marriage proposal of their son to Ngen not because they belong to the same clan but because of the difference in social status. This kind of opposition is very rare in Khasi society which is a classless society where all are equal. This may, however, happen with other societies which follow the class system rigidly.

In Khasi society which is a matrilineal society it is the custom that a man should go to his wife's house after their marriage. The author tries to change the Khasi custom by trying to bring a wife to live with the in-laws. This has been mentioned during the conversation between Khain and his parents. Khain's mother tells his father
that since Ngen is the only daughter she cannot leave her parents to live with Khain (p. 110).

But the main reason that Khain's parents have against the marriage between their son and a girl belonging to a poor family is the fear that she would take away all their wealth. This has been revealed in the strong reply of Khain's mother to his question. She told him that if he marries into a poor family all their wealth would be squandered (p. 110).

According to the Khasi custom, however rich a man is he cannot share his ancestral property with his wife. In the same novel Jyrwa tries to propagate Khasi culture and mention is made of the hunting, harvesting, arrow shooting, cremation and a visit to the market. In all these cultural activities a spirit of brotherhood, fellow feeling, equality and cooperation prevails. H.W. Sten writes:

The novelist devoted several pages to cultural propaganda which does not contribute to the central theme at all. The episodes are hunting, cremation of the dead, winnowing of paddy and arrow shooting competition.69

As such all these episodes can be excluded from the novel except the visit to the market where the hero and the heroine were present. The author writes:

Khain an honourable person from Pyrda follows Ngen of Nonglwai to the weekly market and it is here that he falls in love with her (p. 2).

Another cultural episode that the author mentions in this novel is the cultivation of sweet potato. According to the novel, the sweet potatoes are dug out during the monsoon but in reality the time to sow sweet potato is during the monsoon and harvested after five months.

In U Pyrkhat the author describes the Khasi custom shown at the time of bereavement. It is the duty of every Khasi to help and console the bereaved family irrespective of social status. Sib Charan Roy counsels:

Help the poor and the needy voluntarily in their bereavement unlike feasts, which would be a shame to attend uninvited.70

As soon as a death occurs everyone goes and voluntarily renders all possible help. At this time even those who have misunderstandings prefer to forget the past and share the sorrow with the bereaved family. Jyrwa, a believer in Khasi Philosophy, explains vividly how friends, relatives

However, this practice where everyone offers free services in the various aspects connected with the last rites is still prevalent even today.

Marriage

The popular saying goes 'marriages are made in heaven'. This means that marriages take place by the will of God. The Book of Genesis tells that, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".\(^{71}\) All that is present in these places are his creations. He also created man. Seeing his loneliness God decided to create a male for him and according to the Book of Genesis:

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.\(^{72}\)

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71. Genesis 1:1.
Moreover, as revealed in the teaching of Jesus:

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female.

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.73

Accordingly, Christian marriage is a solemn contract that is binding for life.

According to the Hindus,

'The Creator (Brahma) having divided his own body into two', says Manu 'became male by one half and female by the other half. So divided, man and woman become a perfect person only when united again in wedlock'.74

So Hindus believe that marriage is sacred.

S. Radhakrishnan explains:

Marriage is not so much a concession to human weakness as a means of spiritual growth. It is prescribed for the sake of development of personality as well as the continuance of the family ideal.75

73. St. Mathew 19:4-6.
There are two basic forms of marriage, known as monogamy and polygamy. Monogamy is the form of marriage where one man marries one woman. Harry M. Johnson states:

'Polygamy' is a term covering both polygyny (the institution of marriage that permits a man to have two or more wives at the same time) and 'Polyandry' (the institution that permits a woman to have more than one husband at the same time).... Polygyny as an institution is not found only in primitive societies. Mohammedanism of course holds up polygyny as the ideal and concubinage at least (which one might or might not wish to call polygyny) is fairly common in such highly civilized non-Mohammedan societies as China, India, and the countries of Latin America.76

Johnson adds:

The other form of polygamy — polyandry, in which a woman is permitted to have two or more husbands at the same time is extremely rare .... It is probable that early writers often treated as polyandry relationships that were not stable marriages of several men to the same woman and hence were not 'genuine' polyandry.77

Marriage is a sacred and permanent institution and the primary basis of family structure and institution. As a result of marriage the husband and wife form a new family. The instincts and impulses that are inborn in human life are controlled and sublimated through marriage. In fact,

76. Harry M. Johnson, op.cit., p. 150.
77. Ibid., p. 152.
marriage system marks men off from animals; otherwise there would be chaos in the society. Through marriage the husband and wife become closely united and together they share both happiness and sorrow of life. They develop a sense of unity or oneness by mutual love, attraction, sympathy and cooperation. By sacrificing their personal interest they work tirelessly for the peace and harmony of the family as a result the family life becomes well organised. The Khasis believe that marriage is sacred but after marriage the male and the female cannot become one flesh and blood. H.O. Mawrie explains:

The husband and wife can never become one flesh and one blood which for a Khasi amounts to belonging to the same clan.... The wife and the husband must, of course belong to different clans.78

This practice is contradictory to the explanation of the Encyclopædia Britannica where it describes that:

According to the earliest Roman Customs a woman took her husband's name on marriage. The Roman Catholic Church continues this practice.79

The Khasis believe that in the beginning God created sixteen families and the Khasis are the progeny of the original

seven families' or hynniewtrep. These seven families were decreed of God to populate the world. Marriage is a mutual consent between a man and a woman and of the parents and relatives of both sides.

H.O. Mawrie further writes:

Marriage is an extraordinarily serious matter for a Khasi as it is a starting point in the raising of a family, and for that reason to leave this burden only on the children and brothers and nephews is very dangerous. If it is given to their sweet will, it may lead to blunders and future regrets. The parents along with the uncle of the family therefore reserve to themselves this job of giving and taking in marriage of their children.80

Prior to a marriage the consent of the parents and relatives of both sides is very important as this will check the young people from committing Sang.

Jeebon Roy explains:

The other fear amongst the Khasis is that those involved in a marriage which is taboo would be struck by lightning or devoured by a tiger or wild animals....81

In seeking the consent of the parents and relatives of both sides does not mean marriage is a 'sort of a contract' as practised in Hindu society "where money was paid as

81. Jeebon Roy, Ka Niam Jong Ki Khasi, 1932, p. 3.
the bride price". In a Hindu society after marriage "the dominion which the father exercised over a female child from the day of her birth was now transferred to the person who was selected as her husband". This idea is alien to Khasi thoughts as the children enjoy equal rights and freedom from their parents from the day they are born irrespective of being male or female. The same scope of freedom is given even at the time of choosing their mate. So the question of paying for a bride or where the bride's father has to pay a dowry to the bridegroom does not arise in a Khasi society.

After marriage the Khasi woman retains her individuality and her clan name. Unlike the change that the Hindu woman experiences after marriage as K.M. Kapadia writes:

As a river merging itself in the ocean loses its identity, so a wife was supposed to merge her individuality with that of her husband.84

In a Khasi society the status of man is not affected even though it is the custom that after marriage he should go and live in his wife's house.

84. Ibid., p. 169.
P.R.T. Gurdon comments:

In his wife's clan he occupies a very high place, he is second to none but u Kni, the maternal uncle, while in his own family circle a father and husband is nearer to his children and his wife than u kni.85

Marriage to a Khasi means a marriage between one man and one woman or monogamy.

P.R.T. Gurdon writes:

There is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed amongst the Khasis.... Polygamy does not exist amongst the Khasis.86

Prior to a marriage the parents and relatives of both sides must find out if the lovers are governed by sang or related in any way and only when they are free of these can marriage take place. The celebration of the marriage ceremony depends on the wish of the families. It may be a grand celebration or a simple ceremony but the most important factor to be considered is not the manner the ceremony is solemnized.

In U Kynjri Ksiar, Jyrwa mentions about the marriage between the hero and heroine after a brief meeting. The

86. Ibid., p. 77.
author's comment: "Sharai, a widow meets Juban shortly after her husband's death. She relates the tragic story to him (p. 29). The author further adds that as Sharai and Juban continue on their journey it so happens that they become husband and wife. The author compares the fall of Juban to that of Samson in the hands of Delilah (p. 32).

In real life we seldom come across people who marry after a brief meeting and according to the Khasi custom, marriage cannot take place without the consent of the parents and relatives of both sides but the author here justifies his view by comparing this to the fall of Samson at the hands of Delilah. According to the novel, the marriage between the hero and heroine is their need for one another.

In another novel, U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai, the author mentions about the marriage between Bhakupar's mother and his step father though no mention is made of the marriage of Bhakupar's parents. Bhakupar's mother and his step father marry in a simple ceremony. The author writes:

In the evening Rang accompanied by twenty people arrive at the bride's house. With the consent of the clans on both sides, which is the most important factor on such occasions, they go through a simple marriage ceremony without any ostentation.
This is appreciated by all present as it sets a precedent for others with financial difficulties, and is not against religion. Though there is no music or dancing yet there is merry making throughout the night (pp. 42-43).

In the same novel the author mentions the marriage between Bhakupar and the doctor. The idea of marriage between the two comes from the foster parents of Bhakupar and the girl's side do not oppose it (pp. 113-114). The author shows the difference between the marriage of Bhakupar and that of his mother in the following words:

The arrangements for the occasion are so great that nearly all the people of the town are busy along with Bhakupar's relatives. On the wedding day the courtyard and each and every room is filled with people (p. 149).

In U Pyrkhat, the author describes the marriage between the hero and the heroine and at the same time he clearly explains that prior to the engagement, the consent of the parents and relatives of both sides was sought. The author writes:

In December that year Pyrkhat decides to get engaged, with the consent of his parents and relatives. Their main aim is to get ample time to prepare for the wedding which they propose to hold in January the following year when it would be convenient for all to attend (p. 137).
The author describes the celebration of the marriage in the following words:

The marriage ceremony does not take long. All the invitees arriving at Bakor's house are waited on by the youth of Laban who are busy helping in whatever way they can except for those jobs specifically allotted to others (p. 142).

The author mentions that the hero has already been in love with one girl; but he has to leave her as his mother is against the idea of her son marrying someone from a poor family (p. 104).

In the novel *U Khain Bad Ka Ngen*, the author narrates that the hero and the heroine have to part in the end as a result of the opposition of the hero's parents. The main reason is because the heroine is from a poor family. Instead Rang and Dit get married. The author writes:

On a day in that week, Rang goes to Dit's house, not as a visitor but accompanied by his relatives to seek the approval of Dit's relatives for their engagement. Their answer is that he was welcome to them from the very beginning of their acquaintance (p. 131).

The marriage ceremony, to which everyone is invited, is celebrated in grand style. The author writes:
The clan members and relatives from the father's side who live at a distance arrive on the eve of the wedding. On that night the men folk get ready with their choppers to prepare the pigs and chickens so that everything is ready for the wedding. Dit sees to it that all from the village are invited (pp. 132-133).

The reason that these two characters, Rang and Dit, overshadow Khain and Ngen seems to be that Jyrwa is, to a great extent, influenced by the Sohlyngngem theme where the lovers have to part forever because of the difference in material wealth. The same reason prevents Pyrkhat from marrying the girl he first loved.

We have seen then that respectable marriage in the novels of B.C. Jyrwa involves love, consent of parents and the acceptance of the society. In one case, however, the marriage of Juban and Sharai was accepted only at a later stage. All these ways of marriage as reflected by Jyrwa in his novels are prevalent in the modern Khasi society.