



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

Rethinking History: A Study of Shashi Tharoor's *Riot* As a Postmodern Historiographic Metafiction

Shagufta Parween

Senior Research Fellow, Department of English
The University of Burdwan, West Bengal, India

Abstract:

*History and politics has been a persistent concern of the Indian English writers ever since the origin of English novel writing in India. The last three decades have witnessed the publication of many novels that belong to the genre of postmodern historiographic metafiction. Indian authors have engaged themselves in a retelling of the standard versions of history by both experimenting with the narrative technique and a portrayal of multiple points of view that both decenters any authoritative form of knowledge and hints at the possibility of multiple truths. In this article I will try to explore why Shashi Tharoor's novel, *Riot* can be described as a quintessential postmodern historiographic metafiction, by pointing out its chief features that are present in the novel.*

Key words: Narrative, postmodern, historiographic, metafiction, history

Shashi Tharoor's fictional oeuvre consisting of both fictional and non-fictional works,¹ exhibit a profound awareness and commitment to the diversity and immensely valuable cultural heritage of India, which forms the main foundational plank of almost all his creative output. His fascination and concern for India is evident in his using India as his fictional settings and problematization of national issues that require urgent consideration. His novels *The Great Indian Novel* (1989),² *Show Business* (1992), and *Riot* (2001) are all set in India. His artistic opus displays not merely his creative erudition, but also a firm commitment to humanitarian tolerance, democracy, pluralism, secularism and a concern with the history of India. If he sings a paean to the nation and its civilizational greatness, it is definitely not a blind eulogy. Rather, he adroitly juxtaposes the flaws of the grand architects and detractors of the Indian nation and the problems that hamper the nation building and threaten the very existence of India as a secular nation. His concern with history, truth, and ideologies that perpetuate particular forms of knowledge and specific versions of history, seeking to manipulate and homogenize both truth and history is evident in two of his famed fictional works, *The Great Indian Novel* and *Riot*. Both these novels belong to the genre of postmodern historiographic metafiction.

Historiographic metafiction is a term coined by the postmodern theoretician Linda Hutcheon who defines it as "well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (Hutcheon, 2005, p. 5). She says that these fictions self-reflexive, contradictory, working "within conventions in order to subvert them" and, 'incorporates all three of these domains: that is, its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past" (Hutcheon, 2005, p. 5). This paper will focus on Tharoor's *Riot* and endeavour to explore why it can be categorised as such. Fictions that can be labelled as postmodern historiographic metafiction have appeared on the Indian scene both before and after Tharoor's work. For example, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975), Geeta Mehta's *Karma Kola* (1979), Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1994), Githa Hariharan's *In Times of Siege* (2003), Kiran Desai *The Inheritance of Loss*, (2006), and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) all belong to the aforesaid genre.

The basic features of postmodernist fiction such as experimentation with the formal and thematic content of the novel, self-reflexivity, conscious handling of narrative, fragmentation, discontinuity, subversion of conventional modes of narration, multiple viewpoints, indeterminacy, intertextuality, deferring of closure, mixing of the genres, use of irony and parody, are all present in this novel. In its formal organization *Riot* is a novel that deviates from the conventional modes of novel writing and story-telling. Constituting of fragments that are apparently disjointed, it is a novel that meticulously engages with the theme of the explosion of religious hatred that roused during the Babri Masjid and *Ramjanmabhooni* stir, the communalisation of the public discourse, and the story of love and passion between two persons of conflicting cultures. It is a tale of commitment, devotion and betrayal, both of the nation and the individual set against a highly charged communal atmosphere in a fictional north Indian town of Zalilgarh. The subplot trenchantly critiques the issue of gender exploitation. The novelistic matrix, thus, incorporates the problematization of race, culture, gender, class as well as the issue of religious dissensions and

ideological collisions. On a formal structural level, *Riot* is composed of newspaper accounts, journalistic reports, letters, notebook and diary entries, telegrams, greeting cards, personal and formal conversations and interviews. Unlike a linear chronological narrative it is “divided into seventy-eight sections of varying length”, with the main events of the novel beginning on 2 February 1989 and ending on 16 October 1989 (Roy, 2003, pp. 123-129). There is the mixing of tragedy and romantic tale, serious criticism and amusing anecdote, a fantasy world and gruesome reality; formal literary rhetoric, an innocent child’s faltering English and informal talks mired in slangs and vituperative language; as well as the genre mixing of verse and prose, myth, romance and mystery, poem and epistle, historical writing, political critique and literature. The element of self-referentiality, one of the features of the postmodern novel is most evident in the protagonist’s reference to it. Laxman says that his wish is to write a novel “that doesn’t read like a novel. Novels are too easy—they tell a story, in a linear narrative, from start to finish...” (*Riot*, 2003, p. 135). His novel would be, “something in which you can turn to any page and read... and they’re all interconnected, but you see the interconnections differently depending on the order in which you read them.” (*Riot*, p. 36).

In its intertextuality the novel uses real events (historical and political), dominant mythologies and epics as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and thoughts of real personages as intertexts. Laxman sprinkles the narrative with his Wildean quotes and references to the texts as the ancient Sanskrit text of *Natya Shastra*. Gurinder with his allusions to *Kama Sutra*, Laxman to Freud and Priscilla to *The Lawrence of Arabia*, point towards the romantic and sexual love that forms one of the main thematic content of the novel. Ingeniously the novel begins at the end, with a newspaper report of the murder of the heroine, Priscilla Hart, who was in India as part of her fieldwork for her doctoral dissertation. But the novel does not simplistically trace the events of her life in a monologists pattern. Rather, it is avowedly polyphonic³ and multivocal. Unlike the prevalent customary literary style of a single narrative voice dominating the novel, it is aligned to Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia⁴ and consists of differing utterances. The narrative builds up through the operation of different voices, with the proponents of distinct *weltanschauung*, worldviews which are often contrary and colliding. Hence, we have the views of fundamentalists and secularists, Westerners and Indians, men and women, each conscious and imbricated in their particular cultural, racial, and gendered grounding. Its polyphony provides space to representatives of different groups from the diehard fanatic Ram Charan to the tolerant pacifist Laxman or Sarwar, from the American Priscilla and Randy Diggs to the native Fatima bi and Geetha. “It also includes the implicit and explicit voices of the novelist and even the voices of the readers. The readers engage in dialogue with the text and communicate with it. The reader is also a very important voice that Bakhtin has taken into account as he is the most active voice responding to the text” (Mohammad and Khan, 2012, p. 286). Tharoor highlights the significance of the reader in the construction of the meaning of an aesthetic artifact. He believes that instead of the author guiding the readers (the consumers of the text) the reader must be free to fathom his own interpretation of the text. Laxman says, “Down with the omniscient narrator! It’s time for the omniscient reader. Let the reader construct her own novel each time she reads it” (*Riot* 136).

Paras Dhir opines that in its technical innovation and reflections on truth and history:

Riot marks the emergence of a new perspective vis-à-vis fictional in its clear diversion from being a reflection of social reality. Instead of giving expression to some already existing reality or worldview the novel develops into a kind of discursive formation of ideas and an expression of divergent views forming specific relations to historical events (2009, p. 34-35).

The radical transformation of the traditional narrative technique with an intense self-consciousness, using the fictive realm to weave a travesty of history and politics to subvert the dominant metanarratives⁵ and seriously interrogate present reality is the hallmark of the historiographic novel. According to the postmodern theoreticians the boundaries of history and fiction are porous. Facts and imagination coalesce in these discursive formations, as both history and fiction are linguistically encoded, narrated and narrativised. The interplay of reality and imagination, truth and fictionality has thus, come to be seriously interrogated. In the words of Nishat Haider, “History is always a matter of telling a story about the past, using other texts as intertexts. History is not a matter of dates and great events but of politics, ideology, power, authority and subversion” (2006, p. 247). Gertrude Himmelfarb’s pointed analysis of the textuality of historical representation with close affinities to the literary text is significant:

What the traditional historian sees as an event that actually occurred in the past, the postmodernist sees as a “text” that exists only in the present – a text to be parsed, glossed, construed, interpreted by the historian, much as a poem or novel is by the critic. And, like any literary text, the historical text is indeterminate and contradictory, paradoxical and ironic, so that it can be “textualized”, “contextualized,” “recontextualized” and “intertextualized” at will – the “text” being little more than a “pretext” for the creative historian. (1997, p. 162)

Historians as Dominick LaCapra and Hayden White⁶ doubt the veracity of history as objective and authentic. Bringing in new perspective to the writing of history as human constructs, they emphasise on the historical consciousness and historical methodology used by the writer in creating a particular work of history. Thus, what we know as history today are deliberate human constructs which not only convey the dominating ideology and power-knowledge nexus of society, but also is embedded within the whole processes of the production, transmission and reception of the texts in society. The cultural and ideological orientation of the writer becomes a fundamental factor influencing his writing. White’s much acclaimed work *Metahistory* focuses on the fictive character of “historical reconstructions” that undermine the claim of, “history’s status as either a rigorous science or a genuine art” (1973, p. 2). While the postmodern historians are suspicious about the entire project of historical representation, postmodern novelists are at a liberty to freely represent the contradictions and critique certain national and social metanarratives that in their entrenchment in certain specific historicisations transmit hegemonising ideologies or praxis and proves exploitative. Historiographic metafiction challenges and renders unstable any stable notion of historical knowledge by keeping distinct, “its formal auto-representation and its historical context” (Hutcheon, 2005, p. 206). These novels instead of transmitting any authoritative claim contest the very existence of dominating versions and argue that, “there are only *truths* in the plural, and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness *per se*, just other’s truths.” (Hutcheon, p. 109) Hutcheon argues that in critically rewriting history and being politically motivated these novels, “open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological” (2005, p. 110).

Tharoor, in his fiction uses the rapid acceleration of Hindu fundamentalism that preceded the demolition of the Babri masjid⁷ in 1992 as the main framework. Stunned by the desecration of a holy site he is more horrified at, “[T]he real change involved something intangible, if as pervasive as smog. It was a change in the dominant ethos of the country, in the attitudes of mind that defines what it means to be an Indian” (*From Midnight to the Millennium*, 2007, p. 52). In *Riot*, he defers from the cataclysmic event of the demolition itself and adheres to the *Ramjanmabhoomi* agitation in the wake of *Ram Sila Pujan* that swept northern India, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The novel has a mélange of real and fictional events and characters. There are direct and indirect references to the *Ram Sila Pujan*, Mughal rule, Partition of India, the Emergency, Operation Bluestar, Coca Cola controversy, providing differing perspectives on each issue. Political parties, historical and present political characters are also referred to as Nehru, Maulan Azad, Md Currim Chagla, Indira Gandhi, George Fernandes, Sadhvi Rithambara. The plot is modelled on two real events. Firstly, on the account of a real riot in Khargone as reported to him by his friend and IAS officer Harsh Mander. Secondly, that of Amy Biehl, a scholar who was killed as a result of racist attacks in South Africa. Besides Prof. Sarwar, the Muslim voice of the novel who argues for a genuine place for Indian Muslims and their right to be regarded as true Indian citizens is modeled on Professor Shahid Amin of Delhi University.

The two distinct voices of the novel are of Laxman, the secularist and the Hindu Chauvinist, Ram Charan who is governed as much by political expediency as by a militant version of Hindu nationalism. Many of Ram Charan’s ideas can be directly traced to the architect of the Hindutva⁸ ideology Veer Savarkar and to the militant nationalists as Tilak or Golwalkar. Though he plays vote-bank politics and is a shrewd manipulator, he has a firm unbending notion of the Muslims whom he considers to be foreign invaders who pillaged the land and desecrated its holy places and even after centuries of existence are unpatriotic and treacherous. He says “But these Muslims are evil people...They are all converts from the Hindu faith of their ancestors, but they refuse to acknowledge this, pretending instead that they are all descended from conquerors from Arabia or Persia or Samarkand” (*Riot*, p. 54). Ram Charan’s argument in favour of taking back the three main temple sites, that of Ayodhya, Mathura, and Kashi from the Muslims, verge on a projection of an absurd calculation and manipulation of historical facts and figures. For not only the authenticity of Ram’s exact birthplace unverifiable, but also the existence of Rama, himself as a mythical character or a real historical personage much contested. His opinion closely resembles the general belief among the Hindu extremists. His thoughts reflect Golwalkar’s view, “[B]ut the crucial point is whether THEY remember that they are the children of this soil. What is the use of merely OUR remembering” (qtd. in Guha, 2010, p. 374). Golwalkar explains his aversion for Muslims as:

they have also developed a feeling of identification with the enemies of this land. They look to some foreign lands as their holy places...they have cut off all their ancestral national moorings of this land and mentally merged themselves with the aggressors. They still think they have come here only to conquer and to establish their kingdoms. So we see that it is not merely a case of change of faith, but a change even in national identity (qtd. n Guha, 2010, p. 375)

Laxman, a devoted government official, immensely proud of his religious heritage is condemned by the likes of Ram Charan as ‘pseudo-secularist’ avowedly for his soft stance on Muslims. However, a close scrutiny reveals it is not a blind pandering to the Muslims, but a struggle for peaceful co-existence. For him it’s ironical that a temple supposedly destroyed by Babar centuries ago is sought to be revenged in the twentieth century. The very notion of Hindu fundamentalism appalls him since it’s “a religion without fundamentals” (*Riot*, p. 143). Hindu militancy challenges “the very basis of the Indianness” that rests on diversity and pluralism⁽⁴⁵⁾. Historian Romila Thapar argues that: The new Hinduism which is now sought to be projected as the religion of this community is in many ways a departure from earlier religious sects. It seeks historicity for the incarnation of its deities, encourages the idea of a centrally sacred book, claims monotheism as significant to the worship of deity acknowledges the authority of the ecclesiastical organization of certain sects as prevailing over all and has supported large-scale missionary work and conversion. (2012, p. 85)

Thapar insists that the epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are “civilizational symbols”. Further the trend of identifying the historicity of divine figures as Rama and Krishna and locating their birthplace originated only in the mid-second millennium AD.

Mohammad Sarwar, the academic secularist, strives to illuminate the hegemonising communal historiography of India that is severely damaging the unity of its inhabitants and leading to violence and intolerance. He perceptively points out, “The Hindutva brigade is trying to invent a new past for the nation, fabricating historical wrongs, dredging up “evidence” of Muslim malfeasance and misappropriation of national glory” (*Riot*, p. 67). Contrary to the fanatics who use myth and religion to flare hatred, he feels the urgent necessity of historians to “dig into the myths that divide and unite our people” (67). Hence, his research on Ghazi Miyan, an emblem of composite religiosity. His espousal of composite culture, though appears too optimistic is one facet of the history of India that has deliberately been suppressed or subverted by the fundamentalists to prevent any amity between the Hindus and the Muslims.⁹ Sudhir Kakar in his psychological exploration of the ideology of fundamentalism distinguishes between composite culture and co-existence. Referring to the medieval era in Hyderabad he argues that:

As in the rest of the country, in the medieval period, Hindus and Muslims shared activities and experiences in the public realm ‘even though in private they were completely segregated, almost opposed to each other.’ In short, it was a multicultural coexistence rather than any merger into a single, composite culture; Hindus and Muslims lived together separately. They were more than strangers, not often enemies, but less than friends. (2007, p. 203)

Gurinder offers another dimension to the heterogeneity of perspectives that historiographic metafiction stresses and “the questioning of the ontological and epistemological status of historical “fact” or the distrust of seeming neutrality and objectivity of recounting” (Hutcheon, p. 88). Disillusioned with Mrs Gandhi’s communal politics, and the way in which she sought to counter the growing menace of Sikh fundamentalism he stays in the service only to honestly fight for the security of India and the Indians. Skeptical about the whole *Ramjanmabhoomi* movement and the fetishization of history to be belligerently used, to twist the present he sarcastically questions, “[B]ut who owns India’s history? Are there my history and his, and his history about my history? This is, in many ways, what this whole Ram Janamabhoomi agitation is about- about the reclaiming of history by those who feel that they were, at one point, written out of the script. But can they write a new history without doing violence to the inheritors of the old?”(110).

Riot, is a novel that takes artistic liberty in parodying both the immediate and remote past of India and questioning the very premise on which the whole ideology and praxis of religious hatred is based. The epigraphic quotations of the novel taken from Cervantes and Marx, demonstrates the preoccupation of the writer with both history (past), and history writing. In the Afterword of the novel Tharoor cites Octavio Paz saying, "Memory and oblivion: how one leads to the other, and back again, has been the concern of much of my fiction. History as the old saying goes, is not a web woven with innocent hands" (269).

By shunning any single narrative voice and giving the proponents of each community and group a space to voice their grievances and anguish it foregrounds the various contesting claims. The frequent slippage and shifts from one viewpoint to the next without any overarching declaration by the omniscient narrator leaves to the reader to form his own interpretation and judgment. The conflicting descriptions of the causation of the riot and its management by the narrators delineates how the meaning of the same thing changes with context. Moreover, by leaving the mystery of the death of Priscilla Hart unsolved it hints not only at the impossibility of gaining access to the past, but even interrogate our own interpretation and thinking of the past. In his tour de force *The Great Indian Novel* the novel concludes with the declaration of narrator Ved Vyas that:

...for every tale I have told you, every perception I have conveyed, there are a hundred equally valid alternatives I have omitted and of which you are unaware. I make no apologies for this. This is my story of India I know, with its biases selections, omissions, distortions all mine.... Every Indian must for ever carry with him, in his head and heart, his own history of India. (Tharoor, 1989, p. 373)

In *Riot*, even Laxman, with his close affinity to Priscilla and intricate awareness of the power politics operating in the town is unable to even grasp at a vague hint, a fact that makes the grief of separation more painful and unbearable. The unfathomable mystery of the circumstances Priscilla's death and the identity of her murderer becomes only a minute reflection of the unknowability of the history of the nation. To quote Dr. Manju Roy, "history does not seem to be a rational unfolding, but a chaotic succession of events in which these narrators randomly clutch bits and pieces, in a futile attempt, to make sense of their world" (2003, p. 133). Refusing to provide a resolution to the tale Tharoor echoes his character Ved Vyas in *The Great Indian Novel*, who says, "I did not begin the story in order to end it; the essence of the tale lay in the telling" (Tharoor, 1989 162). As the novel formally begins at the end with the news of the death of Priscilla, it ironically ends at the beginning with the continuation of the same news. Verily Ved Vyas says, "the end is the arbitrary invention of the teller, but there can be no finality about his choice. Today's end is, after all, only tomorrow's beginning" (Tharoor, 1989, p. 163).

To conclude, with its heterogeneity of forms, genres and multiplicity of voices; its use of irony and parody, lack of narrative closure, discontinuity, fragmentation, its contesting of authoritative knowledge and ideology, problematization of the past, concern with politics and history with an ingrained futuristic bent, self-referentiality, intertextuality and acknowledgement of plural truths, the novel can be aptly described as a postmodern historiographic metafiction. *Riot* subscribes to Hutcheon's view:

Fiction does not mirror reality; nor does it reproduce it. It cannot. There is no pretense of simplistic mimesis in historiographic metafiction. Instead fiction is offered as another of the discourses by which we construct our versions of reality, and both the construction and the need for it are what are foregrounded in the postmodernist novel. (2005, p. 40)

Notes

- Tharoor's non-fictional works include *Reasons of State* (1985) *India: From Midnight to the Millennium* (1997), *Nehru: The Invention of India* (2003), *Bookless in Baghdad* (2005), *The Elephant, the Tiger, and the Cell Phone: Reflections on India - The Emerging 21st-Century Power* (2007), *Shadows Across the Playing Field: Sixty Years of India-Pakistan Cricket* (2009) (along with Shaharyar Khan), *Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century* (2012), *Kerala: God's own country* (2002) (along with artist M.F. Husain), *India* (in English) (2008) along with photographer Ferrante Ferranti.
- In his fictional masterpiece, *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), which is also a historiographic metafiction, Tharoor rewrites the history of twentieth century India by modeling it on the great classical epic of the *Mahabharata*.
- Bakhtin borrowed the concept of polyphony from music where it is used to designate the presence of more than one melodic voice. He used the critical term in the literary terrain in his work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* to mean the existence of multiple voices.
- The term 'heteroglossia' was used by the Russian Formalist Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay "Discourse in the Novel" published in the book *The Dialogic Imagination*. Bakhtin argues that a novel is basically heteroglot in its encapsulation of the diversity of utterances, the simultaneous presence and divergences in the multiple types of speech, that of the author, narrator and the characters of the novel.
- Metanarrative is a critical theoretical concept that refers to grand totalizing narratives that validates and legitimates certain kinds of knowledge. According to John Stephens it "is a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience".
- In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* Jean-François Lyotard argues that postmodernism is characterized by its skepticism of the grand narratives as Marxism or Enlightenment and believed that small localized narratives have the potential to challenge and subvert them.
- Dominick LaCapra and Hayden White belong to the group of historians who have revolutionized the whole concept of historiography by focusing on the historical consciousness of the writer, the methodology and sources used by him and his own intellectual, ideological, personal and cultural affiliations.
- Babri Masjid (1528), situated in Ayodhya is the most controversial site of the past century. Popular histories claim that this mosque was built after destructing a temple that was built in honour of the Hindu god Rama. Further, it is argued that the mosque stands on the exact place of Rama's birth. Though both the circulating versions are hugely debated it is an overt testimony to the fact that

beliefs are more potent than truths or facts. Late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed much bloodshed and the worsening of Hindu-Muslim relations because of the frenzy generated by it. The televised episodes of the two epics the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, the Ram Sila Poojan, the organisations of the various yatras modelled on the mythical ones, and the furor to construct a temple on that site led to violent clashes between the two communities in which thousands of lives were lost. The demolition of the Babri Masjid has come to be regarded as a watershed mark in Indian history, after which the relations between Hindus and Muslims has deteriorated, identity consciousness based on religion has become congealed, and the rightful place of minorities in India has become to be solely defined by religion in popular memory. Secularists have strove to fight this communalization of society through demonstrations, public forums, vocal protests and writings. Unfortunately the rise of global fundamentalism and Islamic militancy has added a spur to the menace of growing Hindu fundamentalism.

- Hindutva as a political concept refers to politicized Hinduism in the twentieth century. Its arch propounder was Veer Savarkar whose work *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu* published in 1923 proved highly influential and mobilizing. In it he laid down the basic requisites for a person to claim belonging to the Indian nation. For him an Indian is only a person who accepted Hindustan as his fatherland (*pitrabhumi*), and holy land (*punyabhumi*). The umbrella term 'Hindu', as described by him included all the disparate castes, sects, and cults of the land, as well as the religions that originated in India as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. It however, was radically exclusive in rejecting Islam and Christianity as the faith of the Indian people as these religions were alien faiths. Both these religions were vehemently attacked for their anti-idolatry and proselytizing activities. Consequently, Muslims and Christians were denied the claim of being true inhabitants of *Bharatvarsha*.
- Saba Naqvi in her work *In Good Faith* presents a well-researched account and instances of composite culture in various places in India. She gives examples of Hindu-Muslim which in the surcharged milieu of religious politics have almost become invisible to us.

References

1. Dhir, Paras. (2009, Summer): Perspectives on History, Politics and Culture. Rupkatha Journal, Issue 1(1), 33-43. Web. <<http://www.rupkatha.com/0109shashitharoorriot.pdf>>. 10 January 2014.
2. Guha, Ramchandra. (Ed.). (2010). Makers of Modern India. Viking: Penguin.
3. Haider, Nishat. (2006). Shashi Tharoor's Riot: A Novel about the Construction of Identity, the Nature of Truth, Re-presenting and the Ownership of History. *South Asian Review*, (27)2, 235-260.
4. Himmelfarb, Gertrude. (1997). telling it as you like it: Postmodernist History and the Flight from Fact. In Keith Jenkins (Ed.), *the Postmodern History Reader* (pp. 158-174). London: Routledge.
5. Hutcheon, Linda. (2005). *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory Fiction*. (1988). New York: Routledge.
6. Kakar, Sudhir. (2007). *the Colours of Violence*. In *Indian Identity*. New Delhi: Penguin.
7. Mohammad, Dr Taj, and Soada Idris Khan. (October 2012). Dialogic and Novel: A Study of Shashi Tharoor's Riot. *International Journal of English and Education*, (1)1, 285-290. Web. https://www.academia.edu/3265369/Dialogic_and_Novel_A_Study_of_Shashi_Tharoor's_Riot. 10 January 2014.
8. Naqvi, Saba. (2012). *In Good Faith: A Journey in Search of an Unknown India*. New Delhi: Rainlight-Rupa. .
9. Roy, Manju. (2003). *the Grammar of Narration in Riot*. In U. S. Rukhaiyar and Amar Nath Prasad (Ed.), *Studies in Indian English Fiction and Poetry* (pp. 121-135). New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
10. Thapar, Romila. (2012). *Imagined Religious Communities. History & Beyond*. (2000). New Delhi: OUP.
11. Tharoor, Shashi. (1989). *The Great Indian Novel*. New Delhi: Penguin.
12. ---. (1997). *India: From Midnight to the Millennium and Beyond*. (2007). New Delhi: Penguin.
13. ---. (2001). *Riot*. (2003). Viking: Penguin