

Myth as a Narrative Technique in Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novels: A Study*

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Abstract

This present research is entitled “Myth as a Narrative Technique in Shashi Tharoor’s Select Novels is Study. The purpose of this study it is to examine mythical images drawn from the Indian epic the Mahabharata. This research deals with Tharoor’s fiction *The Great Indian Novel* Shashi Tharoor’s employment of mythical images work as a pattern in all his fictions. This research also explores narrative techniques employed by Tharoor. This research investigates postmodern elements as used by Shashi Tharoor in his novels. The study substantiates Tharoor’s employment of Presenting myths retelling mythological stories, and fragmentation of the society. The present research is a serious attempt to explore this outstanding novel from critical perspectives, it begins with a brief overview of shashi Tharoor’s life and works and a general introduction to the text *The Great Indian Novel*. The novel ingeniously combines past and present, history and myth, parody and polemic, politics and philosophy, prose and verse, and hard hitting satire to present a poignant saga of the great subcontinent.

Introduction

The present research is an attempt to outline the postmodern nuances of Shashi Tharoor's fictional works. It also provides a detailed, theoretical analysis of the concepts of postmodernism in the introduction to the critical examination of Tharoor's novels. The introduction gives detailed information about the author Shashi Tharoor and his works. A child genius who had produced his first piece of fiction in the form of a short story, at the innocent age of six and has since been incessantly causal to the story of Indian English literature, with excellent brilliance, Shashi Tharoor, an well – known author of both fiction and non-fiction. He has successfully created a comfortable niche for himself in the contemporary world of English literature. Tharoor unravels the mysterious past and the complicated present of India through his writings, in an effort to get a glimpse of the land, that matters to him the most.

This study explores the great Indian civilization, history and myth through *The Great Indian Novel* published in 1989. The story of the epic essentially deals with the royalty of the ancient state of Hastinapur elucidating the social of the royals. It also discusses the essential human nature and human behavior manifest in varied circumstances. *The Great Indian Novel* deserves to be termed as an “eminently readable text, powerfully and modestly narrating a human history with extraordinary profundities. Tharoor deals with a brilliant concept deftly executed, which deserves appreciation not only for its subject but also for its technique and technical experimentation.

The research paper also investigates the mythical elements in the novel *Show Business*. The novel is in fact, an exposition of a highly entertaining continuum of Tharoor's conscious and deliberate desire to reinvent and reveal India to himself and his readers. Once again acquainting himself with his country by perceiving it through the cinema produced by her people, Tharoor dwells upon another crucial nuances contributing to the contemporary and modern essence of Indianness and its circumstances

dominating the nation's film industry and film fraternity – which plays a powerful role in influencing the people and their thought process.

This study future illustrates gives detailed study of the novel *Riot* and its postmodernist perspective in the form and content. Tharoor convincingly illustrates the widespread existence of a hidden colonialism in the so called 'postcolonial' scenario of *Riot*. He highlights a colonialism, which not only harbors on the reminders of the erstwhile colonialism of India but also substantiates another division of humanity, the division between its male and female members, with the former emerging as the colonizer of the latter.

This study is an appraisal of Shashi Tharoor's fiction in the context of postmodernism and all the three novels exemplify degeneration of political and moral ethos of the postcolonial Indian society. The great Indian civilization has been, since times immemorial, influenced by religious texts, especially the two great epics *The Ramayana and the Mahabharat*. Both these epics written by Rishi Valmiki and Rishi Ved Vyas respectively reflect the culture of the sub-continent and its people. As it is evident from its name *The Mahabharata* envisages the tales from the great and ancient land *Bharata*. It reveals a rich civilization and a highly evolved society which albeit a part of the ancient order, surprisingly has an unequivocal resemblance with the recent present. The *Mahabharata* identifies and establishes the intrinsic humanity that does not recognize the limitations imposed by caste, colour, language and boundaries. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed concerning this great text, "what is not in it is nowhere." The characters of the *Mahabharata* play an important role in the formation of ideals. A word concerning any one of them carries along with it a world of significance, for every child in India learns the immortal story of the *Mahabharata* as he learns his mother tongue at his mother's knee.

The story of the epic essentially deals with the royalty of the ancient state of Hastinapur. It elucidates the social life of the royals. The author also deals with the society in general. Concomitant to the description of the way of life in the ancient times, the epic also discusses at length the essential human nature and human behavior manifest in varied circumstances. The war fought at Kurukshetra, between the kauravas and the pandavas, is not the only reason behind Ved Vyass choice of the title of the epic. It is justified, appropriately by the fact that, it pictures the life, the emotions, the sentiments, the tears and smiles of the people of *bharata* as a whole. It is this all pervasive aspect of the epic, that makes it a great Indian literary piece that, is *Mahabharata*. Shashi Tharoor, an eminent author of both fiction and non-fiction has reinvented and remoulded the stories of this great epic as an account of the political history of India since the British days to the present, in his first fictional work called *The Great Indian Novel* that relates the story of the great country India. It is quite evident, that the novel takes its title indifference to its primary source of inspiration from *The Mahabarata*. In Sanskrit *Maha* means great and *Bharata* means India and therefore Tharoor calls his novel the Great Indian Novel.

The Great Indian Novel deserves to be termed as an “eminently readable” text, powerfully and modestly narrating a human history with extraordinary profundities. An English novel with an Indian subject that establishes its own class, this piece of fiction emerges as an entertaining tour de force that reinvents India with a dazzling marriage of Hindu mythology and modern history. In this first fictional endeavour of his, Tharoor deals with a brilliant concept deftly executed, which deserves appreciation not only for its subject but also for its technique and technical experimentation. It emblematises the persistent presence of time as a Shakespearian stage trodden by characters of two different ages, with their respective predicaments.

The story of *The Great Indian Novel* through VedVyas (V.V. to his amanuensis Ganapathi, Tharoor describes the mythical episodes of *The Mahabharata* as inseparably merged with the twentieth century contextually, re-acquainting the reader with Indian history in a new recast light. His application of myth as evidenced in the novel is in a postmodernist vein-suggestive and fragmentary-embarking upon the allegorically inimitable comical and satirical styles of writing. These postmodern nuances explicated in the novel are clearly substantiated in the following words: the title itself is a take off on the ancient Indian epic *The Mahabharata*. By a daring stroke of imagination, Tharoor finds uncanny correspondences between the chief characters and events in the three thousand year old epic and the leading political figures and developments in modern Indian history. These correspondences are not mechanically worked out, they are suitably modified, sometimes hinted at rather than fully spelt out: and on occasion they are given an ironic twist in a spirit of self mockery, which is so characteristic of postmodernism. It follows a postmodern technique of expressing himself, Shashi Tharoor emerges as a postcolonial diasporic author exemplifying homi K Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" Writing in the language of the British colonizers of India, this Indian expatriate beautifully portrays the splendid past of his ancient country and its civilization, unveiling her and introducing her to the western world. This fictionalized introduction of the subcontinent's history is an impressive instance of the pride enjoyed and emphatically expressed by Tharoor in his culture, his religion, his civilization and his nation's history.

Employment of Narrative Techniques

This study aims at an analysis of the narrative techniques employed by Tharoor in his novels. The study presents the objectives and the methodology adopted in the analyses of the novels. Tharoor is one of the most prominent novelists in Indo-Anglian literature. He writes highly acclaimed fiction about life in India. Generally, in a novel, one of the characters or an independent narrator narrates the story. The author,

through the narrator, often interferes in the narrative and passes overview comments on characters, events, and episodes. Thereby, he influences the reader's response to fiction. This mode of narration is called "telling" a story. In "telling, the author "tells" or supplies all information about a character or a situation assuming omniscience over it. The reader has to read fiction in accordance with the guidance of the author. As a result, the reader is not allowed to enjoy fiction on his own. On the other hand, the story can be "shown" without the interference of the author. In "showing" fiction, the author does not interfere to make comment on the fictional material through the narrator. He allows the characters to interact among themselves and through interaction, the story and the action are developed. Wayne C. Booth considers the two narrative techniques of "telling" and 'showing' as two distinct modes of narration. He asserts that the mode of "showing" is artistic, objective, dramatic and hence more effective than the mode of "telling" which is subjective and inartistic.

Review of Literature

This Study presents a survey of literature. The eastern critic Tapan K. Ghosh in his critical work *Shashi Tharoor's the Great Indian Novel: A Critical Study* re-interprets the ancient epic *Mahabharata* in terms of twentieth century Indian history and literature. The Indian critic M.K. Naik in his critical text *Shashi Tharoor's the Great Indian Novel*, where he states modernity and points of view of the novel. The Eastern critic Prema Nandakumar in her criticism *Shashi Tharoor's Karna* wherein she establishes Indian mythical images. The critic Anita Parihar in her critical work entitled *Shashi Tharoor's Show Business*, where she explores the novel as a satire on Indian democracy.

The critic G.M. Patil in his work entitled ' *Shashi Tharoor: His vision and Art* ' where he explored the social and literal vision of Shashi Tharoor. She also elucidated Tharoor's art of writing fictions. Eastern Critic P.K. Rajan in his critical work titled *Historical and*

myth in Shashi Tharoor's The Great Indian Novel established the novel as a post-colonial text. It is pointed out that, six Critics have expressed views on different aspects of the fiction craft of Shashi Tharoor. Therefore, this study shows how the present research deviates from the rest of the critics in the analyses of the fictions in terms of literary techniques and tools.

It deals with the main aspects of the critical works on Tharoor. It is pointed out that, many critics have expressed views on different aspects of the fiction craft of Tharoor. Their interpretation of the term “technique of fiction includes the plot, theme, style, image symbol, the writer’s vision, and his handling of the language are different. Yet, a detailed study of the narrative techniques of Tharoor has not been taken up so far.

The novel *The Great Indian Novel* not only allegorises the modern political history of India, but also the ancient past of the country. Tharoor’s portrayal of the modern political history in this allegorical work of fiction is an emphatic and vivid exemplification of the political exigencies prevalent during the era of British imperialism in the country; It is ruthless partition just before its liberation, followed by a description of the circumstances encumbering its polity after the end of the colonial period. The author purports to paint these sequences of recent political history of India through the kaleidoscopic view of *The Mahabharata*, whose characters allegorise the ones from the Indian history. Through this allegorical amalgamation of the ancient and the modern times, he highlights that the essential nature of man perpetually remains the same, and history repeats itself.

Shashi Tharoor’s version of the historical account of Indian polity extends over a considerably long period of time. Envisaging almost a period of five thousand years and juxtaposing the ancient and the modern characters of history, The novel begins with Gangaji’s (Gandhi’s) appearance on the Indian political scene, and ends with Priya Duryodhani’s (Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s) return to power after the fall of the Janta Frontor the

Janta Government. Thus covering approximately a period of sixty years, *The Great Indian Novel* encompasses approximately thirty years before the partition of India, and thirty years after that. Thus in *The Great Indian Novel* Tharoor alludes to the symbiotic influence of the heritage of India that we have inherited from the days of the *Mahabharata* and the colonial incidents, events, circumstances and people, who led to the partition of the country. He also refers to those persons, who accepted the responsibility of leading an independent India after the end of colonialism. In *The Great Indian Novel*, Bhishma of the *Mahabharata* and Gandhi of the Indian Freedom struggle become Ganga data or Gangaji. Tharoor allegorically draws a parallel between these two, one embedded in the mythological past and the other associated with the recent history, by emphasizing that the two were equally austere in their principles and both willingly and consciously gave up their claim to power and governance of the country.

Tharoor further underlines how the hunger for power, which was the cause of the battle of kurukshetra in the *Mahabharata*, was an equally important theme in the political scene of both pre and post-partition India. In the process of delineating this aspect, he introduces the character of Kama, who stands for Jinnah and who despite belonging to the same clan was deprived of his rightful position in the forefront because of the circumstances of his birth. Kama fights courageously for his rights and finally succeeds in procuring a part of the territory of the subcontinent to set up a new nation called Karnistan, which stands for Pakistan. This division of the Indian subcontinent into Pakistan and Hindustan on the 14 of August 1947 was recorded as ‘the partition’ in the annals of Indian history, an event that influenced the future of two nations.

This ruthless act of partitioning the subcontinent synonymous to a brutal amputation of the ancient civilization of India, by the British was evidently a direct consequence of the policy of “divide et impera” followed by the colonizers to conveniently enslave their colonised subjects. Dexterously implementing this ploy of

dividing the Indian society, the British imperialists, as described by Tharoor in the great Indian novel, emerge as manipulative and cunning subjugators decried by Jean Paul Sartre in his preface to Franz fanon's *the wretched of the Earth*.

Mahaguru Gangaji is portrayed in the novel as the initiator of the freedom struggle against the British colonizers of India. Tharoor's politico-historical account takes off from the time when he establishes his presence on the Indian political scene. Since his entry on the Indian political scene synchronized with moments of national pride and frustration, of high expectation, fears and anxieties, Gangaji involved himself in an effort to allay these apprehensions of the people of British India, when British colonialism had consolidated itself into a tyrannical system. Commenting on the colonial ethics and practices of the British, and the shallow justifications given for them, Tharoor reveals their inhumanity. The simple logic of colonialism and the rules of humanity applied only to the rulers. The rulers were people and the people were objects. Objects to be controlled, disciplined, kept in their place and taught lessons like so many animals. The civilizing mission upon whom Rudyard Kipling and his tribe were embarked made savages of all the people.

Tharoor's historiography, on the other hand is a juxtaposition of the perceptions and attitudes of the Indian politicians towards the same ideals both during the colonial as well as the postcolonial eras. His analysis of the degradation of fasting and its bathetic fall from Gangaji's serious and grave significance, that he attributed to the practice of fasting, to a mere hypocrisy and mere symbolic practices devoid of its previous sanctity is relevant to the present day political scenario. Referring to Gangaji's victory at Budge, Tharoor comments: "what happened at Budge Budge confirmed the force of the non-violent revolution that Gangaji had launched." Later in the novel justifying the validity of his non-violent armory, that he used to fight against British imperialism, Gangaji said: there is no point in choosing a method in which your opponent is bound to be superior.

We must fight with those weapons that are stronger than theirs the weapons of mortality and Truth.

In this past oriented novel of his through which he brings to light the bases of the present, Tharoor also expresses the confused and peevish reaction of the imperialist, confident of the impenetrability of their colonial fort, to the freedom struggle augmented by Gangaji's efforts. Referring to the latter's slogan of 'quit-India', and elucidating his civil disobedience movement, which begins in the great Indian novel with the Motihari incident and culminates with the Mango March, Tharoor underlines how Gangaji's endeavours turned the tables on the alien administration with polite insolence, and proved to be a major colonial irritant. This is manifest in sir Richard's peculiarly true to form colonial evident in the following quotation: the man (Gangaji) challenges the very rules of the game. We carve up the state for our administrative convenience, these so-called nationalist yell and scream blue murder, and what do we do? We give in, and erase the lines we've drawn as if that were all there was to it. That could be fatal, heaslop, fatal. Once you start taking orders back you stop being able to issue them (60-61) this concept of non-violent struggle is praised by the author not only for being worthy in itself because of its efficacy, but also as an apt method for maiming the autocratic might of the colonizers. He says: where sporadic terrorism and moderate constitutionalism had both proved ineffective, Ganga took the issue of freedom to the people as one of simple right and wrong-law versus conscience-and gave them a method to which the British had no response.

Post- Colonial Point of View

Tharoor's novel does not dwell upon the indiscriminate butchering of the colonized people of India as discussed by the postcolonialists starting from Fanon and Sartre to Said. cannot be ignored that. the British while withdrawing from India a jewel in their imperial crown, left an indelible mark of their authority by callously amputating

both its spirit and its soul. Replete with instances of inhuman rationality and pragmatism of the British rulers. *The Great Indian Novel* is a telling portrayal of their inhuman tactics and practices. One such episode which foregrounds the grotesque in humanity of the British in the novel is the Bibigarh massacre, referred to as the Jalianwala Bagh Tragedy in the annals of Indian history. Apparently, Gangaji's struggle based upon his high ideals was not an easy task, he was taken aback by the murderous means resorted to by the British with the purpose of subjugating the Indians. Tharoor's Bibigarh massacre was one such incident and it was in response to this virtual genocide of patriots that Gingili gave the slogan "Quit India" which gained immense popularity thus evolving into a movement, that spread throughout the country. Tharoor describes this cold blooded, and horrifying inhumanity of the British in the following words: the soldiers fired just 1600 bullets that day Ganapathi. It was so mechanical, so precise; they used up only the rounds they were allocated, nothing was thrown away, no additional supplies sent for. Just 1600 bullets into the unarmed throng, and when they had finished. 379 people lay dead, Ganapathi, and 1137 lay injured, many grotesquely maimed. When Rudyard was given the figures later he expressed satisfaction with his men.

Gangaji's love for the masses catalysed the common man's feelings of pride in his country and his awareness regarding the freedom struggle. This change of focus in India's struggle for freedom was not welcomed by all his colleagues. One of them was Kama, who represents Mohammad Ali Jinnah in the novel. Kama who made his appearance" as a flourishing lawyer in Bombay, sharp, suave, and self-assured, with a bungalow on the Malabar Hill and an accent to match the cut of his seville Row suits" emerged on the Indian political scene when he joined the Kaurav party, that is the Congress.

Despite his allegiance to the party, his views regarding the nationalist movement were different from those of Gingili. "it was as a skilled advocate of a

constitutional brief that kama approached his politics. Not for him the sweaty trudges through the mofussil districts, the mass rallies that Gingili addressed in one or another vernacular. kama always elegant and well-groomed, was comfortable only in the language of his education and in the kind of surrounding in which he had acquired it” thus known for his sophisticated manners and elite background kama represented a leadership opposed to Gingili and his mass oriented ideals. Probably the first aberration from the Gangajis, which had acquired a normative status for themselves, kama explicitly revealed his disapproval of Gangaji’s mass movement as soon as he realized that the mahaguru’s deep-rooted belief in the Hindu culture and tradition enabled him to exploit Hindu symbols for bringing people together. This realization on kama’s part was accompanied by a consciousness of the threat to the Muslinn identity due to a rising popularity of Hindu influence.

Tharoor does not suggest directly that Gingili was in any way responsible for the disaffection between the Hindus and the Muslims, yet he gives clear indications that Gangaji’s ideals and principles were inadvertently responsible for alienating political leaders like (Jinnah) kama from the kaurav party. Kama was not much of a Muslim but he found Gingili too much of a Hindu. The Mahaguru’s traditional attire, his spiritualism, his spouting of the ancient texts, his ashram, his constant harking back to an idealized pre-British past that, kama did not believe in ... All this made the young man mistrustful of the great teacher. and Gangaji’s mass politics were, to kama, based on an appeal to the wrong instincts. They embodied a natavism that in his view would never take the country forward. A kaurava party of prayer-meetings and unselective eclecticism was not a party he would have cared to lead, let alone to remain a member of. Portraying how this intelligent yet selfish leader of the Indians played into the hands of the colonizers.

Tharoor documents karan dislike for Gangaji’s views in some of the speeches made by karan himself: This party is not going to overthrow the British by

leading rabble through the streets. We cannot hope to rule ourselves by leading mobs of people who are ignorant of desideratum of self-rule. Populism and demagoguery do not move parliaments my friends. Breaking the law will not help us to make the law one day..in no country in the world do the “masses” rule. Every nation is run by its leaders, whose learning and intelligence are the best guarantee of its success. say to my distinguished friends: leave the masses to themselves: let us not abdicate out responsibility to the party and the cause by placing at our head those unfit to lead us.

These above quoted remarks of kama are extremely relevant and significant in the context of the present day Indian polity influenced by India’s postcolonial scenario. Accompanying to these statements made by kama, who atone time was known as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslimunity ‘was the British Government’s policy of ‘divide-et-Imper, that created a communal divide among the Indians both Hindus and Muslims. While Gingili, despite his idealism and righteousness, inadvertently sowed the seeds of a rejection of his own preachings himself by ignoring and thus alienating kama from the kauravas, the British consistently endeavoured to underplay and create hindrances in Gangaji’s pursuit of the subcontinent’s independence. In fact, the rift between Ganga and kama ironically helped the British, who intended to divide the subcontinent into pieces. A respected member of the kauravas and a rising barrister of the Bombay High court, Mohammad ali Jinnah, Thraroor’s kama, who believed that, freedom could only be achieved by taking recourse to the british constitutional jurisprudence, defected from the kaurav party, which had completely side-lined hirn a sits leader. Hurt by the humiliation, he was forced to experience because of Gangaji’s nonflexible ideologies, he joined the Muslim League as its president, an act to emphasis his individuality before his compradors. It is observed that, India’s freedom struggle was corrupted much before her independence, with the focus of her freedom fighters shifting from national well being to their individual interests.

This fractured anti-colonialist movement was further enervated by the colonizing techniques adopted by the British, one of them being their ploy of announcing separate electorates for the Muslims. This declaration of separate electorates marred Gangaji's dream of a united independent India, by evidently creating a sense of division between the two religious communities, it was hailed by kama, who is after his defection from the kauravas, had perceived himself as the leader of the Muslims. Like Gingili and the kaurava party, kama, also wanted the ouster of the British and independence for the subcontinent but his idea of independence was, "Independence without Hindu domination." This statement confirms the considerable success of the colonial tool of the "divide and rule" policy diligently used by the colonizers to thwart a united opposition from the Indians.

The Great Indian Novel, Tharoor subtly makes certain pertinent suggestions. He suggests that had it not been for Gangaji's indifference towards kama's views, and his preference for Dhritrashtra, the demand for karnistan would have been non-existent. Tharoor's novel in an indirect and a far fetched manner suggests that, Gingili, who stood for Hindu-Muslim unity throughout his life, ironically emerged as the one responsible for the augmentation of the communal feelings among Muslims resulting in further deterioration in Hindu-Muslim relations. The mahaguru's temperamental inability to keep politics away from religion was the apparent reason behind the agitated feelings of kama and his Muslim brethren. The British raj's announcement of separate electorates had already given communalism a political platform and therefore a veracity considerably serving the colonialist purpose of the European rulers. Commenting on Tharoor's comprehension and depiction of Mahatma Gandhi's role in the colonial India.

The Great Indian Novel, exemplifies Gangaji's efforts to prevent the partition by trying to convince Dhritrashtra to give kama free India's first premiership an act that probably might have averted the partition of the country. It is pertinent to mention

that, this fictional work produced by Tharoor, owes much of its appeal to the largely unbiased attitude towards events and historical personages. May be stated that the great Indian novel also emerges as an effort to destabilize the colonial discourse' consisting of ambiguous and crafted facts about India's past. Dhritrashtra's (Nehru's) refusal to conform to Gangaji's (Gandhiji's) suggestion of giving Jinnah, Tharoor's kama, the first premiership of free India, forcefully indicts this socialist Indian leader for the genocide and the pogrom, that was witnessed as the time of partition.

Tharoor also hints that all this happened because of Nehru's lust for power. Having fought for his country's freedom as a follower of Gingili for decades and having striven with the Mahaguru to maintain India's self esteem, Dhritrashtra like kama suddenly became aware of his self and ambitions. Despite the fact that Gingili had categorically expressed his displeasure before Nehru by saying, "it you agree to break the country you will break my heart" Dhritrashtra obstinately argued: "It will break many hearts Gingili mine and all ours included. But we have no other choice." A statement highly ironical, for the alternative was suggested to Dhritrashtra by the Mahaguru himself.

Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*, fictionalized historiographical piece illuminates the sad misfortune of India, that could not produce another leader of Gangaji's stature. The novel describes the selfish machinations of freedom fighters like the anglicized kama and Dhritrashtra. As apparent, while kama had encashed upon his antagonism to Gingili, Dhritrashtra opportunistically inscribed the Mahaguru's aims with his own anglophi'e opinions thus carving from the laiter's ideals an easy access to his goal of India's premiership. This irony of fate that, India endured in the person of her first prime minister is fully corroborated by Stanley wolpert's revelation of Nehru's misplaced anglophilia. In his book *Nehru: a Tryst with Destiny*, wolpert shows Nehru confiding in

John Kenneth Galbraith, the American ambassador: “Galbraith, I am the last Englishman to rule India.”

The Great Indian Novel describes Dhritrashtra as the leader of the kauravas, who betrayed Gangaji’s faith and trust as soon as a liberated India was born. Thus, laying weak foundations of his infant country, dhritrashtra emerged as an inadvertent accomplice of the colonizers, enabling them to amputate the great country India into Hindustan and Pakistan. Tharoor further, highlights dhritrashtra’s complicity with the British by foregrounding the illegitimate relations, he had with the viceroy’s wife. This relationship is actually described by Tharoor as a successful consequence of the vulpine machinations resorted to by the European colonizers. Representing India’s last Viceroy Lord Mountbatten as Viscount Drewpad, the great Indian novel further expatiates on the clever manipulations of the British by revealing Drewpad’s immoral ingenuity of using his wife as one of the many subjugating ploys of the colonizers. Viscount drewpad’s intentions become evident in his words to his wife, “You are an essential part of my plans, darling we have got to charm these humouless fellows into being more accommodating. You are my secret weapon.

The authors purpose behind the elucidation of Dhritrashtra’s relations with Drewpad’s wife followed by the birth of D. Mokراسي is to question the moral uprightness of the country’s first premier. In fact, Tharoor’s depiction of Dhritrashtra or Nehru as one enamoured of the beauty of a white lady and as the father of D.Mokراسي born of Drewpad’s wife, suggests volumes about Dhritrashtra’s so called independent socialistic opinions. Which were actually dominated by his anglophile proclivities. These indirect suggestions made by tharoor are reinforced by Nehru’s insistence upon adopting a parliamentary type of government for liberated India, similar to that of Britain, instead of a presidential type. Revealing his inherent genuflections for the European colonizers of his land, historians and political analysis have interrogated Nehru’s rejection of Clement

Atlee's proposal of a presidential system of governance on the lines of the U.S., as a model for independent India.

Shashi Tharoor audaciously incriminates Jawaharlal Nehru's ingrained sycophancy for the British evidenced by the words quoted by Wolpert interrogating the veracity of Nehru's patriotic fervor, the novel unveils his "postmodern nationalism. Despite being the first premier of free India, Nehru-Tharoor's Dhritrashtra- established himself as an essential dissembler, in *The Great Indian Novel* by worshiping the imperialists, he had fought against for many years, defeating the very purpose of thousands of Indian freedom fighters led by Gandhi, his political mentor. This unscrupulous spiritual downfall of Nehru's integrity and his genuflecting for his British compradors unequivocally present him as complicitous with the occidental colonizing powers. Radically incongruent to his much promulgated ambition of procuring respect and equality for his country, his facile acceptance of a subservient status for his country as a mere outgrowth 'anillegitimate' child of the west and the Viscerine are apparently worth indictment when considered from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's postcolonial point of view. By consciously acceding to the appellation of the 'third world' or 'marginal' for India, Nehru advertently supported the occidentalist laims of superiority relegating his motherland to a sub category perceived as inferior, thus categorically confirming Bhabha's theory of 'fixity'.

The relationship between Edwina Mounbatten and the Indian democracy established by Tharoor in the novel is actually the Indian nation's eternal dependence on a white lady. This relationship between a first world woman belonging to the colonial period, and her daughter, a denizen of the Third world, in the postcolonial times, emphasizes the continuity of India's colonialism into her postcolonial era. Evidently this blood relation between the colonial and the postcolonial scenarios in the novel attests to

the popular contention that, post colonialism is not a reaction against colonialism, but it is its consequence.

Tharoor's novel emerges as a consummate exemplification of the persistence of British colonialism, in the liberated and free India. Tharoor's fiction explicitly reveals that while before the 15 August, 1947, the country was exploited by aliens, after independence she was forced to suffer at the hands of her own leaders. Gingili, Tharoor's much eulogized hero of the novel, who had non-violently shaken the mighty British empire to its foundations has been criticized by historians for not making use of his weapon of 'Fast unto death' to prevent the partition of the subcontinent. Tharoor's shikhandi not only expressed his personal reasons for killing Gingili, but also echoed those of Nathu Ram Godse's, Gandhi's assassin. In both cases the much eulogized victim had been disappointing and disgusting. This revelation by Mountbatten, highlights how the frail little man Gandhi possessing an immense amount of intelligence and prowess, was unable to fathom Mountbatten's intentions and colonial inclinations, that made the latter toy with the 'ideals.' which had brought the British imperialism to an end. This episode is an exemplification of the perseverance with which the white colonizer continues to pursue his endeavours to play with the naïve and innocent people of India., Gandhi despite all his achievements emerges as one who emotionally blackmails the Indian Government by obstinately adhering to the ideals, he had adopted for the goal of freedom. In *The Great Indian Novel* itself, Tharoor brilliantly showcases the ironies of life of his frail little Mahatma. Although the leader of the struggle for independence, Gingili was the only one who was the most unhappy person on the 15 of August, 1947. It was so because this sweet fruit of freedom was accompanied by the sourness of the amputation of the motherland. After about three decades of perseverance and persistence, Gingili witnessed a dismemberment of his goals and principles, various pieces of which seemed irrecoverable, in the face of a partitioned and independent India.

Tharoor seems to suggest that, while Gingili in an effort to justify his title of Mahaguru inadvertently played into the hands of the colonizers, towards the end of his career, Dhritrashtra aspiring to emulate the British rulers, consciously resorted to the coloniser's ways of thought and governance, bereft of their vicious and colonial intensions. Proudly perceiving himself as the last English ruler of India, Dhritrashtra's immature and self obsessed decisions laid fragile foundations for the Indian polity of the future generations. Tharoor satirically exclaims: the British had neglected village education in their efforts to produce a limited literate class of petty clerks to turn the lower wheels of their bureaucracy, so we too neglected the villagers in our efforts to widen, that literate class for their India-karnistan war over Kashmir, Tharoor's manimir, being placed before the United Nations indicts him as India's blind premier lacking political vision. In *The Great Indian Novel*, Tharoor suggest that, Nehru had acted in accordance with the instigations of the Vicereine, and had taken an absurd decision for which India has to pay to the present day.

Another significant event in Dhritrashtra's tenure as the prime minister of India was China's invasion of India. Before this, under the influence of Kanika Menon, his defence minister, Dhritrashtra had ordered his forces to take over Cornea (Goa) which was ruled by the Portuguese. Tharoor's novel in fact not only describes the pathetic degradation of India's political leadership in the postcolonial times in the person of Dhritrashtra, but also through the portrayal of kanika menon's character. The latter who had convinced Dhritrashtra to attack Cornea, also exemplified a lack of maturity in his political vision, for this invasion of Comea was taken by China as an example for itself. Tharoor gives a candid andan unequivocal expression to the politician. While arguing in favour of Priya Duryodhani's suitability for the premier's chair, Tharoor's narrator justifies before his friends from the Kaurav party: we want a Prime Minister with certain limitations, a Prime Minister who is no more than a minister, a Prime Minister who will

decorate the office, rally the support of the people at large and let us run the country. None of us can play that role as well as Priya Duryodhani can. If we ever decide we have had enough of her well, she is only a woman.

Priya Duryodhani's popularity among the Indian masses increased commendably with the third war between India and Karnistan, categorically won by the former, liberating East karnistan, and creating the independent country of Bangladesh, Tharoor's Galebi Desh. However, Duryodhani with time evolved into a perfect autocrat, (similar to Duryodhan in Mahabharata who humiliated Draupadi) who imposed a siege (Emergency) on the Indian democracy, represented by Draupadi Mokراسي in the novel. This decision of hers to impose a siege over the country, arresting her opponents, censoring the press, indulging in corrupt practices and playing truant with the norms of the constitution, is represented by Tharoor as an effort to molest the sanctity of the democracy or D. Mokراسي. Thus true to her archetypal name Priya Duryodhani committed the crime of blemishing Draupadi, the young Indian demoracy.

The Great Indian Novel thus surfaces as a text elucidating the decadence of the Indian polity at length, debilitating the country and perversely affecting her people. Immediately after independence, the obvious degradation in the morals of the leadership accompanied by an increase in the frequency with which they compromised their selfless values, snowballed into the emergency or siege imposed by Priya Duryodhani on the Indian D. Mokراسي. Tharoor's disillusioned enumeration of the political upheavals in free India exemplifies the gradual process through which, India after the end of British colonialism was subjected to the colonial mentality and mindset of her own leaders. Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* portrays that both in the colonial and the postcolonial era, India and her citizens have always suffered. Priya Duryodhani accompanied by her corrupt band of ministers betrayed the free citizens of India by imposing a siege over the country in the postcolonial era. This tragic irony of fate victimizing the Indian democracy

has been unequivocally described by Tharoor in the novel. Tharoor problematizes and destabilizes the normative concepts of colonialism which categorically differentiate between the colonizer and the native. The great Indian novel also emerges as one of those postcolonial texts which not only italicize the inheritance of a colonial literature by the natives, but also underlines how the foreign coloniser's concept of 'the self and 'the other' has evolved into the native politician's theory of the "individual self and the 'national other.'"

It is therefore observed that through his novel Shashi Tharoor clearly emphasizes that though the Indians have enjoyed the fruits of freedom since long, they have proved to be incapable of ruling a land as splendid as theirs. He Ironically seems to concur with similar views expressed by the White colonizers of the country, who had completely marginalized the Indian natives in the country's administration. Thus an exquisite recreation of the modern history in the context of the ancient past, Tharoor's the great Indian novel makes use of an innovative and suggestive yet forceful technique of writing. The author uses a postmodern form of expression endeavouring to create ripple effects, in which as light allusion gives multiple meanings. Briefly and emphatically making this point in the novel, Shashi Tharoor refers to it in a characteristically postmodern style replete with playfulness *The Great Indian Novel*, Tharoor has succeeded in communicating his ideas and notions more effectively to his readers. Similarly satire is also used by him in a playful, farcical manner in his reference to certain political characters.

The Great Indian Novel, is stressed by the farcical and playful attitude adopted by Tharoor throughout the course of the narrative. This non-serious postmodern stance in the novel is explicitly evidenced in Tharoor's description of Drona's death as a consequence of the false news of Ashwasthama's death. Parodying the same episode in Vyas's *Mahabharata*, Tharoor bathetically narrates how Yudhishtir maintained his

honesty by naming a cockroach as Ashwasthama and killing it. This parodic representation of one of the most crucial events marking the battle at Kurukshetra in the *Mahabharata* in which Ashwasthama, the elephant dies, and the news of his death is reported to Drona by Yudhishtir, is an unequivocal exemplification of a playfulness in the technique of the novel, undermining the gravity of the ages old serious episode. This non-serious and playful treatment is pervasive in the great Indian novel. It will not be wrong to state that by appropriately and dexterously using postmodern technique of writing. Shashi Tharoor not only uses Ved Vyas's *Mahabharata* but also destabilizes it. The narrative technique of the great Indian novel is another significant aspect of this postmodern text. A first person narrative, the novel is generally cast in a series of monologues of the narrator, Ved Vyas, who dictates his story to Ganapathi, his amanuensis. This portrayal of Ganapathim especially as a South Indian, by Tharoor, seems to be an obvious allusion to C. Rajagopalachari, the author of the translated version of the *Mahabharata*.

The portrayal of the narrator of the novel as Ved Vyas, with Ganapathi as his amanuensis both intimately associated with the *Mahabharata* at the very outset of the novel, gives the novelist adequate means to bridge the gap between the political and the mythical history of the subcontinent, and provides them with the same platform by drawing parallels between the two. It highlights that the essential nature of humanity remains the same, and history repeats itself. *The Great Indian Novel* has a circular narrative. Envisaging two diverse histories of the subcontinent is irrespective of the gap of thousands of years between them. *The Great Indian Novel* ingeniously brings them together alluding to the eternal veracity of the tale by using a circular narrative. This circular nature of Tharoor's narrative in the great Indian novel is further evidenced by the fact that, he perceives history from diverse points of view. The narrator, decides to retell the entire tale once again from a completely different perspective.

The Great Indian Novel manifests its unfinished and circular narrative provides the book with unstable and shifting interpretations characteristic of postmodernism. The smooth surface of Tharoor's narrative is ironically dismantled.

The Great Indian Novel is only a work of fiction, since the world it portrays is 'not' the real world that, it resembles, establishing it as a postmodern fiction. It is observed that Tharoor has consistently used "micro narratives" in the novel destabilizing and problem arising two 'grand' or 'meta-narratives' of India by constantly recycling images from them. essentially depicting India's colonial and postcolonial scenarios, the great Indian novel is not only an amalgam of the "fabulative" and the "problematic" aspects of postmodern literature. *The Great Indian Novel* deserves various readings, from various perspectives. This enables this text to acquire the stature similar to that of a 'grand' or a 'meta-narrative'. Equating characters from divergent pasts, the allegorical representations in *The Great Indian Novel* are outstanding exemplifications of baudrillard's theories of 'Appropriation' or "simulation". Tharoor not only juxtaposes the protagonists of Vyasa's *Mahabharata* with those of the recent Indian history but also allegorises and represents different pillars of administration and governance in independent India through Vyas' protagonists. Probably the best instance of a 'simulacrum' or 'simulation' is Draupadi Mokradi of *The Great Indian Novel*. Representing the Indian democracy in the incarnated form of Miss. D. Mokradi, who suffered at the hands of Priya Duryodhani, Tharoor's novel considerably substantiates Baudrillard's theory. Such examples of 'simulations' are also evidenced in tharoor's allegorical personifications of India's armed forces as Bhim, the press as Arjun, and the bureaucracy and the foreign services as nakuland Sahdev respectively. Tharoor's appropriations and allegories in *The Great Indian Novel* convincingly justify the post-modern concept that society has become a simulation of itself.

Conclusion

Tharoor's the great Indian novel is an intelligent piece of literary art that substantiates Jameson's belief that since, it may not be possible for a writer to make create new and profound statements always, it is justified that, he takes existing forms in this case the ancient and the recent pasts-apart and recombines the pieces in an enterprising way. In conclusion, it may be said that Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* is an outstanding postcolonial text abounding in the use of postmodern techniques of inversion, distortion, parody and pastiche. Audaciously inter textual, farcical, satirical and eclectic, this masterpiece of Indian writing in English emerges as an Indian political systems, brilliantly mythified by its author. The conflict of meaning and absurdity in this *Mahabharata* is retold and resolved in a straightforward manner. In both novels analogical 'meaning through writing' is being conveyed by their storytellers. As to the fulfillment of their "dual lust for fathers and saving the country," they are no more 'puppeteers' but rather "puppets with broken strings" (MC 262,426) They are unable to save the country through any immediate personal action. The fulfillment and meaning is to be accomplished rather by the search for fathers. The search for roots which are not defined by just one culture or religion but by many, as supported by numerous allusions. The 'hole' of belief or disbelief is to be filled with a different structure, that of the enlightenment. The rigidity of old beliefs is to be abandoned for the benefit of plurality of multiple roots and opinions.

Thus the new myth and its quest for meaning as viewed in the cosmological perspective of Hinduism, supported by numerous allusions to other traditions and by their imageries, becomes the appeal for plurality, tolerance and change as opposed to the totality of opinion, prejudice, and one-sided rigorous sticking to the principles of tradition. Basic all-human qualities are stressed because they unite people contrary to the totalitarian ideologies and ultimate truths which divide them. There is finally hope for

that highly vital community of “India, which is eternal, emerge again from the ‘whirlpool of multitudes.

In this research paper Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* is analyzed in the post colonial point of view. The novel is examined in Indian mythological point of view. Indian mythical and postcolonial images and personalities are examined as a narrative pattern in the novel.

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