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TECHNIQUES IN THE WRITINGS OF AMIT CHAUDHURI

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ABSTRACT

A part from different types of themes, Amit Chaudhuri has incorporated various techniques to enhance the beauty of his works. His techniques are largely responsible in uplifting the quality of his work along with the themes. Through them Amit has been able to bring out the remarkable features of Indian Culture and Values. He has a highly cosmopolitan back ground as he was born in Calcutta, brought up in Mumbai, studied in England and now resettled in Calcutta, but is has never distracted him from the local, concrete evocation of specific times and places in his fiction.

Keywords: Amit Chaudhuri

Discussion

In his first novel, 'A strange and sublime Address' he has tried to capture the middle class Calcutta, which was going through a period of industrial and economic stagnation but still rich with a unique cultural Flavour, through the eyes of a twelve year old protagonist, Sandeep. The novel consists of paragraphs which are simultaneously involved, distanced, immediate and mythic. Usage of simple words helps in bringing out a special impact.

Amit defines the myths, ghosts and Bengal tigers roaming behind an unclear boundary. The description of everyday, common place objects, lanes, tanks etc. are done from the view of a twelve year old child but the description is by no means childish. When Sandeep starts his depiction, he becomes the medium of the writer to convey his feelings to the reader. The description of simple objects using simple language becomes an effective technique of Chaudhuri. Its effect can be seen by the fact that after reading the novel the only thing which remains in the mind are underdeveloped areas of Calcutta, problems faced by the common man, social, and political situations and the condition of women. Not only intellectuals but even a common man would be able to appreciate the quality of his works. Though, he uses simple words, but he knows how to emphasize important aspects and brings to light important issues.

Devoid of any artificiality, in his simple style, he is able to raise his voice against the vices of the society.

The same technique of simplicity is used in his next book 'Afternoon Raag'. Here, the writer compares older age with higher maturity which allows the reader to see a different perception and have an understanding of the issues related to each other. Sometimes he becomes wistful taking a ride between the past and present i.e. between Oxford, where the protagonist was a graduate student, and Mumbai, where his parents lived. He

reveals his love for English literature, Indian Classical Music, traditions, culture etc. He delights in revealing the complexity of his cultural sensibility. He makes clear that the personal, the historical and the political matters are inseparable.

He has also compared the strategies of politics by great politicians. He also does not hesitate in stating the facts which are morally or politically not so correct. Actually, it is just an honest, realistic portrayal of common man's life by an artist. Through this technique he never fails in striking a cord of every heart.

In the next novel 'Freedom Song', he portrays the inner feelings of the common non-Muslims. The novel has discussions related to the communal riots taking place as a consequence of demolition of Babri Masjid. The character of Khuku, a middle aged non-muslim lady, has been used by the author as a spokesperson of the entire Hindu community, for whom there was nothing wrong in toppling the disputed mosque. This character may not be morally correct but by creating such characters Chaudhuri asserted that these characters show how irresponsible attitudes can harm a society. Thus, indirectly an incorrect character is used to bring about awareness.

Amit Chaudhuri successfully blends the experience with the moments of insight. This technique has also been frequently used by him. In 'ASASA', he describes the experiences of Sandeep, who is very poor at his mother tongue. In 'Afternoon Raag' he describes the feeling of a young narrator who was distant from his culture and language but was deeply attracted towards it.

The art of playing with simple words to create special effect belongs to Amit Chaudhuri. He tries to direct the attention of the society towards the basic issues. This is clear in his third novel 'Freedom Song'. It depicts the Calcutta of the nineties entering into the globalised capitalism and advanced technology, at the same time being disturbed by the religious fundamentalism.

Another important technique used by Amit is to glorify the Bengali temperament. Words like 'Verandaha' and 'afternoon' have at ways found a place in his books. His characters love to stand in 'verandah'. However, 'verandah' becomes an ambivalent part of the story. Similarly, 'either' or 'or' 'both' 'neither' or 'nor' remain present. These are the designs used for decorating his works.

Amit Chaudhuri has an ambivalent attitude towards. No common English language. On one hand, he finds English as a foreign language and at another; he considers it to be an Indian language.

For Chaudhuri, the problems faced by the common man do not discriminate on the basis of caste, religion, customs or even country. The middle and the poor class of every country face the same problems.

All his works are noticeable for two very important reasons. One is the neutrality of space and the other is the ghost like presence of the writer. His writing techniques resemble the western writers. That may be the reason why Timothy Brennan calls him a 'Third World Cosmopolitan'.

Amit likes to discuss Bengal Calcutta and Bombay, without any qualms. For him, it was not wrong to discuss selected areas or cultures of India. Even after writing about selected parts, he is an eminent writer of India. He is a writer for whom life is a text and language is the source of renewing the perceptions of reality. His works reject post-modernist theories of language. It is not an early job for any other English writer.

Amit's focus is mainly on physicality, locality and sensibility. He prefers to suggest, to leave things half said and half done and to be ambivalent. His techniques combined make his works a delightful read. They have been conceived in such a way that the reader can touch, hear, see & even taste things. They are very close to the life of a common man. He relishes the imagination related to food and symbolizes it poetically. He is able to describe the rolling and throwing of a newspaper into the balcony, leisure activities of labour class, details of his old car, behavior of taxi drivers, maid servants and so on.

Chaudhuri loves to discuss physically and specificity in his writings. He never supports imaginary, homogenized narration of India. He appreciates those writers who write beyond the bounds of the nation and utilize their imagination. This is the technique which transforms a locality into a world. He is able to compare the wrapped towel of 'Chhotomana' of 'ASASA' with a primitive African Chief because he finds no difference

between and Indian and an African. This quality makes his work unique. As a novelist, he can focus on local culture of a place.

He also has masters in the art of making a clear demarcation between the street culture, suburban and mainstream culture. He observes every object which belongs to the middle class. He focuses on customs, traditions, superstitions, talking style etc. Nothing can escape from Chaudhuri's observation.

His tactics of narration are unique to themselves. He never goes for a conventional idea of paragraph development. His stories revolve around the ordinary life of people, season changes etc. He transforms the whole concept of novel. His techniques are able to transport the reader from one world or culture to another. He has evolved through each one of his novels. He is a musician also, and that is why he has an acute ear sounds. This is the technique used by the writer which makes his writings more lyrical. He notices not only the sound but also its effects. In his first novel, 'ASASA' a lot of examples of this technique can be seen. He pays attention to the sounds not only in their spatial sense but also of their temporal sense. It shows that the novelist is too sensitive towards life.

His specialty lies in his ease at writing. His creations are pleasant and close to life. He communicates through experiences of his characters. His techniques to implement similar and metaphors bring about a visual effect to his writings. Such images are scattered at every place in his novels.

Chaudhuri's techniques in the depiction of longer extended paragraph remains same in which the images are created to bring out an emotional attachment of the reader. His characters are grey, red, white and yellow. Grey represents negativity, red is the colour of love whereas white represents peaceful characters and yellow is the colour of friendship. And also these characters are present in almost all of his models.

Another technique used is quite similar to Saul Bellow in which he used to characterize his women. His narration of Amala is embedded in Jayojit's narrative. He creates masterly effects by using modernistic devices like specialization of time and demoralization of space. It brings freshness to his writings. He can observe every detail and the lightest shade of the landscape and all the actions of human beings. He can create a whole concept by using a single word, phrase or sentence.

The next technique is his use of English language. Chaudhuri can aestheticize simple words and bring out images of life which are not easy to observe. His style of using grammar is very different and uses alliteration very confidently.

Another important feature of his writing is he uses words from the languages other than English. He does so because his characters mostly speak English, Bengali and Hindi. The technique of blending such words into the main theme is quite appreciable. It excites the reader to go deep into the novel to get the real meaning from the context. He also portrays the mental bent of Indians.

Amit Chaudhuri weaves his novels skillfully. The events in his novels happen as naturally as they happen in real life, without any planning and expectation. His depiction has no demarcation or rather say clear demarcation between present and past. He is also very innovative in terms of creativity. Every time he uses the same ordinary characters and each time he percolates a new story or theme. He never kills the soul of the novel to follow the rules. His technique is to change the rules to maintain the essence of his creative works.

His next technique is that in his novels, there is very less description related to any particular event. Solve Harrison is correct in calling his writings as eventless narration because its beauty lies in this eventlessness.

His other technique is to bring India closer to his readers. He has presented India successfully on international platform. Every reader appreciates his skill. He is never artificial and prefers simplicity and reality that is why he is attracted to middle class, lower class and upper middle class. He never presents his intentions openly. They are indirectly said. All his novels leave a message which can be decoded only after a deep understanding. He uses his simple expressions to resolve difficult issues of the society. He uses easy phrases, toughing sentence and leaves an unforgettable impression on the mind of the readers.

Conclusion

Amit's works are lyrical, introspective and nuanced with long sentence and impressive style. One of the most important features of Amit Chaudhuri's writing is his evocative ability of using everyday words and encoding of deep-rooted cultural history is a modernist assertion. His second important technique is that his works lack a conventional plot of action, giving more importance to the inner life as opposed to the external life. He is able to influence the reader through his works. His writings are a depiction of the personal as political and vice-versa is an effective expression of post-colonial beliefs.

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