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A Thematic Study of Amit Chaudhuri's Writing Style and as a Creative Writer of the Highest Intellectual Quality

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ABSTRACT: Amit Chaudhuri is a worldwide novelist, poet, essayist, academic and critic. He creates his own style and themes. His themes have no inclination such as Diaspora, nationalism, feminism etc. He writes about life. He makes unimportant things important. Style in literature is the literary factor that explains the ways that the author uses to include the author's word choice, sentence structure, figurative language, and sentence arrangement which work together to establish mood, images, and meaning in the text. The aims of this research paper to study Amit Chaudhuri's craft style in his various novels and in general. A writer's style is what sets one's writing apart and makes it distinctive from others. It is the way in which writing is dressed to fit the specific context, purpose, or audience. This paper will discuss the literary techniques used by Chaudhuri in the selected novels, *A Strange and Sublime Address*, *Afternoon Raag*, *Freedom Song*, *A New World*, and *The Immortals*. He has used various techniques like different words, allusions, imagery, irony, etc. which make his novels more interesting.

KEYWORDS: Literary technique, cultural spaces, Style, Imagery, Irony and lyrical writing, literary intellectuality and literary sensibility etc.

OBJECTIVES

To study various literary facets of Amit Chaudhuri's personality as a creative writer of high intellectual quality

- To study the cultural and traditional values in Indian and Western perspectives.
- To highlight the passion for north Indian classical music in the form of raga in the context of Chaudhuri's novels.

I. INTRODUCTION

Amit Chaudhuri is a versatile writer working in numerous genres. He has written fiction, poetry, stories, essays, memoir and literary criticism. His writings have appeared in *The Guardian* and the *London Review of Books*. He has written seven novels: *A Strange and Sublime Address* (1991), *Afternoon Raag* (1993), *Freedom Song* (1998), *A New World* (2000), *The Immortal* (2009).

Amit Chaudhuri's first novel, *A Strange and Sublime Address* (1991) is about a boy of twelve years, Sandeep, who comes to spend his holidays at his uncle's home in Calcutta. Here, he cherishes simple joys of daily routine – cooking, bathing, eating, and sleeping in contrast to his organized and lonely life in Bombay. Chaudhuri tries to capture the faded comfort and happiness of childhood. The novel is about the pure innocent memories of small middle class homes in India. Chaudhuri's use of language in this novel reveals an extraordinarily keen sensibility. A sense of nostalgia suffuses the novel. The little pure moments of childhood and the disappointments of daily life are brought out beautifully. The central point in *A Strange and Sublime Address* is the impression created on children's minds by the prevalent culture and lifestyle in a particular place. Chaudhuri's descriptions remind us of our childhood memories such as the sounds of radio babble "like a local idiot" and of thunder that, after a "moment's heavy silence," speaks "guruguruguru". Each and every detail in *A Strange and Sublime Address* is described properly. The author tries to engage with human life in a detailed manner. The Character of Sandeep seems autobiographical. It is similar to Chaudhuri's childhood. Chaudhuri beautifully draws a comparison between the simple joys of childhood and the corporate world. The novel also moves back and forth between the city of Calcutta and Bombay. Calcutta offers a carefree life whereas Mumbai offers an organized life. Sandeep feels trapped here in Bombay. Chaudhuri narrates the life of Sandeep as a grownup man. He lives with his parents in Mumbai in a multi-storey building. Life in Mumbai is rather excessively organized, mechanical and lonely. Sandeep feels closer to Calcutta and derives great pleasure in the company of his cousins. While describing Sandeep's big apartment in Mumbai, Chaudhuri suggests Sandeep's craving for a carefree life: He was like Adam in charge of paradise, given dominion over the birds and fishes; he was too much

in the foreground. It delineates the experiences of a young Indian student of English Literature at the University of Oxford. The novel is also a tribute to Indian classical music. Multiple emotions are evoked with the help of rāgas

Freedom Song (1998) is set against a backdrop of growing political tension between Hindus and Muslims after the demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992. The novel also examines the dealings among two families living in Calcutta going about their domestic business against a backdrop of civil unrest. Khuku's annoyance with the Muslims is hinted at when their call to worship wakes her up rather early every morning. Her husband Shib is a retired businessman. He is hired to cure a "doomed" candy factory. Khuku's brother, Bhola, is worried about his son Bhaskar's involvement with the Communist Party as it may affect his marriage prospects. The book is thus about a family's efforts to marry off a troublesome young fellow. The two friends' close relationship and their conversations about family, social relationships and Muslims structure the narrative. The events intersecting with the ordinary people's consciousness are Chaudhuri's main concerns, for instance, a scene in which both Khuku and her friend sit and eat oranges, all the while discussing Bhaskar's involvement with the Communist Party. In *Freedom Song*,

A New World (2000) offers a picture of the emotional intricacies of marriage and its failure. It is about Jayojit Chatterjee who lives in America and visits his elderly parents in Calcutta. He feels uprooted and unsettled. His Bengali wife, Amala, puts her husband through a nasty divorce after falling in love with her gynecologist. She has also gained custody of their young son, Vikram or Bonny. Jayojit is allowed to have Bonny with him only during the boy's school vacations. Jayojit feels obligated to take Bonny to Calcutta to get him to meet with his grandfather Admiral Chatterjee and his grandmother Ruby. Through Chaudhuri's precise and evocative writing, the reader experiences Jayojit's inner life and his past, particularly his struggle between the memories of India and of America.

Friend of My Youth (2017) is part novel and part memoir. It is a book about friendship, the memories of youth and Mumbai. The narrator had a childhood friend named Ramu who has, for most of his life, been addicted to heroin. In brief, the book embodies the narrator's memories of his childhood. Chaudhuri also explores the nature of friendship, especially the kind of friendship that is formed early in life. Thus, Chaudhuri is miniaturist, formalist and suggestive lyricist writer who writes about self and culture. James Wood comments on Chaudhuri in *The New Yorker*: He has defined that "refutation of the spectacular" throughout his career. Chaudhuri creates impressionistic and poetic atmosphere. He never forces anything on us. There is no detailed plot, no fixed design, no faked "conflict" or other drama. His creations seem more like documentaries rather than fiction. He seems to elaborate that literary pleasure is a human pleasure, as we slowly encounter this strolling, musing, and forceful self.

The Immortals (2009) is a story of two families. One belongs to the corporate world and the other to the tradition of music. Music is the thread which ties the two families. The book is about three music lovers: a mother, her son and their guru, who is a classical music teacher. Mallika Sengupta, one of the central characters of the novel, is married to Apurva Sengupta, chief executive of a large corporation. She is interested in learning music. Mallika's sensitive son Nirmalya also loves classical music. Shyamji, a musician and tutor who instructs Mallika and later Nirmalya. In brief, Chaudhuri interweaves art and relationships, reflecting on the conflict between art and commercial values in an India transformed by globalization.

II. DISCUSSION

Amit Chaudhuri has contributed fiction, poetry, criticism and reviewed in the most of the major journals and publications in the world as *The Guardian*, *The London Reviews of Books*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The New York* and *Granta Magazine*. He is the editor of an anthology of Indian writing, the *Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*, published in 2001, including translation from Hindi, Bengali, Urdu into English, works of 38 authors covering a hundred and fifty years. His collection of short-stories, *Real Time*, published in 2002, set in Bombay and Calcutta. Some stories have been published in the *London Review of Books*, the *Time literary Supplement* and the *New Yorker*. He has also edited *Memory's Gold: Writing on Calcutta*, published in 2008. It is a unique collection of stories, essays, poems and memoirs of people in which he shows different stages of their relationship with the captivating city, Calcutta. Chaudhuri awarded the West Bengal government's Rabintra Puraskar for his book *On Tagore: Reading the Poet Today* in 2012. This book is a collection of essays on Rabindranath Tagore in which Chaudhuri deals with the eternal moments of Tagore's life as a poet. In 2012, he won the Infosys Prize for his extraordinary contribution in the humanities of Literary Studies. Chaudhuri proved his imaginative and theoretical mastery in writing of literary criticism as a critic with the publication of *clearing a Space: Reflections on India, Literature and Calcutta*. This book is called 'the best work of criticism by an Indian' by *Caravan Magazine*, India's leading journal of ideas. His non-fiction book, *Calcutta: Two Years in the City*, published in 2013, is a personal account of two years (2009-2011) in the city after moving from England to India. His latest book, *Telling Tales*, is a collection of essays, published in different publications from *Telegraph* (Calcutta), *Granta* and *London Reviews of Books*. His books are published in more than 12 countries and translated into several languages. At the first stage of writing, Chaudhuri was writing only poetry and



imitating the writers as Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and Baudlaire. He wrote a great deal of poetry and his collection of poems, *St. Cyril Road and Other Poems*, published in 2005. But suddenly he changed his mind and decided to move from poetry to prose. Amit Chaudhuri said in an interview, “When I was 23 I wrote a poem about a street ... my parents had moved to in Calcutta. It was the first time I had actually written about a real locality, a real street, a real neighborhood. Before that, I thought writing and poetry was about grand themes and I felt that surely nothing I had experienced first-hand was important enough to put in a poem led gradually to wanting to put another neighborhood. I had known in Calcutta in a novel. I realized I was a person who actually wanted to write about everyday things and I thought a novel had the architecture, the space for me to write about them in a certain way. So I saw the novel as a space rather than a plot, a space which I could inhabit in a larger way than I could in a poem.”

III. CONCLUSION

Amit Chaudhuri used his own particular style. Style is a writer's verbal identity which one creates by choosing various words, putting those words together in particular ways, and employing specifically selected figures of speech. A writer's style is what sets one's writing apart and makes it distinctive from others. It is the way in which writing is dressed to fit the specific context, purpose, or audience. This paper discuss about the style and language used by Chaudhuri in the selected novels. He writes simple novels and his style of writing is descriptive. He describes his place and characters in detail. The style and language used by him is very realistic. Amit Chaudhuri's primary aim is to explore the meaning of human relations, interpersonal relations, which determine the structure of human bonds and bondages. His novels do not discard the relevance of the institution of marriage and his female protagonists do not lose their morality in search of self identity. Thus his all novels present his attitude and ideology of cultural and familial traditions in his own way. Here in this research paper I tried to explain the main aspects and abilities of Amit Chaudhuri's creative writing which has placed him in a different category of young writers.

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