

## NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES OF SHOBHAA DE

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### **Abstract**

*Every Indian writer adopts a style to present his/her subject matter, but no one is as remarkable as Shobhaa De who has experimented different styles and techniques, in one novel after the other. This paper, in general, briefs out the art of styles and techniques adopted by Shobhaa De which gave her a distinct place among the Indian English novelists*

**Keywords:** *Techniques, Narration, Hinglish language, style*

Shobhaa De's writing proves that she is one of the most remarkable women writers in contemporary Indian English Novelists. In fact she deserves and falls into several critical and controversial issues. She seriously raised her voice against sexual issues against women and so she is summoned as "Sex Queen", yet she doesn't bother of her detractors. However, being endowed with highly imaginative and creative skill, she uses variety of styles and techniques in her fiction and thereby gives a new dimension to the Indian English Novel.

De emphasized her creative excellence by using the cinematic flash back method of technique and thereby makes the narrator to tell the events with the benefit of hindsight. Sometimes she uses interior monologue to help the characters to analyse themselves and brings out the suppressed desires lying in the deep mind of the characters. For an example, Aasha Rani in **Starry Night**, quite often undertakes her journey between past and present and thereby tries to come back to the time and the society, in which she is part and parcel. De also uses controlled method of stream of consciousness techniques, that is necessary to the story for an instance as depicted in *Socialite evening*. Though there is similar techniques in Anitha Desai or Shashi Deshpande's fiction, De brings her own technique to narrate her story in her novels.

Her technique is the natural outcome of her pre-occupation within the individual psychology combined with her literary knowledge. Writing came very spontaneously that helped De to write in a very simple, clear and lucid style. As De doesn't want to beat around the bush, she gives a straight forward narration and thereby gives a clear perception of her subject. But few critics considered her writing estranged from her literary circle, whereas critics like Jay Dipsinh Dodiya and R.K.Dhawan deny such views and instead appreciate her literary excellence :

Shobhaa De as a writer is gifted with extra ordinary ability to discuss very sensitive aspects of human life tactfully. The way she narrates each and every aspect of human relationship in general and man-woman relationship in particular, is really wonderful...we don't find anything reserved in her fiction from narrative point of view. In my opinion, she is the last person to care for what orthodox readers say about the subject matter of her fiction. As a creative writer she is becoming immensely popular day by day. Most of the readers enjoy her extra ordinary narrative techniques as well as her subject matter. (13-14)

The aspect of technique and theme in De's novels are not isolated elements. They go in hand in hand to make the novel more effective as the writing style fits her themes and that lends more power to the novel. There are several themes like conflict between tradition and modernity, emancipation of women, self-assertation of women, sexual liberation, emergence of modern women and new women, breaking the demarcating marginalization, social consciousness and feminine psyche. All these themes give her novels a universal significance. However many critics fail to catch the exact theme of her novels and they interpret her novels in different perception. To give a reply to the critics and about her theme she says,

Nothing I wrote was made up-somewhat exaggerated perhaps, but not fabricated...subjects of my books are my own which I pick up from the people around me, my writing is based on ideas. I don't write to harm society. The rotten inside of society may be our subject.

Thus one can say that De's variant theme and characters that are depicted in her novels are based on the reality of the contemporary society.

Even places play an important role to bring alive the characters. De has bravely depicted the Hi-Fi modern metropolitan city like Bombay, Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi etc, as these cities lay a platform to the protagonists like Karuna, Aasha Rani etc to expose themselves. In fact, the places in her novel stand as a metaphor for freedom and thus give scope for the women characters to be very independent.

In regard to her style, the title of the novel also has its own significance given with deep sense of meaning. Though the title goes hand in hand with the theme, it gives a surprising note to the readers, as all her novels start with the symbol or alphabet "S". Few critics consider this symbol "S" might be the starting letter of her name or might be the secret of "S" is "Sex", as all her novels deal with the sexual concepts. But I view "S" as "Self-Independent" as she develops her characters very independently. However, De's writing is not only associated with "S" but also "E". Her Experience in life, Environment around society and Exposure of talk on her subject. Hence one can say that "S" and "E" become a logo or symbol of Shobhaa De.

Unlike any other Indian English Women writer, Shobhaa De outstands herself in the aspect of language too. If other Indian English writers translated local words or language into Indian English, De alone seems to break this ground and adopt new dimension to the Indian English. As the translating word into English would not be effective, De uses the very Hindi and Tamil words without translating them into English. For an instance, as used in her novel **Socialite Evening** “Kutcha roads, the real big memsaaby, paan bidi shop, raddiwalla etc”. Another examples from **Starry Night** is “Innu voru dam addi, seekram, aiiyo, chikna-chikna face, kapdey uttaru, Hindi aata hai?, achcha lagta hai yaar etc. De also used her boldness in language by using words like “Fuck you”, “chickening out”, “naked body”etc. To support the linguistics De firmly talks about the inventiveness and new exploration as

I adore Indian English and marvel at our inventiveness. We can bend English any which way we feel like and still succeed in communicating the essentials. This is a creative feat which deserves to be documented meticulously, for every few years we add phrases and expression that reflect our evolving selves, “totally Jhakans” cannot be translated effectively enough, “phokat ka bhav mat khao”, is too delightful to ruin by explanation.” (138)

As De said, she finds a new personal way of local expression by using everyday words for the sensitive language of emotions and thereby brings a new brand and preserves her identity as the mother of “Hinglish”. Apart from this, De’s transparency of language and spontaneity of prose are the outstanding features of her style and this made her to remain one of the most celebrities in multi-lingual gossip column.

De also uses quote lines and phrases from other famous literary personalities like William Shakespeare, Aldous Huxley, Mark Twain etc that show her literary knowledge and enhance the richness of the novel. For instance, in **Socialite Evening**, “Double-bubble gum” (19), “Love is music and food, wine and touch (121), Brave New world trip (70) etc. Apart from this she also uses Myth and also brings out the remarks from the Bible and Bhagvidha Gita. For instance, in **Socialite Evening**, Rada, Buddha, Krishnan, Mirabhai, The Ten Commandments etc.

Thus one can wind up, that De’s style and techniques that are sprinkled in her novels are really artistic. Her language, themes and uses of other elements enrich not only her novels, but also amongst the readers. In fact, in spite of several controversies, De has not limited her ideas or words, and at the same time her writings satisfied the literary decorum’s as well as norms as she has used different style and techniques for writing and thereby was considered a fierce and individualistic writer.

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