

CHAPTER - IV

CONCLUSION

The present research project has sought to analyze *The Trotternama: A Chronicle* and *The Great Indian Novel* with the help of narratological tools evolved by formalists, and specifically structuralists in the early part of the last century. Narratology has been developed into a number of complex theoretical positions. Paul Bouissac in *Encyclopaedia of Semiotics* observes:

“Thus, as the scope of narrativity widened, the precise meaning of narrativity has tended proportionately to become blurred. This fluctuating meaning of narrativity in Greimassian narratology, together with the transdisciplinary proliferation of the term in 1990s and the lack of agreement among narratologists on a precise definition of the term, all effectively suggest returning to the privileged object of study Morphology of Folktale. It was inside this distinctively narrative domain, the domain of the archetypal folktale, that the primary of narrativity was first staged in a sharply focused way.”¹

The present research work tries to approach the narrative texts with the ternary model of story, text, and narration. With the help of the model following structures are analyzed:

I. Narrative Structure

The narrative structure is examined in event-structure of story in terms of their causal and temporal relations. The events in action are recounted from the text. In this sense, story is not directly available to the reader. It is with Tomasvsky that formalism started thinking about 'succession of events'. Vladimir Propp later on, in his seminal work on Russian fairy tales, discusses 'function' as a fundamental part to keep story in action. After Propp, Greimas, Levi-Strauss, Bremond, Roland Barthes and others developed theories of narrative structure.

II. Thematic Structure

The narrative structure is evolved as a part of theme it orients. The researcher studies thematic forces that shape events in the narrative. The story is constituted into micro-events and macro-episodes according to the thematic structure. The analysis of distributional pattern of events helps to give complete sense about the structure. Also, the chain of events and their inter-linking in action arrive at the uniform thematic structure. The principles of organizing these events in the given narratives are studied.

III. Structure of Narration

The structure of narration discusses relation between story, text, and narration. The researcher has discussed structures of narration beginning with the relation of the story with the text on the one hand and with narration on the other. The narrated events in the story are not directly available but are abstracted from the text and without being narrated the text will not be in existence. The relation is studied with reference to 'time' as proposed by Gerard Genette. Text is examined through characterization, focalization activity of perspective through which the story is filtered in the text. The text is written or spoken by the narrator and the narratee in narrative communication. As the process of communication is available through text, it is temporally related to events in story. The relation between story and narration creates a hierarchy of levels of embedding structures in narrative. Within the narrative text, communication involves a fictional narrator, an authority transmitting narrative message to a fictional narratee. The communication is crucial in the reader's understanding of narrative.

How History is made

I wish to shew how history is made. Understand first, good adept, that there are no sides to it. Front back there be, certainly, which the vulgar call past and future (the one with buttons and the other not), and also top and botto, which some call class (the one with epauletters, the other not). But sides, no. No circumventing it, sharp adept: the fabric extends endlessly, defying the lateral cut. In this present sorry business, for example, neither side (so-called) will budge, foreign or native. Show them good adept, the middle path lit by the lamp of self-interest. After all, you have no concern with either: the one would kill you and yours and yours if he could, the other would chain to a desk, an unconvenanted one at that. Consider your predicament well. (*The Trotternama: A Chronicle*, 343)

Now, the researcher attempts to discuss the constitutive force in the structuration of *The Trotternama: A Chronicle* and *The Great Indian Novel*. *The Trotternama: Chronicle* 'chronicles' 200 years of an Anglo- Indian family. *The Great Indian Novel* reviews the history of modern India before and after independence. Both these novels look at history as a modulating narrative to create fictional narrative. In these narratives, the past figures predominantly. A historical consciousness comes strongly in the characters and their action in these narratives.

In this context, the process of structuring these narratives could be as follows. Firstly, the unprocessed historical records or 'historical field' is temporally arranged and 'invented' in the form of a story of Anglo-Indians and India in *The Trotternama: A Chronicle* and *The*

Great Indian Novel. Then, the same stories are de-chronologized in the form of the *nama* and the *Mahabharata*. In this way, both these narratives appropriate history in two ways:

1. Appropriation of specific historical content
2. Appropriation of historical narrative forms

In the first, a story is arranged 'historically' by the process of happenings possessing beginning, middle and end. It is also a process of confining specific events of the past in spatio-temporal boundaries of the story. The narrative texts present not the past but versions of the past by selection of details, a determination of emphasis and so on. For example, *The Trotternama: A Chronicle* begins with the episode of the Great Trotter in 18th century and ends in the episode of Eugene Trotter in 20th century. The proper settlement of colonial empire in India is the beginning of *The Great Indian Novel* that ends with the chaos in India under its own rulers.

In the second, the story of both starts de-chronologizing events of past and "emplot"² the narrative. The emplotment activity is, on the one hand, appropriating the narrative texts of past and on the other, fictionalizing the history. Then, an obvious question is: Why is it both these texts appropriate the narrative forms of the past? Why does the narrator Eugene Trotter, while living in India with his

ancestry, draw deliberately on nama? Or, why does *The Great Indian Novel* look back to the narrative form of *the Mahabharata* to structure the fictional narrative? The researcher finds it a part of their historical immediacy towards appropriating the form. For them, it is not mere 'structure of narration' that seeks to appropriate the narrative forms but the great lost moments of the past.

In these two ways, the narratives "attempt to reproduce the structure of the choices experienced by the protagonists of the process related, in it the reasonings dominate to create 'reflexive history' or 'strategic history' in their narratives.

The Trotternama: A Chronicle and *The Great Indian Novel* appropriate history in different ways. *Trotternama: A Chronicle* looks at history as a part of narrator's personal past. *The Great Indian Novel* fictionalizes history as a nation's past. Then, the question is: what is the difference between the forces of history (ies) that constitute both the narratives? *The Trotternama: A Chronicle* directly approaches it as it was. The narrative aspires largely to historical verisimilitude. The narrator is from minority community in India searching for home.

"What was under the word "home"? Did it mean simply the place where things were the rightside up and familiar looking? But what was familiar? Was home the place where one was born? Or the place where one hopes to

bury one's bones? Was home the place where your ancestors lay dead...Could you have two homes...and come and go forever between them?

The Great Indian novel approaches history in the allegorical mode. The narrative becomes a metaphor of history. The narrator is from the mainstream culture of India searching for 'home' in his own nation politics and tells his story from 'a completely mistaken perspective'.

It would be interesting to see how both the narratives appropriate the same event to constitute themselves. The narrator of *The Trotternama: A Chronicle* looks at the event of independent of India in the following way:

How a mine is sprung

I wish to shew how a mine is sprung. To start with, good adept, your must have a Mutiny (or atleast a war of Independence). Otherwise, complications occur which are not easily explained away: property damaged, life lost, men and women (and some in between) hurt. Other essential ingredients are gunpowder, a fuse of sufficient length, a match, pickaxes, spades (as who should say, shovels), pans, beams, supports, patience, pistols, dice, and a demijohn of sherry... The last-named is a particular nuisance, nailing people when they least expect it. (339)

In The Great Indian Novel,

So it was over, and we had won. India had conquered Great Britain; Gangaji's khadi-clad coolies, his homespun hordes, had triumphed over brass-and –braid brigades of the greatest empire the world had ever known. You cannot imagine, Ganapthi, and I mean that literally, you cannot imagine the excitement, the exhilaration, the exultation of that midnight movement when nationalist tricolour code up the flagpole and Dhritrashtra, his voice breaking with emotion, announced to the nation in the most enduring of his visual metaphors:

‘At the hour of darkness, as the whole world slumbers, India awakes to the dawn of freedom.’” (230)

The narratological analysis we have made thus shows how the narratological categories of story, text, and narration meet in different narrative modes as a point of convergence in appropriation of history in both the novels

Notes

- ¹ Paul Bouissac, *Encyclopaedia of Semiotics*, ed., Paul Bouissac, New York: Oxford Uni. Press, 1998, pp. 444-5.
- ² Hayden, W., *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth- Century Europe*, Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins Uni. Press, 1973, pp.6-7.