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Narrative Technique and Style in Chetan Bhagat's Revolution 2020

Dr. Sunil Gomaji Chaudhari

Assistant Professor

N H College Bramhapuri

Dist Chandrapur, Maharashtra

Gondwana University Gadchiroli

Abstract

Chetan Bhagat has been acclaimed as one of the best-selling novelists of the Indian fiction. He has written about modern Indian youths and their need in his novels. He says that novels are entertainment tools through which one can express his views and opinions about society and the youth. In the modern India human behavior changed into lust, greed, hypocrisy, and hatred and these are the major themes of Bhagat's novels. His novels are incomplete without humour, friendship, love, family conflicts and marriage. The background in which Chetan Bhagat has written novels is predominantly of the society in the post globalization era. His novels are based on day-to-day happenings in the Indian society so ultimately he has written the problems of Indian society in a humorous ways. He has handled the modern situation in proper manner. His characters easily get involved in friendship and love and suffer a lot. He takes upon the sensitive issues which concern to the society in his novels ranging from romantic love story to a shocking condition of the Indian multiculturalism. Bhagat, in the novels describes about the

Indian culture and trend using different narrative technique and style. This paper aims to study the narrative technique and style used in his 'Revolution 2020'.

Keywords: Humour, Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Symbol, Personification

Introduction

Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist, and speaker. He is the author of nine blockbuster novels, Five Point Someone-What not to do at IIT (2004), One Night @ the Call Center (2005), The 3 Mistakes of My Life (2008), 2 States (2009), Revolution 2020 (2011), Half Girlfriend (2014), One Indian Girl (2016), The Girl In Room 105 (2018) and One Arranged Murder (2020) and three non - fictions, What Young India Wants (2012), Making India Awesome (2015) and India Positive : New Essays and Selected Coloum (2019). All these books have best-seller since their release and some bollywood

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films like 3 idiots, Hello, Kai Po Che, 2 States and Half Girlfriend took inspiration from these novels. Chetan Bhagat is seen more as a youth icon than just an author. This IIT and IIM-A graduate is making India read like never before.

Any narrative as a technique of delineation has two overlapping aspects, one refers to content, or the assemblage of material and the nature of the connections implied. The other is rhetorical. It is the mode of presenting the narrative to the reader, or audience. So the art of narration pertains to two basic queries- 'what' and 'how'. 'What' part of narration discusses the various recurrent themes at length. In the present paper, a study is undertaken to elaborate in details the 'how' aspect of narrative technique. Here an attempt is made to limit the study to the use of various modes like humour, simile, metaphor, irony, symbolism, personification, hyperbole, repetition etc. as found in the 'Revolution 2020' of Chetan Bhagat.

Thus, humour is generally used by all the creative artists to provide a variety to the texture and also to relieve the atmosphere of tension and gloom. It helps the author to intersperse comic relief in an otherwise serious plot. Instances of humour abundantly abound in the novels of Chetan Bhagat. Most of them are available in 'Revolution 2020'. Humour is a useful tool in the hands of a skillful artisan to shape his plot in an interesting manner. According to Carlyle, "Humour is sympathy with the seamy side of things." Gopal and Raghav,

most of the times in their childhood during school do not attend Morning Prayer and steal food from other students' bag. Gopal eats chocolate cake from Aarti's tiffin and put dirty ruler on her seat. After the prayer, students come and sit on their respective places. Everyone surprises when Aarti "screamed and jumped up. She picked up chocolate-stained ruler from her seat". Gopal's father wants to see Gopal as an engineer. Gopal, Raghav, and Aarti join AIEEE and JEE, tuition classes in Varanasi. Gopal doesn't want to enroll himself for classes but due to his father, he joins the classes.

Teacher conducts a test where Raghav tops and scores sixty-six out of eighty. Gopal sees his low score and calls himself "good enough to become the twelfth man on a cricket team, but not quite player material". Aarti's ambition is to become an airhostess. She takes admission at entrance exams classes for the sake of her parents. Her father wants her to take education at Varanasi only. She shares her sad news with Gopal at the temple. She says there (Varanasi) are no airlines, only temples, so "maybe I can be a temple hostess". Gopal's father is very happy on the day of result of AIEEE and JEE entrance exams. Gopal had already seen his result at Raghav's house. His father insists him to see result. When Gopal tells him his low score, latter can't control his anger and changes his expressions. He starts to circle round the dining table and asks Gopal what he will do next. Gopal says, "I wondered if

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I should suggest some options- suicide, penance in the Himalayas or a life of drudgery as a labourer". At Kota, the watchman takes Gopal to show him a room for rent. Every house in Kota turns into hostel. Gopal wants a spacious room. A lady owner come out and shows them a room. Gopal describes the condition of room. He says, "The lady, watchman and I could barely stand in the tiny room together". Some students after getting failed in the exams hang themselves. Gopal says, "I've seen dead bodies burning and floating all my life. I don't care if some loser hanged himself". Gopal after the classes daily chats online with Aarti. Aarti takes Gopal's care and always asks him about the day and dinner. Once he sends her a message of Hi! Aarti replies him with three exclamatory marks. Gopal makes comment that "if girls got to set grammar rules in this world, there would only be exclamation marks". He tells the shopkeeper about his condition and says, "I have temper problem. I am working on it".

Aarti's closeness with Raghav increases Gopal's jealousy. Gopal takes it seriously and can't concentrate on his study. He joins the company of Prateek, a boy who is already involved in drinking and smoking. Gopal tells him his love for Aarti and her interest in Raghav. Prateek gives him courage and says, "Don't worry. You will get another girl. Everybody gets a girl. Even the last rankers". Bhagat describes the pitiful condition of private engineering colleges in India. Gopal, after getting low

marks in AIEEE and JEE, wants to take admission in private college. He along with his friend's friend, Sunil goes to Career Fair where more than hundred stalls were built. There a man who was dean of one of the colleges tells Gopal about his college. Gopal shocks and says, "I had never expected a dean to sell the college to me". Two brothers, Jyoti Verma and Mahesh Verma open Chintumal and Sri Ganesh colleges respectively. They try to attract Gopal towards their college. Gopal without asking more details about fees goes to Sri Ganesh's stall who offers him thirty percent discount. Jyoti Verma asks Gopal why he don't ask him for discount. Gopal says, "I had never seen a businessman-cum-dean before". After selecting Shrivastava as a dean, Gopal wants Shrivastava to cooperate him in searching faculty members. Gopal also asks him about the date of opening of the college. Dean says he is ready to start the college anytime and adds that he will come to college three days in a week. Gopal asks how dean can come to college three days in a week. Dean Shrivastava says, "I am the dean that is why three days. Else once a week is enough". He spends total six crore on college building and bribe. He arranges the dinner for AICTE team at Taj Ganga hotel. He invites all the faculty members and government servants who helped him in his college work. All the faculty members come with family. Gopal says this "party of a hundred people burnt another hole in Ganga Tech's pocket".

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Simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things. Every writer has his own technique of writing. He has his own ways of expressing his own ideas and opinions. Gopal's father is a teacher. He is suffering from cough since long time. He even can't engage the class of fifty minute, as he has to take break for coughing. School authority expels him from the job. Gopal says his father turns sixty but his non-stop coughing bouts made him look "like an eighty-year-old". Raghav's father is an engineer. Gopal goes to Raghav's house to see AIEEE's result. Raghav scores good marks and is eligible for any NIT colleges. Gopal's rank is above fifty thousand and isn't eligible for any government engineering colleges. Raghav's father asks Gopal teasingly about his rank. Gopal gets disappointed and feels humiliated. In Raghav's house Gopal feels "like a beggar hanging out with king". After getting selected to IIT, many relatives come to Raghav's house to say congratulations to Kashyap family. Raghav's father looks very happy. One of the relatives says an IIT rank is a huge event "like to climbing the Mount Everest or being on a space mission". Raghav's father gives Gopal a smile when former was talking with Raghav. Gopal says the greeting of Raghav's father seems "like the one you give to people well beneath your stature". Large numbers of coaching classes at Kota force owners to give students a uniform. Gopal chooses Career Path coaching center. After completing the

procedure, a clerk gives him all the materials required for learning including a uniform. Gopal gives a comment that after wearing it made him look "like a budget hotel receptionist".

Metaphor is a figure of speech, which makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics. Bhagat calls Raghav a stubborn pest. Gopal is at Kota for coaching classes but his mind is always thinking about Aarti and his native place, Varanasi. Raghav and Aarti are in love relationship but she is not happy with Raghav's nature, as he never takes her to watch a movie. She tells Gopal that Raghav is "stubborn pest". After getting low score at entrance exam, Gopal decides to do engineering from private college. He meets Vineet, a boy from Varanasi who had once helped him in selecting coaching class in Kota. He advises Gopal to visit Career Fair where many representatives of private colleges come who may admit him with cheap fees. Gopal tells him he has no money and is "neck-deep in debt".

Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. In other words, Irony shows contrast between what is said and what is done. Gopal earns a lot of money by corruption. He builds his

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college building with corrupt money of MLA Shukla who earns it by making fraud of twenty crore rupees. Gopal gives bribe to every government and non-government officers to complete his illegal work. Raghav fights against corruption and even sends Shukla to jail. The person who will marry with Aarti would be the next MLA of Varanasi. Gopal wants Raghav to be the next MLA. Therefore, Gopal who does corruption wants Raghav to eradicate it by becoming a MLA. Admission in private colleges means a process of getting in trap of gangsters rather making spaces in the house of learning. Bhagat has presented pity, pathos, and uncompromising irony:

Mahesh returned with three people who resembled Bollywood thugs. Apparently they were faculty ... I tried to escape, one of Sri Ganesh's goons pushed me. I fell face down and landed on a wooden table covered in a white sheet. It had a protruding nail that cut my cheek. Blood covered one side of my face. Sweat drops appeared on my forehead. I had finally given my blood and sweat to studies.

When Mr Shukla comes to know that Gopal owns fifteen acres of land on Lucknow highway, he becomes highly sympathetic for Gopal. His focus is at the land of Gopal than at his career and ambition. Gopal says, "I am missing something here. Why had the world suddenly decided to help me? What's the catch". Gopal starts the admission procedure of engineering. Many students from rural areas come there to take admission. Bhagat says many students pay their fees in cash. "Farmer's kids, in particular, brought money in gunny bags, with bundles of notes accumulated over the years". In the novel, the whole description of attracting or grabbing the students for admission in private college is ironical and it exposes the inhuman practices being employed in the name of education. Everything is to be manipulated in context of profit taking policy. The ease of presentation is remarkable when Gopal reads out about the structure of Vinayaka College:

See, tuition fifty thousand, hostel thirty thousand, let's say twenty thousand more for useless things. They will make you buy. So pay a lakh a year for four years. Average placement is one and half lakhs. Fuck it. Let's go".

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Repetition is a device to make the same claim twice in succession. This mode gives emphasis on the statement made. Gopal's father by taking loan sends Gopal to Kota for coaching classes. Gopal returns Varanasi with some hope of passing. His father is very happy and wants to pay loans as soon as Gopal gets job. On the day of result, Gopal is at Aarti's house. He terrifies as thoughts comes in his mind that what he will do if he fails to fulfill the expectation of his father. Aarti says him, "It isn't the end of the world, Gopal, it isn't". Gopal wants to make sex with Aarti and for that, he books a room at Ramada hotel where she works. He requests her to stay with him for a few hours. Her duty was going to end at six in evening. Therefore, she calls at her house and tells her mother that the receptionist who is going to join the duty at six pm will not come, so she has to stay for night shift. She tells Gopal that her mother is thinking about her marriage. In her word, Indian parents want their children to "study, study, study and marry, marry, marry".

Hyperbole is an unreal exaggeration to emphasize the real situation. For example, when you meet a friend after a long time, you say, "Ages have passed since I last saw you". You may not have met him for three or four hours or a day, but the use of the word "ages" exaggerates this statement to add emphasis to your wait. Gopal goes Kota for coaching class. Kota is regarded as the capital of coaching class as there are many coaching class institutions. Gopal wants to join top most institution. But one has to give screening test to get

admitted there and for screening test one has to buy brochures. Gopal brings brochure, goes to his room, and keep it on the table. He says I want to exercise, but I had to figure out the "ten million brochures first". In the prologue, Chetan Bhagat writes about Gopal's love for Aarti. After being asked by Bhagat how much he loves Aarti, Gopal says, "Imagine every Sadhu and priests. More than all their devotion put together, that's how much I loved her".

Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea, or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings. When an advertiser proclaims, "Time and tide waits for none", he means to say that the time and tide never wait for anyone. Here again Personification is involved because time and tide being lifeless, cannot speak or tell. Gopal after giving the entrance exams at Kota, returns to Varanasi. He doesn't inform his father about his way back to Varanasi, as he doesn't want his father to waste money on auto-rickshaw. After reaching at Varanasi railway station, he says, "Sight and smell of Varanasi came to receive me at station".

Hyphen is a short line used to connect the parts of a compound word or the parts of a word divided for any purposes such as self-motivation, seventy-five, and mother-in-law. Chetan Bhagat has used many compound words joined with hyphen. To give stress on particular things he joined non-compound words by hyphen. Gopal

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becomes jealous if someone talks with Aarti. Once Aarti makes a joke that if she is denied from doing airhostess course, she will become a temple hostess. Raghav laughs on her joke. Gopal doesn't like the "we-find-each-other's-lame-jokes-funny" between Raghav and Aarti. Gopal and Bedi go to Shrivastava's house to make him a dean of the college. Gopal asks him about his salary. He tells them that he will take two lakh per month. Gopal takes objection and says what other teachers will say if Shrivastava is given two lakh per month. Bedi interferes and settles the deal. Gopal is happy as they settle for a "one-lakh-cash-seventy-thousand-cheque" package per month.

Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. For instance, "smile" is a symbol of friendship. Bhagat has used very less symbol in the novel. Bhagat has used the numerical '2020' in the name of the novel. Figure, 2020 is a symbol of year when our country will be free from social evils like corruption. Throughout the novel, Chetan Bhagat has given stress on the word corruption. It is suggestive. Raghav in the novel starts revolution by dismissing MLA Shukla and having hope of getting rid from corruption by the year 2020.

Chetan Bhagat has written his novel in the first person. He told the story through the characters of main protagonists. A passage from the novel tells his technique of using first person:

I wondered if I could give some laddoos to drama queen Aarti as compensation for the cake. I wanted to buy a chocolate cake and slam it on her desk. However, I didn't have money for that. My father didn't give me any pocket money, and he didn't have much money in his own pocket.

Bhagat has used memory as the device for recollection of past. He recovered the past events and incidents through individual and communal memory. The characters reconstruct the past, through telling, listening, and remembering. Speech is a powerful instrument for this purpose. Gopal at school used to take simple food in his tiffin as his mother dies when he attains the age of four. He wishes to buy chocolate but he can't as his father does not give him pocket money. He remembers his past memory:

My mother's illness had wiped out all his savings. She died two weeks after I turned four. I don't remember much of her or her death. Baba did say he had to wear

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her dupatta and sleep
next me for a month.

Gopal faces many problems at Kota while searching for room. A watchman of the Gayatri building takes Gopal from one building to another to show him a rented room. Gopal gets tired, as it is hot noon. He thinks about his past:

I thought about how different my life would have been if I had answered six more multiple-choice questions. I, thought of Raghav, who would at this moment, be attending his orientation at BHU campus. I thought of Aarti and our heart-to-heart conversation. I thought of baba's ill health and his determination to kick me into this dump.

Bhagat has also used story-telling technique in the novel. Aarti changes her decision of marrying with Raghav and wants to marry with Gopal. She writes scrapbook on Gopal's birthday in which she writes:

Once upon a time, a
naughty boy stole a
good girl's birthday

cake ... The naughty
boy, however,
became the good
girls friend. He came
for every birthday
party of hers after
that.

Every writer has its own style of narrating events and situation. Some allow in flights of fancy and provide their description an imaginary theme. There are novelists who furnish facts and who are very practical in presenting them. There are novelists who refer to the ancient legends to show similarity or offer contrast in their claims. It is to the credit of Chetan Bhagat that he employed all these devices to make his descriptions not only life-like but also living.

Chetan Bhagat has used many Indian words in the novel. These are Poha, Behenchods, subziz, rotis and dal. Many instances can be cited to show Chetan Bhagat's skill of narration in the novels. He is a keen spectator of people. His sense of humour and presence of mind provides his description a novelty.

Conclusion:

Thus, Chetan Bhagat in his novel, Revolution 2020 has tried to present the different narrative techniques and styles. He has used simile, metaphor, personification, repetition, hyperbole etc. In the novel the author has given stress on humour and other techniques. Gopal, Raghav and Aarti used figurative language. Bhagat is successful in making the reader happy. New readers who

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don't know the literary language can also enjoy the writing style of Chetan Bhagat. The author has succeeded here in describing all the things in beautiful manner. He has also succeeded in keeping the readers stick to novel up to at the end.

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