48
SUBVERSION OF GRAND NARRATIVES IN SHASHI THAROOR'S
THE GREAT INDIAN NOVEL

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Abstract:
Shashi Tharoor makes the radiant interpretation of Indian metaphysics, literature, and religion by bringing consciousness of underprivileged in it. He disapproves the legitimized and perpetuated values, beliefs and ideology of established castes and religions. He highlights on the cultural manipulation of dominant social castes on the underprivileged. He brings out different forms of manipulation through his writings. His defense for the downtrodden is quintessential. This research paper attempts to understand the value of Shashi Tharoor's efforts in the subversion of established history, society and metaphysics. It concentrates on the grand narration with false ideologies of so called great scriptures and literary works. He subverts the false intellectual property of Indian myth and literature. His writing paves the way to recapture the subaltern self-consciousness erased in the march of caste hegemony. The research paper explores the network of inter-textual relations of epic word of Mahabharata and the modern world. It investigates the highly controversial philosophical and political debates discussed in Tharoor's The Great Indian Novel.

Key Words: *Subversion, grand narrative, totalitarianism, pluralism, hegemony, ideology, orthodox, narration, counter narration.*

Objectives of the Study:

This study concentrated on the following objectives to achieve the directed result by the meticulous interpretation of the novel:
1. To identify the forms of power relations represented in the novel.
2. To interpret the prerequisite issues like grand narratives represented in the novels.
3. To explore political hegemony, political identity and crisis totalitarian values represented in the novel.
4. To make the counter-discursive strategy in evaluating the dominant ideologies.

Introduction:

The term 'grand-narrative' refers to the resistance against established and perpetuated metaphysics, religious scriptures and literary works. It explores diverse forms of manipulation, legitimized ideas, values and beliefs of established class, caste and race. This kind of resistance against the dominant ideologies has been represented in the literary works of postcolonial literary writers. Indian writers and theorists chiefly concentrated on discursive interpretation of many forms of manipulation dealing with the discourses such as race, ethnicity, hybridity of language and culture of the previously colonized countries after their independence. Shashi Tharoor protests against the established values and ideologies of dominant castes and religions. He dares to write the alternative history of Indian. He primarily highlights on history and literature which have been created false consciousness. He relates the suppression of culture and denial of dignity of underprivileged in India. Tharoor realizes Brahminic Hinduism which reinforces and discriminates against the downtrodden in India. Tharoor makes the radiant change in the society by bringing subaltern consciousness.

Analysis:

Vyasa's *The Mahabharata* is an epic written in the form of narration, extraordinarily concerning a serious subjects, containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation. It is one of the major Sanskrit epics of India and a vibrant genre of literary expression that orders superhuman and divine experience and explores socio-political, moral values. It also demands an emotional and ethical response from the reader. The telling of stories is a pervasive aspect of our environment. Besides its epic narrative of the War of Kurukshetra and the fates of the Kuravas and the Pandavas, the Mahabharata contains much philosophical and devotional material. It also considered as historical monument. It is written version in classical Sanskrit and widely translated interpreted into vernacular languages and transmitted a book and oral performance.

Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* traces back its origin in the narration of The Mahabharata. It is a strange vision of contemporary India retold in the grab of the ancient form of story-telling. Tharoor considers the narrative of Mahabharata not only explains socio-cultural relation of their own society, but functions as a legitimization of the existing power relation. To him, text is not an alien entity; it is set up with whole ideological aspects. He, on the other hand, applies grand narratives of Mahabharata to serious issue of modern political world. The narration in the novel is a political commentary on the history of India since the advent of Gandhi. Characters in the novel have the same names of characters from Mahabharata. Gandhi is with Gandhi or Gangaji and moves to the period of Jawaharlal Nehru as the Prime Minister of India. It also concentrates on Lal Bahadur Shashtri and Indira Gandhi. The novel ends with the days of National Emergency. The emergence of Janata Party and its coalition and the defeat later. Through Vyasa's original Sanskrit Mahabharata, Tharoor subverts the narrative of the same with brilliance and endurance than the original version. He protests against the ideas monopoly, gender biases, orthodoxy, ideological strategies, false-consciousness,political hegemony, polygamy and authoritarianism of the established class and castes by giving allusions from the epic. The author explores mythological and historical flaws. He deglorifies the war and criticizes the sublimation and hyper-masculine world view by employing general allegorical references.

Tharoor's novel is a satirical work and mocks on the incidents and characters of the scriptures like Mahabharata. It renarrates the context of the Indian Independence Movement and the first three decades of post-independence. The novel contains puns and parodies of Rudyard Kipling, Paul Scott and Forster. The novel tells the historical dynastic struggle over the throne of the kingdom of Hastinapur between the Pandava's and the Kauravas. The word 'great' from the title *The Great Indian Novel* mocks on the religious scripture of India. The novel is divided into eighteen chapters. The first part of the novel is complements to the Mahabharata. The first part is Book of the Beginning, where the narrator Ved Vyasa (V. V.)remembers his own story. This part explores the Marabharata with new vision. The second book, The Duel With the Crown is counterpart to the Mahabharata's part the Assembly Hall. There are many references like Gangapathi who is scribe of the tale described as big nose and shrewd, intelligent eyes, substantial belly, elephantine treat and broad forehead. These statements about a person is quite discriminative and authoritative. Tharoor explores the racial discrimination where Aryans feel superior from Dravidians. Tharoor connects the ancient story with contemporary history. He compares Mahatma Gandhi, a spiritual leader of the independence movement, to Bhishma or Devavrata, celibate son of Shantanu and the river Ganga. Dhritarashtra, the blind, is compared Pandit Nehru who is often considered as a blind idealist. Pandu, pale, weak younger brother and cursed with heart condition is compared with Subhash Chandra Bose. Pandu gives the sexual freedom to his wives because he was incapable to bear children. This impotency of Pandu is compared with Bose who takes the advantage of Axis power in establishing the Indian National Army. Vidura Hastinapuri a wise son of Ved Vyasaand Ambika's maidservant. Vidura saves the life of Pandavas and Kauravas many times. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel compared with Vidur who forced the accession of the princely states and established the Indian Administrative service significantly.

Jayaprakash Nararayan is intertextualized with Drona a former freedom fighter who opposed the rule of Indira Gandhi. He was the leader of Janata Party. Draupadi stands for the Indian Democracy which is in the crisis. Drupada is the King of Panchala denotes Mountbatten who was the last viceroy of India. Kamala Nehru represents Gandhari who tolerated many sexual infidelities, adulteries of her husband, Jawaharlal Nehru. Shakuni denotes Sidhartha Shankar Ray who holds emergency dictatorial powers in West Bengal in the Naxalites rebellion. Indira Gandhi is represents Duryodhan who seized the dictatorial powers in the period of emergency. Yudhistira, eldest son of Kunti and the god Yama embodies the concept of dharma, honesty, virtue, justice. Morarji Desai, the honest and ineffective prime minister of Indian is compared with Yudhistira. Bhima denotes incorruptible Indian Army; Arjuna exemplifies with supreme commander of the Pandava at Kurukshetra. V.V. Giri is compared with Ekalavya who was a part of labour movement, politics and freedom fighting.

This novel is not the translation of the ancient epic the Mahabharata rather it is a part of commentary of the same. Tharoor subverted the earlier text both structurally and thematically. The gods and goddesses have been compared with real and historical characters. Tharoor rejects the divinity and sublimity of gods and goddesses. He also subverted the monopoly, orthodoxy and manipulation of established race, religion and castes. Tharoor's The Great Indian Novel designates power structure, identity politics, manipulation, authoritativeness and complex power relations.

Conclusion:

Shashi Tharoor compares the ineffectiveness of contemporary political society and compares the historical and political issues of the nation with the ancient period. He employs fun and satire and also mocks on the disloyalty, fidelity and betrayals of both ancient and contemporary society. Tharoor engaged himself in retelling the standard version of history in tongue-in-cheek style. He makes the demystification of grand narratives and advocates humanitarian and political values, tolerance, democracy, pluralism and secularism. He protests against the totalitarian values of ancient period and the diverse kinds of manipulations generated by the ancient societies.

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