



## Wide spectrum of themes in the writings of Amit Chaudhuri

Santosh<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Kartikey<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, Bhagwant University, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India

<sup>2</sup> Research Supervisor, Department of English, Bhagwant University, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India

### Abstract

Amit Chaudhuri admits himself that he is inspired by the lives around him. He tells to Fernando Galvan about it as- *"I fell in some ways almost closer to Jibanand Das but that doesn't mean that I don't think Tagore a great writer and poet. But I think Rays films meant a lot to me and later on the writer Bibhuti Bhusan Bandhyopadhyay from whose novels Ray created his first film Pather Panchali...it's a very modernist novel in a sense."* The themes and techniques used by the writer in his novels are a true embodiment of his personal experiences like the idea of his first novel was also a result of one of the incidents of his life. Amit Chaudhuri, before writing ASASA, had read a comment about the novel of William Golding named Lord of the Flies'. In that comment, there was the criticism about the explanatory opening sequence of the beginning with the boy arriving at the island. Chaudhuri grasped the idea from their comment and weaves his novel with explanatory sequence from the starting of the novel. In it, he gave the details about the life in Bombay and starts with arrival of the boy in Calcutta. 'Afternoon Raag', the second novel of the writer too had the same story. In this novel, Chaudhuri reveals his personal experiences at Oxford, or we may say that it would not have existed if Amit had no connection with the foreign air. The loose structure of the novel shows the immature thinking of the novelist at that time. So, once again it becomes quite apparent that his life has a major contribution in the creation of such wonderful masterpiece of English literature.

**Keywords:** Amit Chaudhuri, themes

### Introduction

One of the reasons of Amit Chaudhuri's instant success is his keen observation and a taste for something different. While other writers are usually more concerned about a conventional story, lots of characters and the events that take place in due course of time, not surprisingly though, but all those details bore him. In fact, he is more interested in the movement between worlds and between cultures. He himself has compared his bent of mind and taste with the other novelists. This variation is just a result of what he came across in his life.

All the novels, written by Amit Chaudhuri, possess a very gripping theme. He has earned a separate corner for himself solely due to his writings. The novels conceived by the writer are masterpiece in themselves and the basic content of such work is a good and well-versed theme. This explanation would revolve only around the first four novels of Amit Chaudhuri namely- 'A strange and Sublime Address, 'Afternoon Raag, 'Freedom Song' & 'A new World. The most important features of the novels mentioned above are that, these novels do not have a single theme. Rather, the novels have one main theme and it is supported by the other themes. His novels are like a cocktail. They are pool of romantic theme, political theme, social theme, historical theme, themes based on personal experiences, themes revealing childish depiction, elegant themes, themes of family relation, interesting themes & themes of mental state of man at different phases of life.

The writings of Amit Chaudhuri are quite close to life and he displays the novels in such a manner that the reader starts

considering himself as a part of the story. His writing has a magnificent attracting power which binds the reader to go through the whole story at first sitting. The first novel of Amit Chaudhuri is A Strange and Sublime Address, published in the year 1991.

### Themes in the Writings of Amit Chaudhuri

Amit Chaudhuri's depiction of romanticism is hesitant, shy and suggestive. He has never mentioned the details of love scenes, leaving it to the imagination of the readers. According to human nature physical attraction is the first step towards any romantic relationship. Probably keeping this in mind, Chaudhuri likes to give the physical details of a female character to arouse the feelings and imagination of the reader. Similarly, the character of the novel is also attracted towards the opposite gender and so this attraction is transformed into romance. This technique has been used by the writer at many places in his first novel, A strange and sublime Address.

Infact, not only females, but Amit has described the physical details of males too. In this story, Amit described the male physical characteristics with the help of a male child body. Similarly, a glimpse of a female body has also been given which is not at all bold. Rather, it makes the reader be imaginative.

*"Her legs, like two romantic, indefinite paths on a mountainside, were lost in her saris vast landscape."*

*A Strange and Sublime Address (Page-22)*

The next feature of the romanticism of Amit Chaudhuri is that he instead of presenting these details in a complete paragraph he scatters these details here and there. It may be because of his hesitant nature while describing these romantic activities openly. But when a reader goes through these partially revealed details of the opposite sex, then these details act as a catalyst and give birth to some romantic thoughts.

The second theme used by Amit Chaudhuri is political theme. Here also, Chaudhuri instead of commenting straight away on the political condition and activities, he portrays the effect of the political developments on the lives of innocent, common man. Amit Chaudhuri inspires and starts the thought process in his readers but does not provide any conclusive thoughts. He lets the reader decide what should be or should not be. Many lines and paragraphs can be quoted which reveal the condition of the common man who bears everything and is a puppet in the hands of dishonest politicians. They talk about a good future for one and all but it is they themselves who have a good and secure future. For their personal and professional gains, they manipulate the common man as they please. They even use religion as a play to get their means. Religious sentiments are played with, which give rise to the communal riots. People fight with each other thinking that it is for a noble cause (in the name of religion) unknowingly playing into the hands of corrupt politicians, benefitting them and harming one another.

One can also see in Chaudhuri's works a comparison between the morals of Gandhi and Nehru. He has also portrayed the physical appearance, nature and strength of Gandhi Ji, Subhash Chandra Bose and other freedom fighters. All these instances prove that Amit Chaudhuri was not totally indifferent to the political scenario at any point of time. He has written about politicians whom he admired, sometimes compared them and sometimes indirectly criticized them by highlighting the harm they did. He may seem aloof from the political issues but inside somewhere he is disturbed and anguished at the irresponsible, dishonest and corrupt nature of the politicians of today. His second novel shows the animosity between India and Pakistan and the ill-effects of partition with Bangladesh.

The third theme used by Amit is the social theme, in which he has followed the same indirect style of raising the issues. A wide variety of social problems have been discussed in his novels ranging from power cuts, poor condition of roads, poor telecommunication system etc. to problem of sexual discrimination. Even today people are discriminating on the basis of gender, which may be blamed on the poor rate of literacy in our country. Poverty and unemployment are rampant in India. The senior citizens of the society prefer consulting a doctor with fewer fees, as they consider the money spent on their illness as a waste. Chaudhuri describes the way of cooking fish by his mother. The mother does not throw away even the peelings, head or skin, as they cannot afford to waste any edible item. This description is so compelling and moving that it makes the reader think. Every morning a rich man wakes up early to reduce the stomach size whereas a poor man wakes up early to fill the empty stomach of his children.

Romance has absolutely no meaning for the poor whereas for the domestic class it is the only source of entertainment with relaxed atmosphere and a time to live all those romantic hindi film songs. A minor price rise of a

commodity disturbs their budgets so much so that their happiness and sorrow lies in it. Amit Chaudhuri may well be called a feminist as he showcases the condition of women in India. From their birth, they are considered a burden on their family. The girls since their childhood are taught that a good woman is one who sacrifices everything for her family and husband. A man is free to live his life upto his expectations and desires but the women are not allowed to do so. Chaudhuri, very politely, highlights the inequality between men and women in the Indian society.

The fourth theme used is the historical theme. He has added historical references in his book 'ASASA', where he compares children to Egyptian slaves, for studying all day long. He also refers to Mohenjodaro. In another novel, he refers to white niggers and their part. In 'Freedom Song', he refers to the post-independence period. In fact, he refers to this period frequently showing his appreciation.

Another theme used by Chaudhuri is the personal theme. All his works are based on him or people around him. Like in 'Afternoon Raag', he described the walking schedule of his parents. The description of poor people, congregating on the pavements in winters to get some sunlight is so real. He has successfully brought in view the chills and thrills of a common man's life. Amit has a separate place for children too in his novels. He has depicted the emotions and experiences of a child. Almost all his novels have one or more child characters that are intelligent and mature irrespective of their age. He has even shared memories of his childhood. The activities of Bonny in the novel 'A New World', are a way of incorporating the children theme.

Another type of themes used by Chaudhuri are elegant themes. He tries to lend beauty to his work with a kind of sublimity. In fact, all his works consist of some very beautiful expressions. Such common people like vendors, Key-man etc. have been dealt with beautifully. He can provide elegance to each and every ordinary item. The comparisons made by him are awesome and impart beauty to even commonplace objects. He enhances the beauty of his work through elegant themes. Themes highlighting family bonding have also been presented beautifully by Chaudhuri. His stories revolve around family. Every member and every relation is important.

Amit also uses a theme of mental state of men in different phases of life. The thinking likes and dislikes, priorities and responsibilities change with the passage of time. The journey of life is well presented by him. His novels are like sum of all feelings. All the themes included in the text form the foundation of Amit Chaudhuri's beautiful creations.

### Conclusion

It seems there has not been much academic study on Themes of the Writings of Amit Chaudhuri. The present work offers a thematic review for the researchers to understand one part of Amit's writings. Amit Chaudhuri has not been well recognized in the field of English Literature. His wide spectrum of writing can tempt any scholar to pursue research on his works. His themes are varied and have stigma of social relevance.

### References

1. Tripathi, Salil. 'Amit Chaudhuri: Redefining What is meant meant to be a modern Indian, 'Review' The Independent, 2007.
2. Sengupta Chandak. 'The Immortals, By Amit

- Chaudhuri'. The Independent, 27 March, 2009.
3. Rushdie Salman. 'Oh, the Return of the Clown Prince', Outlook India (Magazine), 2005.
  4. Shukla Sheobhushan. 'The unfamiliar Familiar in Strange and Sublime Address', Sarup & Sons, 2004, Pg. no. – 57
  5. Shukla Anu. 'Such Stuff as Amit Chaudhuri's song is made on', Sarup & Sons, 2004, Pg no-105.
  6. Majumdar Saiket. 'of that Time, of that place', Sarup & Sons, 2004, Pg. no.
  7. Deb Siddhartha. 'The Beautiful and the Demand' Life in the new India', The Guardian, June 5, 2011.
  8. Abell Stephen. 'The Immortals by Amit Chaudhuri', The Telegraph, 21 May, 2012.
  9. Trumphant Eclectic. Outlook India, May 7, 2006.
  10. Shukla Sheobhushan, Shukla Anu. 'The novels of Amit Chaudhuri: An exploration in the Attentive tradition', Sarup & sons, 2004, Page no-3
  11. Shukla Sheobhushan. 'The Unfamiliar Familiar in A Strange and Sublime Address', Sarup & Sons, 2004, Page 58.
  12. Sharma SR. 'Impressionism and Freedom Song', Sarup & sons, 2004, Page no- 96
  13. Chaudhuri Amit. 'A Strange and Sublime Address', Picadar, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 2001, Pg. 07