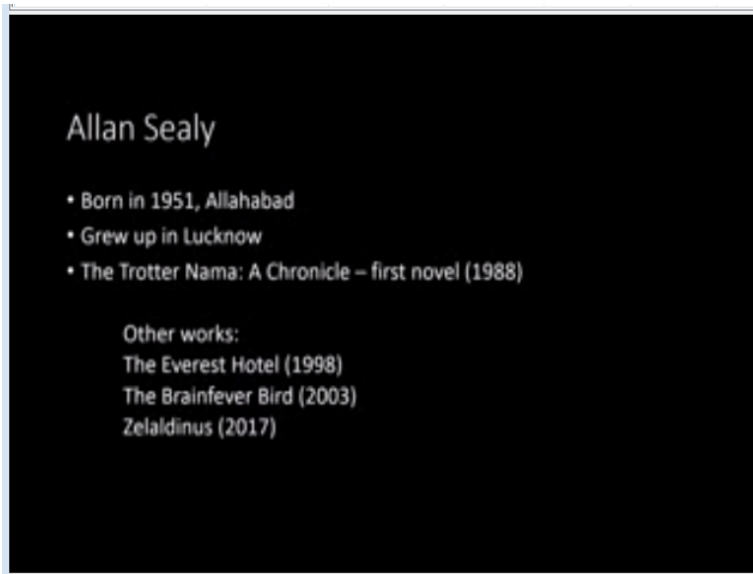


Indian Fiction in English
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Lecture-20
The Trotter Nama: A Chronicle

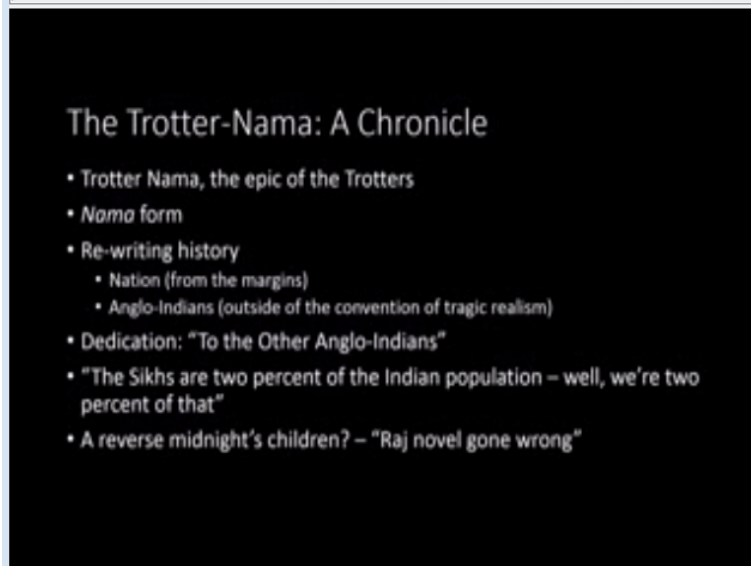
Hi today will be discussing the novel The Trotter Nama by Allan Sealy, Allan Sealy was born in 1951 in Allahabad.

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He grew up in Lucknow but he also had spent significant amount of time outside in India and Newzealand and other places The Trotter Nama A chronicle is his first novel. It was published in 1988 his other works include The Everest Hotel which was nominated for a book a price The Brainfever Bird and Zeladinus is most recent one .

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The novel *The Trotter Nama* fits squarely in the period of postmodern post-colonial writers in India along with his contemporaries like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Chandra and the others that name title that *Trotter Nama* is can be equivalent to the epic of the Trotters or the chronicle of the Trotters. Allan Sealy chooses the form of the Nama which is traditional Indian way of telling history especially as we can see in the *Akbar Nama* which is one of the most important medieval accounts of medieval Indian history that we have today.

So, even in this form his choice of form the Nama we can see a very conscious attempt to situate himself in particular kind of literary history the so, *The Trotter Nama* borrows a lot of features of the Nama form and incorporates it into a modern retelling of the Nation the so, *The Trotter Nama* what it sets out to do is quite vast epic in it is ambition.

Because we see that Allan Sealy in a way trying to rewrite history not just of the Nation like Salman Rushdie does with his *Midnight Children*. But also by using rewriting of the **Anglo-Anglo-Indian** community and in a way writing them into Indian history by removing them from the margins and placing them in the center of the way Indian history is narrated the way Indian literary history is narrated.

So, it is a very ambitious project that Allan Sealy sets out to make with this novel. So, he first of all like I said it is a retelling of the nation from the perspective of the Margins and when this

particular case the from the perspective of the Anglo-Indian community. But also for the Anglo-Indian rewriting of Anglo-Indian history itself which until this period.

We see lot of tragic really sort of conventions in which Anglo-Indian history is being told for example you see Frank Antony's Britain's betrayal in India. So, Allan Sealy here rewrite several of these conventional understanding of history of Nation heard of community of what Anglo-Indian means of who the Anglo-Indian community is of what it means to be part of a national history.

And what it takes to be a part of history of the Nation. So, in many ways he is writing into places of absence places of where things have disappeared from history of a gotten. His writing into those kind of spaces with this work called the Trotter Nama, so at even at as it at it is get go it is a very very ambitious and vast project that he undertakes with his work. So, it is dedicated write it this start you see that the work is dedicated to the other Anglo-Indians.

So, you also aware from the start that the book itself or The Trotter Nama itself is aware of it is otherness of it is position in the margins. But it also making you question the ways in which we identify the other or the ways in which the other is identified in the post-colonial nation. So, his calling into question all of these generally accepted generally unquestioned terms that are news in post even in post-colonial theory in literary history even for example calling into question.

The use of (()) (04:42) in midnight children as a mixed mysterious protagonist but whose Anglo-Indian identities is never explode or not is not brought to the fore front at any point in the entire novel . So, in that sense The Trotter Nama is very aware of it is hybrid precision in literary history, in this novel and also in history of the nation also another way in which this sentence is very pertinent is the fact that The Trotter Nama uses a lot of literary and historical characters.

There are very familiar to the Anglo-Indian community do the small group of Anglo-Indian community may not be very apparent to people from the outside who are not aware of these characters of these literary works, historical works about the Anglo-Indian community. So, a lot

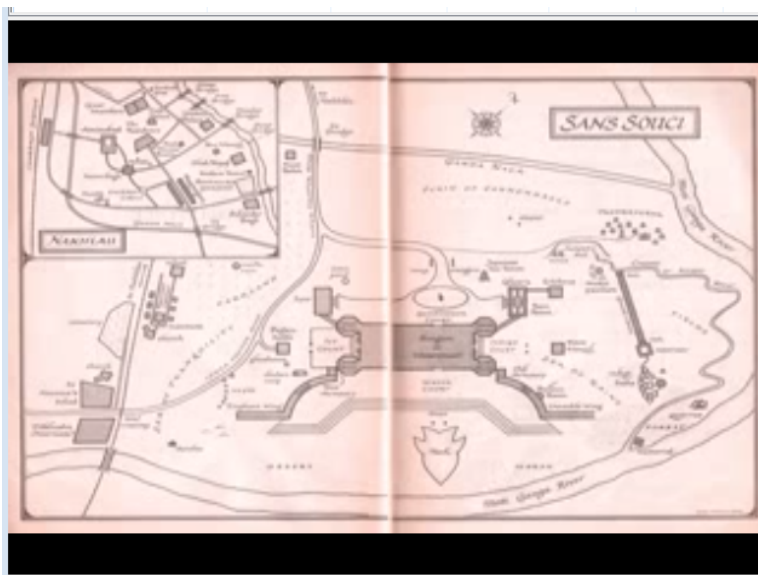
of these things are accessible only to an audience that is aware of the Anglo in committee and the history of the Anglo in community.

So, again it calls you to it makes you aware of your of the things that have been forgotten of the things that have been left in the margins. Another example of the ways in which I would like to emphasize that this work is aware of it is otherness is in the sentence write at the start in the early part of the novel the seeks are 2% of the Indian population well with 2% of that.

So, despite being aware of this small number are the numerical minority that the Anglo-Indian community is it is still makes a case for it is position in history of the nation. And how any history of a nation can only be told be violates aware of the other within in it is Nation no matter how small. In many ways this novel is compared to midnight Salman Rushdie midnight's children it is also in fact in the same novel.

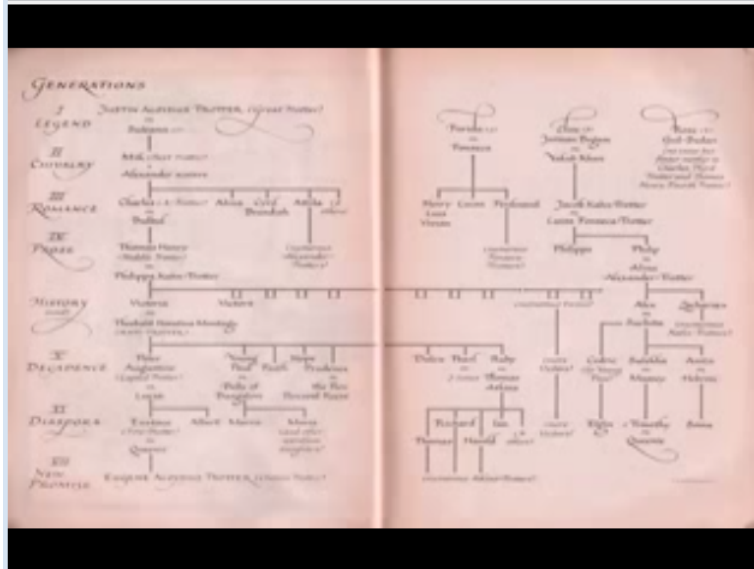
You see phrase The Trotter Nama is like the “Raj novel gone wrong”, so it is very inventive, it is very playful, it is aware of the things that it does and it place with these notions of post-colonial and postmodern ideas. It is a very difficult to summarize novel it is vast under a several innumerable characters in the novel and expands about 200 and 250 years. But I will try to summarize the novels.

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So, that we get a sense of kind of the novel that we are dealing with the novel I said in this place in this imaginary place called Sans Souci which is somewhere in Lucknow which could stand for Lucknow which even the book suggest itself that it is a form it is situated in somewhere in Lucknow.

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It tells the story of 7 generation of Trotters beginning with Justin Aloysius Trotter who could stand for clot Martin the French machinery who came in who worked for the East India company as a soldier and also for the local (()) (07:57). So, we see the story beginning with Justin Aloysius Trotter who works for the nawab and then is rewarded with this large a state called Sans Souci which he then develops into this huge cassil.

And which has several rooms and it has an ice house it has reverse exploding within it. And he is also someone whose interested in local religions, so he develops this form of religion Huawei which again you see references to Akbar's own form of religion that he developed. So, a lot of these references finds it is way into the novel so we begin with Justin Aloysius Trotter.

And his glory and the grandeur of the, that time in which the Anglo-Indian community began of sorts with people who immigrated into India in the colonial period. And then establish themselves through braving soldiers vote for the company and for local princess. And in a way

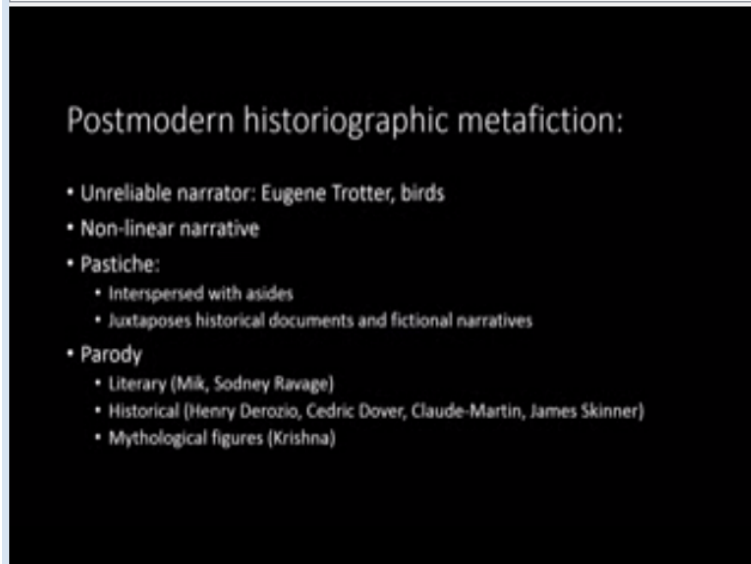
the there is a it is a wealthy, it was a glorious time period in history for the Anglo-Indian community.

And he portrait by Justin and then you see his son Mike whose also a soldier who follows in his father's footsteps. And then we see several other generations of Trotters who becomes soldiers, poets, painters, politicians and even one dhoti-clad, nationalist politician in this family tree. It is the story of a great house called the Trotters who then slowly over time expand they grow the growth the glory of this house.

And also the steady decline and the eventual poverty in which this community ends itself is kind of the story that the novel portrays. So, in the way that this story is told is Eugene Aloysius Trotter the last starter the 7th starter is narrating this story because he says he claims that Justin Aloysius is hunting him in his dreams that he needs to write the story of the Trotters that the story of Trotters needs to be written.

So, we see Eugene taking up this quite reluctantly to narrate the story of the Trotters. And so he puts together this large directive with epic elements and with really with includes the whole gamut of characters from Anglo-Indian history and Indian history. So, that is the story of the Trotter Nama itself, now the way that this story is narrated is very significant. Because it the novel is a postmodern a spot of the postmodern historiographic metafiction journal.

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We see an unreliable narrator trotter himself seems to be quite unreliable, he is very notorious seems to be running away from something or someone which we then later realize that he has been dealing with several illegal and fake selling art in illegal way. And then earning through that and he is running away from (()) (11:29) where after him. So, we see this very unreliable notorious kind of narrator Eugene who is say telling new this story.

And also two Eugene this story comes he claims through birds the different birds come in a rate different parts of the story then that is how it goes and throughout the novel itself you see different ways in which the story is narrated. You see in one place where he say she went out in collected all these histories and he work hard at it. And then you see this other place with these birds just come and tell him this and that.

So, there are whole range of narrators that you find indulging in this in the telling of the story. It is also a non-linear narrative it jumps between different time scales and there are call backs and you see flashbacks to different times you though more or less it goes from Justin Aloysius time until Eugene's time it is also circular in a sense that it starts with Eugene giving this manuscript of this book to co-traveler in his aeroplane.

And then in the end you come back to this co-traveler having read this entire novel and then see Eugene again a talking from about it. So it is circular but also you see a sort of a timeline that

you can follow in a way between from Justin until Eugene. But a bulk of the book is dedicated to the period of glory of Justin Mik and Charles and so on, after that the number of characters are also increase significantly.

And the number of events and begin to take a very fast paces and you also get a sense of the quickening of history at that period between the 1900 and 19 in the impost independence period. So there is a quickening of events which you get a very real feel for in the novel by the number of things are happened consecutively it uses the form of pastiche by having a lot of indispense with lots of asides. It also historical documents and fictional narratives brings these 2 together.

And makes you question the historicity of fiction and fictionality of history itself. He does use several of these forms like pastiche and parody with a great skill in this novel, the novel also can be considered as a great work in parody it parodies literary characters like Kim in the character Mik and Rodney savage who is from Bavani junction of course who is in this novel appears as Sodney Ravage.

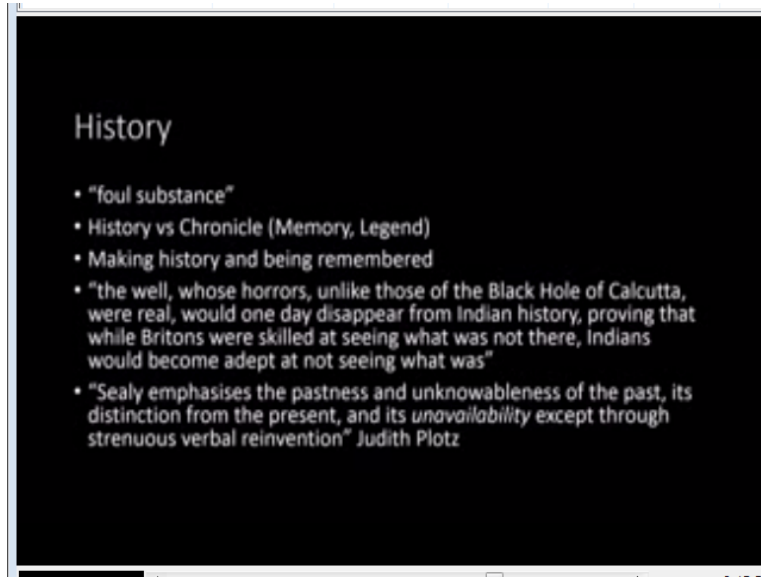
So, there are several literary characters who are paraded throughout the text. And you also find historical characters especially form the gamut of Anglo-Indian historical figures who had great respect still whole great respect within community, for example Henry Derozio, James Skinner, Cedric Dover and people like that also appear with different names or slightly modified names for example Cedric Dover, Cedric khan, Trotter in the novel.

And Henry Derozio also has a very similar sounding name in the novel. So, you can very easily understand that it is a very specific kind of parody of specific characters. So, you also find callbacks to mythological characters like Krishna in the character of Mik. So, also we should remember that single characters hold a lot of different significance as well. For example Mik himself is a reference Kim from red yard crippling is also very similar to the historical figure of James Skinner.

And also the mythological figure of Krishna so, there are several different elements that are being brought into this one character of Mik. So, that is how rich and vast and deep the

references and intertextuality of this text is which we have to remember when we look into text of this sort from this period in time where postmodern and post-colonial writing becomes very important one of the primary concerns of this novel is history or the theme of history .

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He calls it he calls history in this novel foul substance and you know way the Trotter Nama itself is a counter or a challenge to traditional history writing and historiography itself. So, we see history and the chronicle the history and the Nama being just of course and being challenged one with another is just of course with writing of history which is more which is considered scientific acceptable and main stream whereas the chronicle is more unreliable and has realize on memory and legends in order to tell its virgin itself.

So, we see also a section in the novel called how to make history and be remembered. So, he talks about this ways which that we can what one needs to do in order to get into the books of history. And who needs to be in order to get into the books of history. For example in the story of the first war of Indian Independence in what is then called (()) (17:04). You see an Anglo-Indian character who claims that without him the whole story could have been very very different.

Because he went out and saved and sent a message to the British armies and they were able to come and save the Lucknow residency. So, while this is true there was a character who did

significantly contributes towards saving lives in the Lucknow Residency. We do not see several mentions of that in either in period history or in **or** Indian history itself.

Both because it is quite inconvenient to use in Indian history and it is inconvenient to use in both Indian and in period history owing to the mixed race status of these Anglo-Indians themselves. How can one become part of history is something that this novel is very conscious about or the another example is one have coated here the well whose horrors unlike those of the Black Hole of Calcutta were real would one day disappear from Indian history, proving that while Britons were skilled at seeing what was not there.

Indians would become adept at not seeing what was, this refers to the well in the Lucknow Residency where several women and children were murdered during the first war of Indian Independence. So, again it is very inconvenient story to include in our histories and therefore it is one that is forgotten. Sealy tries to emphasize the pastness and the inaccessibility of the past no matter in what form it comes whether it is history or chronicle.

And how the only way in which these kind of histories like the well is a only available through as through strenuous verbal reinvention like the one that Allan Sealy himself indulges in this work called *The Trotter Nama*. So, we see that this text is something that attempts to rewrite and reinvent history through the form of a chronicle to the present the form of the chronicle as an alternate to this over arching.

And this extremely powerful and suppressive form called history itself history with a capital H. So, that is the kind of text that this is but also we should remember that is very aware of its own limitations. Because as the novel progresses we see that it declines the generation of Trotters and the Trotter family declines into a poverty and it is and people. You do not they scattered all around the world.

And there is really know Trotter family to speak of any more a Eugene himself says that he is the last Trotter. So, why it does present an alternative form that we can through which we can access this unknowable and almost invisible past. It is also very aware that the power of history itself is

so vast that are so great that the truth that you cannot hide from is that the community has become a lot more scattered.

The community has become has forgotten its own history the nation has forgotten the community and all of these are in a escapable form. And that is really brought into the text in the way that the novel ends especially in the last few lines of the novel where it's as to tell you the truth.

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I made up the whole line I mean joining up all those Trotters like that. So, he kind of dismantles his own history his own telling of history. And says that none of this is true and he just made it up on a Vim, so comparisons are inevitable between these 2 works. And in a way does not hide from it either. Because it talks about how imitation is not a bad thing and in fact one of the most important lines in this novel talks about how we have to first give up factitious with the original, what is the original, what is the original history, what is the original Indian who is an Anglo-Indian.

All of these categories things that we have to engage with in order to become more aware and more open both readers and as people of post-colonial Nation itself. So, this is novel in that sense is again a very playful and inventive way of retelling this history and while also presenting all also presenting the importance of challenging these categories and being aware of the power of

these categories in defining and redefining who we are as a community and as a nation. Thank you.