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NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN ROHINTON MISTRY SELECT NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

In order to draw the attention of the readers, many Indian writers, used varied narrative techniques in their works. In this way, Mistry is no way an exception. He is been gifted and blessed with wonderful narrative technique who focuses the facts of the society. So the main intention of this conceptual paper is to disseminate as how Mistry has used narrative techniques in his novels.

Key words: Indian writing in English, Narrative techniques, styles

Narration is an art not a science, but this does not mean that we are necessarily doomed to fail when we attempt to formulate principle about it. There are systematic elements in every art and criticism of fiction can never avoid the responsibility of trying to explain technical successes and failures, by reference to general principles. (Booth, 164)

Technically, a novel, like drama follows various structures such as plot, settings, narration, characterization, language and theme. Every story is written for a purpose. Some writers write to entertain, others may be committed to sensitize the people with social issues through their works. Some other writers fill their works with the historical aspects. So based on their purpose and theme the settings and techniques are used by the writers.

The novelists sometimes analyze the characters, emotions, thoughts, feelings, motives and so on, directly or they allow the characters to reveal themselves through their deeds and actions indirectly. For it the stories are narrated in different methods. The novelist makes omniscient narrators, to narrate the story or may be a first person narration or it may be revealed through a series or diaries or documents. However the point of view may shift from scene to scene, thus the novelists uses various techniques to tell his story.

Mistry, though has written three novels like Salman Rushdie uses variety of techniques in one novel after the other. In fact many critics have appreciated Mistry for his growth as a writer and have compared his transparent style to that of Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo and Thomas Hardy.

Mistry's first novel *Such A Long Journey* (1991) deals with multiple person of narration as the novel involves three historical background, of the national issues. It bring out the three wars of 1948 war with Pakistan, 1962 war with China and again war with Pakistan. Thus by bringing out the three wars, through three different characters of Parsi, multiple perspectives are presented.

For an example, An Indian Army officer Major Jimmy Bilimoria, narrates the post-partition conflict with Pakistan. Gustad Noble, the protagonists narrates about the second war with China and the third by Pay

Master. Thus Mistry has used multiple person narration. M.Mani Meitei rightly comments of Mistry's narration as,

Mistry's *Such A Long Journey* is in line with the realist tradition in which the narrative is pushed forward in arithmetical progression and is chronological rather than spatial in the development of the plot. Along with them there lies a rich fabric of beliefs, superstitions, magic, rites, nationalistic ideas, humanism, radicalism, secular views and so on...based on the sequential development of the plot the book offers a powerful narrative that keeps a sustained intensity throughout with a few surprising turns in order to effect a climax and also precipitate the hero's fortune into a fall. (40)

All the three narratives meet one another in a situation and recreates Bombay geographical landscapes in slices. Though the negative facet of Bombay is narrated, it brings out the real picture of the grown metropolitan city. Thus through the narrators of the story, the author tries to expose several aspects of political circles. The narrators also brought out various social issues like geographical, religious, legal, economic crisis, historical aspects and of Parsi community and culture.

The second novel *A Fine Balance* (1995) brings out the emergency situation of the political turmoil. In fact the novelist narrates and re-narrates, through the flash back techniques to connect various events. Mistry by employing such a technique, makes the narrator to describe the events with the benefit of hindsight. The four different social background narrators, Dina, Ishwar, Om and Maneck, quite often undertakes a journey between the past and the present, by the way of trying to comprehend the nuances of time and society, which is part and parcel. If the first, third and fifth chapter deals with the past, the remaining deals with the present. However, though the characters end with negative remark or tone, yet it brings out the real face of the society. So in this way, the novelist, makes the character to narrate forward and backward and thereby creates interest upon the readers. To this novel Neelam Srivastava states,

retrospective secular narrative of the emergency through the use of a sympathetic and socially conscious third person omniscient narrator. The emergency is portrayed social as an even that brings together four people of different social extractions and of different religions within a tight though temporary microcosm symbolized by the tiny apartment of the impoverished Parsi widow, Dina Dalal. (10)

In brief the narrators of *A Fine Balance*, link one aspect to the other and thus brings out various social issues like casteism, partition, poverty, political turmoil's, diverse religions, problems of widow, dowry problem, begging as a business and absence of law and order etc.,

Unlike the other two novels, Mistry in his third novel *Family Matters* uses the stream of consciousness technique. Through this technique Mistry tries to bring out the inner minds of the characters. The novel has twenty chapters, each representing with an epilogue. Even in epilogue, the author has used narrative device.

*Family Matters* revolves around the story of four generation of a Parsi family. The first one is Nariman Vakil, Head of the family and English professor, the second is his wife Yasmin, a contractor, the third is Jal, Coomy, Roxana and Yezad Chenoy and the fourth is Children of Yezad and Roxana's Murad and Jehangir.

The novel is printed in two episodes. The first episode reveals our Nariman's past which made him to recollect of past and feel guilty for having missed his lady love. This part is also in "the form of dream and reality and sleeping and waking". The second episode deals with the historical issues of partition of 1947 and internal emergency issues of 1975-77. Here the author presents each episode through two characters. The first part is narrated by Vikram Kapur and the second part is by Yezad Chenoy. For an instance, when partition situation occurs Kapur's family were forced to leave away Punjab and so they relocated finally to Bombay. In short, through retrospective narratives various social events like dowry, death, alcohol abuse, evils of communication etc is conveyed.

To sum up, through all the three select novels, one clearly understand how Rohinton Mistry as an enduring writer has employed suitable techniques to his themes and proved his literary or artistic talent to the readers.

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