

**The Narrative techniques in Show Business by Shashi Tharoor**

---

**T.R.Persia<sup>1</sup>**

Research Scholar (Full Time)

Department of English, VELS Institute of Science and Technology of Advanced Studies,  
(VISTAS) Chennai-117

**Dr T. Senthamarai<sup>2</sup>**

Associate Professor, Department of English, VELS Institute of Science and Technology  
of Advanced Studies, (VISTAS) Chennai-117.

---

**Article Received:** 1/8/2022,

**Article Accepted:** 28/08/2022,

**Published online:** 07/09/2022,

**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2022.4.9.02

---

**Abstract**

Shashi Tharoor is a well-known literary artist and a prominent figure in Indian literature. He is a renowned diplomat who became a writer who published in various areas. Tharoor supports and strengthens Indian cultural heritage through his fiction and non-fiction narratives. He focuses on plurality and openness in India's diverse heritage. He also wants to help us understand Indian culture and history better. Shashi Tharoor is fascinated by India's diverse identity, which is the driving factor, inspiration, and enthusiasm behind his classical and non-classical works. His personal view is more forthright than that of most of his contemporaries. He expresses a definite social and political viewpoint in his writings. Show Business by Shashi Tharoor is a novel on Indian social reality. In this novel, Tharoor uses movies as a metaphor to analyze several facets of the Indian experience. The author depicts Indian film culture against a backdrop of current mythology. To him, the film industry encapsulates India's diversity. This article explores the usage of figure-of-speech in this novel. A figure of speech is a term or phrase with a meaning other than the original. It might be a metaphor or a simile used to contrast two things. It produces an emotional impression by iterating alliteration or emphasizing hyperbole. Show Business brings the actor's "actual life" and "reel life" to the forefront, attempting to persuade us that such lifestyles sometimes correlate but are diametrically defended at other times. This article aims to assess how well Tharoor has depicted the confluence of these two lifestyles in his novel. It also seeks to judge how well performers manage to live these two lives at the same time. Furthermore, the article aims to determine whether or not this novel has succeeded in exposing us to modern India's social, political, and cultural aspects.

**Keywords:** Shashi Tharoor, Show Business, The Figure of Speech, Metaphor, Simile

## **Introduction**

Documentary and social novels represent a general way of life, a specific social or professional community, and the total of social experiences and feelings. The novelists have attempted to capture the essence of Indian culture. The sensation of isolation, alienation, and self-excitement has been a significant part of realistic fiction throughout the post-independence period. Personal and social words are used to view society, combining individual and social practical components.

Personal relationships, aspirations, and characters' feelings are all considered in personal, realistic books. Because they are part of society, these individuals can sometimes become parts of culture and a general way of life. For example, Salman, Rushdie, and Amitabh Ghosh have been successful in their endeavors. The intriguing aspects of pan-Indian social reality include politics, fabricated Indian history, insurrection and dominance, patriotism and internationalism, urban quotidian life, family relationships, and ethnocentric and religious beliefs.

Show Business, Tharoor's second novel, was published in 1991 and is an attempt to understand India, its population, and the phenomena known as "Indianness." The work, which is driven by a feeling of worry and interest, is a direct response to the writer's concerns, as he contends:

What do these stories tell the Indians? What do they mean about Indians? What can we know about the world from which these stories come? That is the world of the filmmakers and the actors who make these films. And in turn, what does this all reveal about India as a society today? (TSB)

Show Business distinguishes between appearances and actuality, between the ambiguous globe of movies and the actual globe of reality. It portrays modern living in a humorous and ironic light. The entire research is dedicated to "the intricate interplay between the neatly controlled binarism of the movie world and the variety of real life," as Chelvakanaganayagam characterizes it in his article Exile and Expertise. However, a film hero's glossy personality and the Bollywood industry's hollowness are an unpredictable blend of fiction and actuality. (Kanaganayakam, 49). Tharoor, a gifted writer, has produced a novel about the Indian cinema industry, which depicts an unreal social structure. Nevertheless, film scripts, including Musafir, Godambo, and Dil Ek Quila, address significant social issues such as morals, violence, family life, Swiss bank accounts, and religion.

When Tharoor published this novel, people were astonished as they intended him to pursue 'The Great Indian Novel' with a book on the shabby universe of commercialized Mumbai movies. And yet he did so as he believes that Indian movies, despite the flaws and downright irrelevancies, are part of India's upcoming optimism. Films are the primary medium for transferring popular culture and values in a country. Bollywood and its provincial affiliates

engage 2.5 million people and make over 800 movies annually in 19 languages. The Indian public repeatedly watches their films; movies are quite economical sources of entertainment when another sort of entertainment. Famous cinematography in India derives from and has always mirrored the heterogeneity of the pluralist society which produces it. The narrations are repetitive; the Indian cinema where good welcome content and content creators with moral and cultural values without any discrimination of language, culture, religion, cuisine, and outfit, so-called unity in diversity. It is what organized the film industry and symbolizes the fundamental idea of India's plurality. "The whole point of Indianness is its pluralism," he says.(Rai, 86)

In *Show Business*, Tharoor claims that these amusements and diversions reveal much about him and others attending these flicks. And he's unveiling India in the process. Tharoor examines the Bombay film sector and the movies he views as the principal medium for transferring fictitiousness to many Indians to reaffirm and recreate a feeling of Indianness. During an interview, he revealed why he used this cinematic metaphor in *Show Business*.(Parmar, 36)

In the second novel, I . . . looked at stories . . . of the famous film industry. Why? Because our country is still fifty percent illiterate, films still represent the principal vehicle for transmitting fictional experiences. Besides your grandmother telling you the stories on her knee, you go off and get your fiction by watching a movie. (TSB)

This novel is a humorous description of Bollywood, or the Mumbai movie sector, at its basic level. This novel follows the history of Ashok Banjara, a politically well-connected but distressed theatre artist who chooses to leave his comfortable political position and pursue his dream of becoming a Bollywood superstar.

### **Literature Review**

At this point, some of the critics' and reviewers' comments on Tharoor's novel *Show Business* are worth noting. The Shashi Tharoor "educates us while brandishing a needle-sharp sarcastic sword," according to the Seattle Times, in this "hugely entertaining" and "delightful depiction of India's popular silver screen." Prieta Maitra notices a funny parallel between cinema and politics and concludes that "success in either requires the development of clever methods of deceiving the masses." By Earth Times, the story "captures the corrupted culture of modern India and... ruthlessly satirizes it." According to the author, the work also portrays India's political, economic, and cultural realities with understanding. It's a "withering satire on Bombay's movie sector... elevated to a new and more global level by revealing what is similar between movies and economics," according to Saros Cowasjee of the Toronto Star. In this work, India West, like The Earth Times, reveals "deeper insights concerning India's political and social realities." According to T. N. Dhar, *Show Business* embodies Tharoor's character.

### **Indianness in Show Business**

Tharoor's second novel, *Show Business*, was published in 1992 and is a satirical note on the Bombay film business. Later, the book was converted into a Bollywood film. The story recounts the history of Ashok Banjara, a prominent cinema star, from when he was battling to

break into the industry to when he was fighting for survival following a deadly accident in a shooting zone. Banjara is based on Amitabh Bachchan, whose life is remarkably similar to that of the fictitious hero. A continuous loop of the big blockbusters in which Banjara has appeared serves as a backdrop to his climb to the pinnacle of Bombay's economic cinema-'a never-ending vision that took over his life and changed it. Into an incredible, albeit fascinating, lie.' Tharoor utilizes cinema as a conceptual metaphor to analyze the present myths created by popular Hindi cinema and specific aspects of Indian life that he thinks are a vital medium for communicating fictitious experiences to the Indian masses. He makes a fictional world that becomes an artistic metaphor for more profound truth: delusion and actuality, ambitions and greed, love, deception, and mortality, using a montage film story, shooting screenplays, music, and monologue.

It is a hilarious novel regarding the glitz and glam of the Hindi cinema field, otherwise popularly known as "Bollywood." The book enhances Tharoor's position as one of India's most prominent figures and a world-class writer. Tharoor depicts Bollywood with hints of Hollywood, such as glamour, ego, and double ethics. Tharoor has skillfully mixed various facets of the movie industry with realities, such as the power of privilege, sensuality, deception, politics, and rivalries, to create a colorful, engaging, and deadly serious drama. According to the New York Times, the book is "exuberant and witty..... both tenderly and furiously done."(Pierson,)

### **Identity Conflict and hybridization in Show Business**

It is a raucous novel about Bollywood, the huge Hindi/Indian movie sector. It's essentially a biting satire on Bollywood, depicting the evil side of the industry, such as ego, adultery, glamour, sensuality, politics, privilege superiority (nepotism), and double ethics. Based on real-life celebrity Amitabh Bachchan, the film actor Ashok Banjara has a career faithfully followed throughout the book. The story followed Ashok from when he was a fighting artist trying to make a name for himself, himself the beauty globe, to when he was involved in a tragic car accident on a movie set and struggled to survive in a clinic.(Ghosh, 186)

Banjara's films became blockbusters, turning his life into a never-ending illusion and transforming his actual life into a perplexing but persuasive and exciting untruth, to the point where Ashok lost touch with reality. The stories involve comprehensive screenplays as well as 'Bollywood style' conversations, monologues, and music, which together create a make-believe universe that serves as a vehicle to attract attention to the greater truth of life-love, fatality, passion, willingness, deception, greed, and the profound variation between illusion and reality. "In the second novel, I... looked at stories... of the popular film industries," Tharoor said in an interview. Why? Since our nation still has a 50% illiteracy rate, films are the primary means of transmitting fictitious experiences."(Kreisler)

The depiction of Ashok Banjara as a societal, economic, and commercial figure in the beauty world illustrates Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial idea of "hybridity." The story depicts the Indian cinema sector in every one of its complexities. This novel is a mix of literature and movie investigating the tensions between the classical and the silver-screen mediums of fantasy on the surface. Tharoor, in a sense, re-discovers and exposes modern India's concepts, narratives, and difficulties.

### **Multicultural Concerns in Show Business**

It is a satirical exposure to the Bombay cinema industry. It satirizes the paradoxes in not only Bollywood film culture but also a trenchant indictment of corruption in the Indian public lifestyle. The story recounts the journey of Ashok Banjara, a prominent cinema star, from when he was fighting to make a remarkable comeback into the industry to the time he was fighting for survival following a severe crash in a shooting area. Banjara is based on Amitabh Bachchan, whose lifestyle is remarkably similar to that of the fictitious character. This is demonstrated by the words: *You're too tall; your legs are too long. Your back is too straight, whatever.* (Patil, 123)

Tharoor utilizes cinema as an artistic metaphor to investigate modern myths created by popular Hindi cinema and specific parts of Indian life, which he thinks is vital to communicate fictitious experiences to the Indian masses.

The novel Show Business explores the inner workings of the film industry and the career of a fictitious superstar named Ashok Banjara. Tharoor has clarified it in various interviews, stating that it relates not only to Bollywood but also to politics and religion. The narrative revolves around Bombay cinema, which reflects society's shattered morals.

Tharoor is of the political ideology that the present Indian politicians have a selfish attitude. They are very greedy to accumulate money, property, and so on. Tharoor satirizes such a political system for promoting castes for their political gain. The cinema is the world of make-believe. The film producer's business is to show everything clear, simple, massive, and magnified. Life in the film is shown in black and white in Technicolor.

### **Post Modernism in Show Business**

Literary, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction, lifestyle, and literary criticism all fall under the umbrella of postmodernism. The rise of research and the explanation of the world characterize current modernity. Authenticity, legitimacy, certainty, distinction, isolation, textually, and skepticism are all common associations. Shashi Tharoor has effectively integrated postmodernism into all of his works. Show Business is based on the life and experiences of a Bollywood superstar in the Indian movie sector and the Indian Legislature. (Bhavana, M, 34)

The humorous and comedic portrayal of fictitious and political realities of India is a compelling illustration of the importance of achievement in both the actual world of Indian

politics and the movie sector. He masterfully employs postmodern parody and pastiche tactics. In *Show Business*, Tharoor uses a lot of pastiche. He depicts the subcontinent's societal, financial, and cultural landscape as typified by the duplicity that pervades its Mumbai-dependent movies and Delhi-dependent policies. The movie-dependent metaphor is a resource of compilation in this novel. "There are actors in Bollywood who pay their taxes, surely, and there are honest politicians. It even sounds like an oxymoron." *Show Business* exposes the distorted vision and mentality of today's Indian politicians, which has an impact on the nation's administration.

### **Conclusion**

In Shashi Tharoor's "*Show Business*," the current work has the creative and critical taste to show Indianness. It also demonstrates Shashi Tharoor's skill as a novelist by extracting his unique features and attributes and using Indian elements in his writings. As a result, Tharoor employs cinema as a fresh metaphor for exploring many facets of the Indian situation. The author depicts Indian movie culture against a backdrop of current mythology. He chooses the Mumbai cinema industry to tell an intelligent narration about hits and misses in the film and political worlds. Indeed, he creates a fictitious environment to communicate his underlying concerns. Tharoor's *Show Business* inspires and also informs us about some of India's darker realities. It takes us to a pleasurable realm while highlighting aspects of India's economic, historical, and political concerns. It also depicts the heterogeneity of pluralist society and the majority of Indian people's delights, sufferings, procrastinations, and predicaments. In reality, even a corporate filmmaker adds to and aids in articulating and articulating the society's cultural identity. Films, identity, culture, and growth are inherently intertwined and interconnected.

### **References**

- Kanaganayakam, Chelva. "The Anxiety of Being Postcolonial: Ideology and the Contemporary Postcolonial Novel." *Miscelánea: A journal of english and American studies* 28 (2003): 43-54.
- Rai, M.K., "Exploring India And Indianness Through Cinema: Shashi Tharoor's *Show Business*." *Research Scholar*. 3.3, (2015): 85-94.
- Bashiruddin, Mohd. Nasiruddin. "Metaphorical Description of Cinema in Shashi Tharoor's *Show Business*." [www.researchvistas.com](http://www.researchvistas.com) 03. 1 (2014). Web. 20 September 2014.
- Kreisler, Harry. Interview. *Conversations with History: A discussion with Shashi Tharoor*. Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley, 1999. Web, 17 April 2011.
- Pierson, M. (nd). *The Review of Show Business*. *The Village Voice*, New York. Online. [www.badmashfilms.com/quotes.htm](http://www.badmashfilms.com/quotes.htm). Accessed on 2 April 2010.

Parmar, B.D., 2013. The reflection of Indianness in Shashi Tharoor's work. International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, 1(7).

Ghosh, D., Hybridity and Indian Conflict of Identity in Shashi Tharoor's Novels.

Patil, E.D., Exploration of Multicultural Concerns in the Novels of Shashi Tharoor.

Bhavana, M. and Shibila, K., 2017. Post Modernism in Shashi Tharoor's Show Business. International Journal for Advance Research and Development, 2(8), pp.33-35.