



Recounting the Narrative Techniques and Cognitive Attitudes in the selected Postcolonial Booker Prize Novels

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Abstract

This paper aims in analyzing the postcolonial aspects and cognitive attitudes through the narrative techniques and the characters in the Indian novels of the Booker Prize Awards. - *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, *The God of Small Things* by Arunthadhi Roy, *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai and *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga. The key aspects of postcolonialism such as Orientalism, Diaspora, Hybridity and Postcolonial Feminism are dealt within the study. The study also touches on other aspects such as Otherness, Globalization and Cultural conflicts. The choice of the novels for the study was made on the basis that the authors of these novels were all Indians. The obvious connection among these novels is that the aspects of postcolonialism can be found in each of them in different proportion. The Booker Prize Foundation launched its prize in 1969 with the aim of promoting the most excellent fiction by gratifying the best novel of the year written by a resident of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth or the Republic of Ireland. The panel of members for this prize is chosen from a wide range of authority like good critics, novelist, academicians and also poets, political people and film field members, all with fervor for excellent fiction.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, feminism, cultural conflicts, colonialism, cognitive attitudes

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This paper aims in analyzing the postcolonial aspects and cognitive attributes of different characters in the Indian novels of the Booker Prize Awards. - *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, *The God of Small Things* by Arunthadhi Roy, *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai and *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga. The key aspects of postcolonialism such as Orientalism, Diaspora, Hybridity and Postcolonial Feminism are dealt within the study. The Booker Prize

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great critic has clearly defined the difference in the terms of “Postcolonialism” and “Post-colonialism” in the book *Beginning Postcolonialism*. The hyphenated term represents occurrence about the particular historical period with the given duration of time.

Three important features that fall within this are, reading the texts written by the writers mainly with the history of colonialism, reading texts about migration and re-reading text introduced during colonialism. In historical perspective Orientalism is defined as the division that it makes between the East and the West. It always portrays the superiority and give importance to the strength of the west. The second key aspect is Diaspora. It deals about the immigrants who have made their movement due to compulsion or with various reasons. It portrays the culture, the inherited habit and many other things that they have during their habitation.

Hybridity, the most important aspect of postcolonialism has been well defined by Homi.K.Bhabha. An identical thought process, where new ways of thinking comes to the picture based on identity, community and knowledge. This creates a third space where international culture merges with the existing one and enforces hybrid attributes that leads for the well being of the forthcoming generation. Another key aspect is Feminism, which criticizes the western form of feministic approach, western standards that has different goals and causes.

This postcolonial aspect is revealed by Rushdie in the novel *Midnight's Children* through the characters Saleem, Nazeem Aziz (Saleem's grandmother), Mumtaz Aziz (Saleem's mother), Brass Monkey (Saleem's sister), and Saleem's identity is depicted in another form - Indira Gandhi. Saleem's personal identity is inextricably entangled with that of India and its historical incidents. All the characters characterised by Rushdie, change their own place, their character and name and

survive moving from one place to another showing their own different identity. The belief and knowledge they have among themselves increases the understanding and sometimes make their life happier and based on different situation, ideas generate with very good cognitive ability. In the novel *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy portrays the postcolonial aspect - identity through her description of various characters. The twins Rahel and Estha through whom the complete novel is based on, Sophie - Mol cousin of Rahel and Estha, Papachi-Chacko's father, and Chacko himself is an example of historical identity, the minor character Kari Saibu, and the language of the author also has its own hybrid identity.

The same aspect is also found in the novels *The Inheritance of Loss* and *The White Tiger*. Desai's major characters Sai, Jemubhai Patel-the judge, Biju- the cook's son, the neighbour of Sai's family Cho Oyu are a the examples of the aspect identity. Adiga's characters Balram, Ashok Sharma and his wife Pinky Madam are also examples of this aspect. Thus these characters are examples of hybrid identities, historical identities and diasporic identities, where identity is considered as an important aspect in the postcolonial writings.

The postcolonial concept Orientalism is also found basically in all the four Man Booker Prize Novels mentioned above. The character in the Roy's novel, twins Rahel and Estha in one way or other are influenced to Western culture and in all their activities western culture dominates the most and the minor character Sophie- Mol in the novel is portrayed with the influence of western culture. All the characters personified in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* can be seen in a view that West dominates more in their real life and this aspect Orientalism is sketched by Kiran Desai.

The postcolonial aspect, otherness - how one group excludes or marginalizes another group is also revealed in the above mentioned novels. This aspect otherness is pictured in Roy's *God of Small Things* through



the character Velutha, where one section of people are ill-treated, dominated and betrayed by another section- called as higher class. In Kiran Desai's novel the character cook is also ill-treated and dominated by the upper class people and his son Biju also faces many traumas because of only one reason that he is an Indian, where the Indians are dominated by the west always.

Multiculturalism is also found as a common key concept among the studied novels. The relationship between Ammu and Velutha is a very good example of multiculturalism, which reveals the relation between one culture and the other, the bondage between Chacko and his wife is also an another example of this. In *The Inheritance of Loss* Kiran Desai depicts multiculturalism through Sai and Cook and the conflict between Sai and Gyan can also be taken as an example for this. It is portrayed in Adigas novel from the character Ashok Sharma and his wife Pinky Madam. Postcolonial aspect diaspora is revealed by Rushdie through the character Saleem Sinai and Rahel in *God of Small Things*, Jemubhai Patel in *The Inheritance of Loss* and Balram in *The White Tiger*. An another key aspect of postcolonialism feminism is also found in the various characters in the above mentioned novels. Thus the common key aspects found in the study are analysed.

The narrative techniques used in the novels are analysed since narrative part plays a vital role in capturing readers mind. Narration in *Midnight's Children* takes the structure of a dialogue between two voices that of Saleem and that of Padma. Rushdie mixes different kinds of style and language to create a description very different from conventional western books. From the start he moves within the verbal custom by continuously arguing within himself for the mode of story telling. He uses distinctive colloquialistic features, e.g. No, that won't do, Well then etc. He uses very familiar words, once upon a time, which reveals the oral tradition of the folk-tales and also he

right away produces the exact time and date of the story, when it begins. He even details all the incidents and draws the attention of the audience. The complete text looks as if it is addressed to the audience directly..

On the other hand Roy in *The God of Small Things* departs from the old technique of narration and the point of view expressed in the novel is plural and not singular. A number of passages chapters are beyond the purview of seven year old twins. The narrator has full knowledge of all the events. He freely moves from one character to another and from one place to another. The narrator knows everything about the character including the thought process of the characters as well as things which are generally not accessible to the open eyes. Roy delights in verbal innovation and stylistic tricks. She runs words together – 'thunder darkness', 'echoing station sounds' etc. The narration jumps through time, wending its way through Rahel's memories and attempts at understanding the hard fate deal with her family. The book is also autobiographical and the child character Rahel is so closely Roy herself and she is a completely plausible character with whom the reader can empathize.

The narrative structure revolves around front and back, giving indication on past and present. The authors style is descriptive mode with poetical expressions. The plot of the story is converted into different divisions, based on the imaginative expressions and creative examples. The sub-plot has its own characteristic features and analytical technical modes of expressions. The character analysis are based on intrinsic expressions related to artistic view.

The Inheritance of Loss describes intensely, the characters of different situations in the Northern part of West Bengal in India and an oppressed and disenfranchised migrant who has become heartbroken and distressed due to brutal handling by Americans. The writer brings human sentiments in the story without any



hesitations and makes the readers very interesting.

Kiran Desai jumps from past to present, to near future, and again to past. Desai shifts from one character to another suddenly, and this may create confusion to readers sometimes. But, when the novel prolongs, this shifting also provokes interest among the readers. Desai's shifting narration emphasizes the importance of all her characters, the connections between their lives, and the postcolonial effects they have experienced. . At first, it may seem that she is limited in that ability; however, when the perspective of one character is related, the point of view easily transfers to the thoughts and perspective of another. This not only bridges characters, but also extends over time. In a series of shifts, Desai covers a time period of nearly 65 years (from the judge's birth in 1919 to the Ghorkha protests that occurred in the mid-1980). This recounting allows for the narrative to uncover the separate and intimate stories and thoughts of all the main characters, and it also allows for a deeper evaluation of the conflict experienced by each of them. The narrative moves on between New York, northern India and elsewhere, and also between the here and now, yesteryear and the judge's childhood.

In a parallel narrative style, we are shown different characters and also their way of life. The novel is endowed with comedy, subtlety, playfulness and a very good nature description also. The novel's descriptive plot is very vast. There is a juxtaposition of place and time. Desai follows flash back techniques and the past is compared with the present and local words are used in the novel. Characters of different backgrounds and cultures are beautifully described throughout the novel. Desai includes many Indian words and makes the readers interesting while reading. The flow of the book is very fast, without any stop anywhere. There is much description at the start but it decreases gradually when the chapter moves. Thus Desai

touches the readers mind with her beautiful description.

Adiga's *The White Tiger* narrative technique is quick, entertaining and full of vividly descriptive forms. It is presented in the form of epistolary novel, a series of letters written over a period of seven nights, in which the protagonist Balram narrates the story to the premier of China, Wen Jiabo, who is to visit Bangalore, India's Information Technology capital. These letters become the confessional mode through which the narrator tells of how he became a successful entrepreneur. Adiga has chronologically arranged some important landmarks in the history in his narration.

Though the above mentioned writers follow different style and techniques in their own presentation of characters and structuring the plots, few analyses reveals that realistic approach and everyday societal problems are vividly pictured in the narrative part. More structured analyses are found in all the four novels, highlighting the years and seasonal changes that occur because of varied scenario. Postcolonial aspects and its related theory are interwoven in the approach of the incidental happenings prevailing among the characters. Thus the concepts and the narrative techniques are analyzed in the Indian Booker Prize Novel have been analyzed.

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