

Preface

Creativity demands curiosity, receptiveness, acceptance and also humility. The curiosity of a creative mind manifests itself in asking questions and seeking answers out of the desire to understand things – whether or not the answers have practical applications. On the part of the research scholar, receptiveness is a complex process. It involves becoming detached from one's usual concerns and paying attention to the new ideas that come to the mind. One cannot get creative ideas by searching for them. One can only be receptive to them. They shall come as a spontaneous rushing in, filling the spirit and organizing the loose sally of the mind.

This is what happened to me when I chose the topic of this thesis, “A Study of *Faction* in the Works of Shashi Tharoor.” I have often observed in my fellow beings and friends, with myself no exception, the tendency to read between lines, to try to see the invisible, to interpret a page that simply does not exist. We add and subtract freely from words, multiply and divide them, so that all interesting writing is deemed allegorical or exaggerated or hyperbolic upto a certain extent.

Language changes and keeps changing. In a world where change is the only permanence, and the constancy of inconstancy is followed by artists of any genre, new connotations get added to the existing word. It is generally agreed that the conception of a new interpretation of an already existing word is rooted in the belief that the existing horizons have to be expanded, and new areas found. Great minds like those of John Milton could coin new words like

“pandemonium.” The bombastic verbiage of Dr. Samuel Johnson came to be talked about as the “Johnsonese.” Needless to say, that the -isms and double superlatives, like “the unkindest cut of all” in *Julius Caesar*, and also the anachronistic irrelevancies of William Shakespeare have not been derided by men of letters. Shakespeare’s forays into new and hitherto unheard of fields in grammar and syntax have been welcomed by the modern intelligentsia as well as the averagely literate readers, as novel and bold ventures. So, we can say that the taste of the writing lies in the reading.

The blend of fact and fiction enhances not only the beauty of the subject matter but presentation as well. Though some may disparagingly say it is old wine in new casks, one cannot but appreciate the elusive aroma of the blend. If an idea or fantasy occurs in the mind, it can be recombined and the real can be inverted.

Faction has a given meaning in the English language. It can be generally understood as political faction, cultural faction, socio-economic faction, economic faction and so on and so forth. None of these terms are wrong, since faction means a sector, a symbol or a portion. In literature “Faction” is a mid-20th century coinage. It means a blend of “fact” and “fiction” in a literary work. Leading writers in the U.S.A., like Truman Capote, Arthur Mailer, Tom Wolfe, Tennessee Williams, Edgar Allan Poe, John Grisham and others developed a new kind of journalism along these lines, called “Faction.” The present study explores the literary application of Faction in the works of Shashi Tharoor.

When I faced the unavoidable incompleteness of fictional worlds and words by themselves, I could see that the author of the works under study, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, has taken the choice of maximizing a single small event or minimizing a vast canvas into a synthesized nucleus. Intensive or extensive strategies are adopted by Tharoor to effect fusion or Faction. When his fictionality is interlaced with reality, **Faction**, a new form, very much related to the original, emerges in his work, as a very different, yet much more interesting resultant.

I have taken up this new genre because I believe in its veracity, practicality and enjoyability. Faction, I discover, has a vitality that is even more “truthful” and “real” than “reality” and touches the life of people as closely. Writing in fact-fiction-fusion is a very difficult craft and can be done only by an accomplished and seasoned writer. We can definitely find one in Tharoor. Fictionalised fact or factualized fiction becomes truer than reality because it enables one to see the essential humaneness of all mankind, and to believe that anything and everything is possible. There cannot be a word “impossible” in the dictionary of a Factionalist.

One of the most joyous experiences of my life came to me when I read Tharoor’s *India: From Midnight to the Millennium*, which made me feel that it was worth wading through tonnes of trash during all my reading life, which included inferior works too, to find such a jewel. But if the young and aspiring academic minds of the present and future generations can find in this thesis, a reference book for Faction, as well as an interesting analysis of the works of a gifted writer, the humble yet tireless effort of this scholar to bring into

prominence, a rare and difficult topic of study, and make a substantial contribution to the academic fraternity and student body, will bear fruit.

Tharoor, in his fiction, states facts in such a way that they attain mythical significance. His is a perception where the factual and the fictional are inseparably tied up in an endless process of signification. He seems to contend that men will behave realistically only when they realize that reality is fabulous. Thus, Fiction is the cornerstone of Tharoor's literary creativity, the fundamental principle of his understanding of reality.