

# Exploring Narrative Techniques in Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life*: A Critical Analysis

Vimal A<sup>1</sup>, & Subramania Pillai R<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Department of English, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of English, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, Tamil Nadu, India

Correspondence: Vimal A, Research Scholar, Department of English, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, Tamil Nadu, India. E- mail: vimal99.a@gmail.com

Received: February 26, 2024

Accepted: April 15, 2024

Online Published: May 17, 2024

doi:10.5430/wjel.v14n5p218

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n5p218>

## Abstract

Chetan Bhagat's novel, *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, has garnered significant attention for its narrative intricacies and thematic depth. This paper delves into an in-depth examination of the narrative techniques employed by Bhagat in crafting this compelling story. Through a critical analysis, this study explores the use of various narrative devices such as point of view, plot structure, character development, and thematic elements. By scrutinizing these techniques, this paper uncovers the underlying narrative strategies that contribute to the novel's overall impact and resonance with readers. Furthermore, this analysis offers insights into the broader literary significance of Bhagat's work within the contemporary Indian literary landscape. Additionally, this paper seeks to investigate into the thematic depth of the novel, exploring its portrayal of societal issues, cultural dynamics, and individual struggles. This study promises to provide readers with a thorough understanding of Bhagat's narrative craftsmanship and the enduring relevance of his storytelling within both literary and societal contexts. Through this analysis, readers will gain insights into the novel's thematic complexities and its reflection of contemporary Indian realities.

**Keywords:** narrative techniques, critical analysis, point of view, plot structure, character development, thematic elements, literary significance

## 1. Introduction

Chetan Bhagat's literary works have sparked considerable discussion and debate within the realm of Indian contemporary literature. Among his notable novels, *The Three Mistakes of My Life* stands out as a captivating exploration of friendship, ambition, and the tumultuous journey of self-discovery. Central to the novel's allure are the narrative techniques employed by Bhagat, which intricately weave together the fabric of the story, inviting readers to delve into the lives of its characters and the complexities of their experiences. This paper is a comprehensive examination of the narrative techniques utilized by Chetan Bhagat in *The Three Mistakes of My Life* that aims to dissect and analyze the various literary devices employed to craft this compelling narrative. Through a critical lens, we delve into the intricacies of Bhagat's storytelling by exploring elements such as point of view, plot structure, character development, and thematic resonance.

At the heart of our analysis lies the exploration of narrative point of view, a fundamental aspect of storytelling that shapes the reader's perspective and engagement with the narrative. Bhagat's adept use of first-person narration lends a sense of intimacy and immediacy to the story and draws readers into the protagonist's innermost thoughts and emotions. By closely examining the nuances of this narrative choice, we aim to unravel its impact on the reader's interpretation of the events unfolding within the novel.

Furthermore, our analysis delves into the intricate tapestry of the plot structure within *The Three Mistakes of My Life* and trace the trajectory of key events and their significance in shaping the overarching narrative arc. Bhagat's skillful manipulation of plot devices and narrative pacing imbues the story with tension, suspense, and dramatic momentum, and captivates readers from its beginning to its end. Through a meticulous examination of these structural elements, we seek to uncover the underlying mechanisms that drive the novel's narrative momentum and thematic coherence. Character development emerges as another focal point of our analysis, as we explore the evolution of the novel's protagonists and their relationships against the backdrop of socio-cultural dynamics. Bhagat's portrayal of multifaceted characters imbued with depth, flaws, and aspirations lends authenticity and relatability to the narrative and fosters a deeper emotional connection with readers. By scrutinizing the intricacies of character portrayal, we endeavor to illuminate the psychological nuances and thematic significance underlying their individual journeys.

Moreover, our critical analysis extends to the thematic exploration of *The Three Mistakes of My Life*. Our analysis delves into the broader socio-political and cultural themes that permeate the narrative landscape. From the pursuit of dreams and aspirations to the complexities of friendship, love, and identity, Bhagat navigates a diverse array of thematic terrains that offers poignant insights into the human condition and the fabric of contemporary Indian society. Through a nuanced examination of these thematic elements, we aim to elucidate

the novel's resonance with readers and its broader literary significance within the context of Indian fiction. This paper endeavors to unravel the intricacies of narrative technique in Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life* by conducting a critical analysis that sheds light on the novel's thematic richness, structural complexity, and narrative resonance. By engaging with the text at a deeper level, we seek to unravel the layers of meaning and significance embedded within Bhagat's storytelling and contribute to a greater appreciation of his literary craft and its enduring impact on readers.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To analyze the narrative techniques employed by Chetan Bhagat in *The Three Mistakes of My Life* and their impact on shaping a reader's engagement with the novel.
- 2) To examine the narrative point of view utilized in the novel and evaluate its effectiveness in conveying the protagonist's perspective and emotions.
- 3) To deconstruct the novel's plot structure by tracing the development of key events and themes, and assessing their contribution to the narrative's overall coherence and momentum.
- 4) To explore the evolution of the novel's characters and the psychological depth of their relationships to shed light on Bhagat's portrayal of complex and relatable protagonists.
- 5) To elucidate the thematic resonance of *The Three Mistakes of My Life* by investigating the socio-cultural themes addressed by the novel and their relevance to contemporary Indian society to understand the broader implications of Bhagat's narrative.

## 3. Literature Review

Chetan Bhagat's novels have garnered both widespread popularity and critical attention within the realm of contemporary Indian literature. His unique storytelling style and thematic exploration have made him a noteworthy figure in the Indian literary landscape.

Previous studies have offered insights into Bhagat's narrative style and thematic concerns. For instance, scholars such as Imaniyal S have explored the socio-political themes prevalent in Bhagat's novels by highlighting his portrayal of contemporary Indian society and its challenges. She also has examined the representation of youth culture and aspirations in Bhagat's works by shedding light on the author's resonance with young readers. (Imaniyal S, 2016) Furthermore, scholars like Suganya have analyzed Bhagat's narrative techniques, particularly his use of language and dialogue, and emphasized their role in making his novels accessible to a wider audience. (Suganya, 2023) However, a comprehensive study specifically focusing on the narrative techniques deployed in *The Three Mistakes of My Life* has not been done.

Scholars such as Meena Khorana provide a theoretical framework for understanding narrative strategies employed by Indian authors. (Khorana M, 1987) An empirical analysis of specific works, such as Bhagat's, would further enrich our understanding of narrative craft in contemporary Indian fiction.

Additionally, studies on narrative perspective and characterization in literature offer valuable insights that could be used to analyze *The Three Mistakes of My Life*. James Phelan and Peter J Rabinowitz have extensively discussed the role of narrative point of view and character development in shaping reader engagement and interpretation of literary texts. (Phelan J & Rabinowitz P J, 2008) These theoretical frameworks can be applied to examine Bhagat's narrative choices and character portrayal in his novel.

Overall, while existing literature provides valuable insights into various aspects of Chetan Bhagat's literary works and narrative techniques in Indian fiction, a focused study on the narrative techniques employed in *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is warranted to deepen our understanding of Bhagat's craft and its significance within the broader context of Indian literature. This focused approach allows for a nuanced exploration of Bhagat's narrative choices and their impact, offering valuable insights that complement existing scholarship while also paving the way for a more comprehensive understanding of his contributions to contemporary Indian fiction.

## 4. Research Analysis and Discussion

Chetan Bhagat's novel, *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, intricately weaves together themes of passion, ambition, friendship, and societal challenges against the backdrop of a turbulent Ahmedabad. The novel stands out as a portrayal of 'gloomy passion,' by highlighting the characters' relentless pursuit of their dreams amidst adversity. Notably, Bhagat elevates his characters above societal trifles such as casteism and religion by focusing on their individual aspirations and collective efforts to preserve national talent as exemplified by their friendship with Ali. The essence of the novel is succinctly captured in its back cover description; its back cover outlines the journey of a young boy living in Ahmedabad who dreams of owning a business and, in a bid to fulfill his friends' passions, opens a cricket shop. However, their path is fraught with challenges including religious politics, natural calamities, and personal mistakes. This narrative encapsulates the struggles and aspirations of a generation navigating the complexities of modern India, as depicted by Bhagat.

Published in 2008, *The Three Mistakes of My Life* has transcended linguistic boundaries. The novel has been translated into Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, and French, underscoring its widespread appeal and cultural resonance. The novel's cinematic adaptation, 'Kai Po Che,' directed by Abhishek Kapoor and featuring notable actors like Sushant Singh Rajput and Rajkumar Rao, further cements its cultural significance. At its core, the novel revolves around the friendship of Govind, Ish, and Omi, whose diverse backgrounds and interests are united by shared passions and aspirations. Govind's entrepreneurial spirit, Ish's love for cricket, and Omi's departure from his family's religious tradition, all converge as they embark on a joint business venture. Despite their initial success, their dreams are shattered by

natural disasters and religious riots which test the strength of their friendship and their resilience.

A pivotal moment in the narrative is Ish's determination to protect Ali, a Muslim boy, during the religious riots. Ish's acts portray themes of empathy and humanity amidst communal tensions. Through the friends' collective struggles and triumphs, Bhagat crafts a narrative that transcends individual experiences and offers insights into the ethos and challenges faced by an entire generation. *The Three Mistakes of My Life* emerges as a poignant portrayal of friendship, resilience, and societal realities in contemporary India. Bhagat's narrative mastery and thematic depth elevate the novel beyond mere entertainment and prompt readers to reflect on broader socio-cultural issues while celebrating the enduring power of human connection and aspiration. (Gupta & Siddharth, 2016)

#### 4.1 First Person Point of View

The novel opens with a prologue where the writer, Chetan Bhagat, receives an email containing a suicide note and confessional letter. The sender expresses regret over three unspecified mistakes and acknowledges Bhagat's capabilities as an author. Intrigued, Bhagat visits the sender in a hospital and asks him to share his story. Initially reluctant, the sender, identified as Govind Patel, eventually begins narrating his tale. He dismisses his story as lacking the glamour of IITs or call centers, but Bhagat's persistence leads Govind to share his story. Govind recounts the significance of friendship, entrepreneurship, Ishaan's cricket passion, and his relationship with Vidya. He candidly describes the impact of natural disasters like the earthquake and Godhra riots, which shattered his dreams and drove him to attempt suicide by consuming nineteen sleeping pills. Through flashback narration, Govind confesses to his three mistakes.

Govind emerges as the central protagonist and narrator, providing a firsthand account of the events. The story, which unfolds from his perspective, starts with a cricket match between India and South Africa. Govind introduces himself as an aggressive young man as exemplified by an incident where he assaults a boy for harassing his sister and honking near his house. He delves into his family background, highlighting his impoverished status when compared to that of his friends. His father's demise years ago compelled his mother to run a small snacks business. Govind supplemented their income by offering to tutor pupils. Amidst the narrative, Govind offers insights into Ahmedabad's character, humorously noting the city's claim as the 'real India' compared to the perceived artificiality of larger urban centers.

Bhagat's utilization of the first-person perspective through Govind's narration provides readers with an intimate understanding of the protagonist's thoughts, emotions, and experiences, and sets the stage for a compelling exploration of friendship, aspirations, and adversity in contemporary India. Govind detests the pervasive gossip circulating among people, particularly the outlandish theories concocted about his friends. Govind reflects on his preference for logic over emotions when describing his own mental disposition. "As far as I can remember, I was never good with emotional stuff. I love maths, I love...with every lady in every poll coming down to sympathize with her." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 8)

This excerpt underscores Govind's pragmatic and rational nature, as well as his aversion to emotional displays. His passion lies in business, a pursuit he finds more fulfilling than his friends Omi and Ish, who were not serious about their careers. Despite his family's expectations for him to pursue engineering, Govind remains resolute in his entrepreneurial aspirations. Collaborating with his friends, they decide to open a cricket shop within Omi's uncle Bittu's premises which is located inside the Swami Bhakti temple. The inauguration of their shop on April 29, 2000, marks the commencement of their venture, named 'The Team India Cricket Shop.' Each friend contributes to the endeavor: Ish designs the Indian flag and features images of cricket icons Ganguly and Tendulkar, Omi provides the shop space, while Govind oversees supplier negotiations and maintains financial records. After three months, their business begins to flourish following India's series of victories against South Africa. While Ish and Omi are content with the current state of their business, Govind harbors grander ambitions for expansion. He expresses his vision to his friends, emphasizing the need to move their shop to a new location within a shopping mall under construction:

"I don't want this short-sighted mentality. I will open a store in a mall, and by next year have one more store. If you don't grow in business, you stagnate. No Ish, proper shop. Young people like to shop in swanky malls. That is the future. Our shop has been doing good business, but we can't grow unless we move to a new city location." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 25)

Govind's impassioned stance reveals his entrepreneurial drive and determination to pursue larger opportunities. However, Ish dismisses Govind's plans as 'bullshit,' mockingly likening him to an aspiring Ambani. Despite their differing perspectives, Ish agrees to stock notebooks for sale in exchange for Govind's purchase of a TV to watch cricket matches. In addition to their cricket shop venture, Govind and Ish diversify their income streams. Govind, leveraging his proficiency in mathematics, begins offering tuition classes in the compound building. Meanwhile, Ish starts cricket coaching sessions at the SBI compound ground, further enhancing their financial stability. The narrative introduces Bittoo Mama, an RSS volunteer, who visits the shop for the first time since its opening. He reprimands Omi for wearing slippers in the temple area and imparts Hindu philosophical teachings, showcasing a reverence for tradition. Bittoo Mama's admiration for Omi is evident as he frequently praises him and invites the trio to Parekhji's house. During their visit to Parekhji's house, they are exposed to Parekhji's rhetoric, which highlights historical injustices faced by Hindus: "I don't even want to go into who this country belongs to because the poor Hindu is accustomed to being ruled by someone else. 700 years by Muslims, 250 years by the British." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 43) This quotation underscores the prevalent socio-political themes in the novel and sets the stage for deeper exploration of identity and belonging. Govind narrates his first visit to Vidya's house as a tutor. Vidya is Ish's sister. Ish requests to Govind to tutor her in Maths. He reaches Ish's home at 7 p.m. Vidya's room is neat, clean, and extra pink. He asks her about maths class. "I have lived, compromised, struggled with it. It is a troubled relationship we have shared for years. From classes one to twelve, this

subject does not go away. People have night mares about monsters. I have nightmares about surprise test.” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 46). She says that she does not like maths and would opt for an electric shock over a maths test. She says that Maths is the worst thing ever invented by men. She narrates her experience about Maths class:

She expresses her desire to attend college in Mumbai, yearning to escape Ahmedabad. However, her parents insist on only allowing her to pursue prestigious courses like medicine or engineering. Teaching her math proves to be quite challenging for Govind. Despite his reluctance, he agrees to tutor her out of his friendship with her brother. However, the task proves to be daunting given her disinterest and struggles with the subject.

Govind introduces another important character, Ali. Ali is responsible for the development of the plot. He is the son of Muslim activist. Due to Ali, many unexpected incidents take place in the fictional narrative. He becomes Ish’s mission of life. Some boys come to the shop to call Ish to see Ali at the Belrampur Municipal high school. Ish and Govind go with the boys. They see Ali. Ali is a little malnourished. Boys ask him to play but he is not ready. After some time, he agrees to play. Omi becomes the wicketkeeper; Govind works as a fielder. Ish becomes a baller, and he takes a fake run up as he views Ali as a small kid. Ali hits six on the first ball. On every ball, Ish increases his run-up and ball speed but Ali hits sixes on every ball. Govind describes this event: “I laughed. I knew I should not have but I did. To see the school cricket champion of my batch raped so in public by a mere boy of twelve was too funny. At least to me, actually only to me.” (Bhagat, 2008, p.54)

After some time, Ali takes a seat on the crease as he experiences a sudden headache—a recurring issue when he plays with full concentration. Ali’s remarkable talent leaves a strong impression on Ishaan, himself a cricket champion, who resolves to coach Ali. However, Omi initially disagrees with this decision due to Ali’s Muslim background. Despite his hesitations, Omi, who fears Bitto Mama’s disapproval, eventually relents on his refusal to allow Ish bring Ali to the temple. Govind recounts Ish’s dedicated efforts and struggles to teach Ali cricket. They even take him to Dr. Verma to investigate the cause of his headaches, who subsequently recommends Dr. Multani. Upon undergoing an MRI scan, Multani offers his insight into Ali’s remarkable brain function, stating, “His reflexes are ten times superior to those of the average person. Ali’s brain is truly fascinating... making it seem as if they were slow throws.” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 60)

Dr. Multani asserts that Ali possesses the potential to be part of the Indian cricket team but suggests that he needs to develop other aspects of his game as well. Govind recounts their visit to Ali’s modest home to seek permission from his father to coach Ali. Despite their best intentions, Ali’s father expresses his financial constraints. Ish then generously offers to teach Ali for free, but Ali’s father questions the practicality of cricket coaching when school is already challenging for his son. Govind observes a heated exchange between Ali’s father and Omi, during which they touch upon topics of religion, secularism, and the Ayodhya issue. However, Govind finds himself unable to fully grasp their discussion, such matters leave him perplexed. He reflects on his uncertainty, questioning whether Omi genuinely believes in what he says or merely echoes teachings from Parekh-ji. Govind wonders if religion is Omi’s true passion, akin to Ish’s love for cricket and his own pursuit of business. Alternatively, he thinks Omi, like many others, is simply grappling with confusion in the pursuit of his own passion. Unlike himself and Ish, who never took Omi seriously, Govind considers the possibility that Parekh-ji might lend Omi a sense of purpose and importance.

Ali’s mother graciously invites them for dinner, despite Omi’s initial reluctance to eat at a Muslim’s house. However, Ish and Govind persuade him to accept the invitation. In a spontaneous declaration and without consulting Govind beforehand, Ish promises that if Ali joins cricket coaching, Govind would teach him math for free. Govind recounts Ali’s coaching journey, including their trips to Goa and Australia. Ish focuses on stamina training for Ali, who struggles due to his weakness and inability to run for extended periods. While Ali excels at batting, he lacks proficiency in other aspects of cricket. Ish scolds him harshly resulting in tears. Govind intervenes, urging Ish to be gentler, considering it is Ali’s first day. As Govind begins teaching Ali math, he realizes Ali’s significant weakness in the subject.

Later, Bittoo Mama pays a second visit to their shop, inviting them to join his election campaign to mobilize young people. He urges them to share their philosophy of Hinduism. However, Govind, uninterested in such activities, openly declares, “I am not into that sort of stuff. I am agnostic, remember.” (Bhagat, 2008, p.7) Despite Mama’s attempts to persuade him by emphasizing the importance of justice over religion and the favor he extends to Govind by renting him a shop space at a low rate, Govind stands firm. He announces his decision to relocate to Navarangpura, displaying his determination and refusal to rely on others’ mercy. Subsequently, Govind tutors Vidya, who shows more interest in science than math. He suggests science books for her, and she asks him to accompany her to buy them. While leaving her home, Ish expresses his skepticism about Vidya’s academic capabilities, causing Govind’s heartbeats to quicken with guilt, hinting at his hidden feelings for Vidya. During their visit to the University Bookstore in Navarangpura, Govind is struck by Vidya’s beauty and struggles against the temptation to stare at her. As they interact with the shopkeeper, Govind explains that Vidya is his student, and he reflects on how such encounters contribute to the perception of Ahmedabad as a small town despite its modern amenities.

After purchasing the books, Govind takes Vidya to see the site of the Navarangpura mall. They visit Dairy den, where Govind initiates a conversation about math and science, much to Vidya’s irritation as she is in a different mood. She suggests they could be friends since they are not far apart in age, but Govind rejects her proposal. When she asks why, he lists four reasons: “1) I am your teacher 2) you are my best friend’s sister 3) you are younger than me, and 4) you are a girl.” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 88).

He reflects on the awkwardness of stating his reasons in bullet points, noting how his nerdy nature does not impress girls due to his inability to communicate his emotions. Vidya insists that Govind should have a backup friend, explaining the concept to him by referring

to the close bond between Ish and Omi. Govind is surprised by her analogy and his mouth remains agape at her words. Vidya reveals that Garima is her best friend and Govind serves as her backup friend for venting purposes. During their conversation over pizza, Govind shares his dream of starting a business, tutoring, and moving out of the old city to open a shop in an air-conditioned mall.

Govind describes Ali's training, noting that he often arrives late wearing traditional attire. Despite Ish's frustration, Govind gives Ali a new bat. However, Ali expresses a desire to leave early for a marble competition, prompting Ish to insist on catching practice. As Ali's stamina improves, Ish becomes increasingly frustrated when Ali drops a simple catch and slaps him twice in anger. Govind intervenes, urging Ish to be gentle as Ali is just twelve years old. Ish, feeling disillusioned, questions why God gifts talent to some individuals more than others; questions that express his buried emotions: "Not, enough. Not as much as Ali. I love this game but have no gifts. I pushed myself... And then comes this marble player who has this freakish gift. I could never see the ball and whack it like Ali. Why Govind?" (Bhagat, 2008, p. 97)

Govind attempts to provide a philosophical explanation to Ish's questions, suggesting that God bestows talent upon individuals to enable ordinary people to become extraordinary, and allow the poor to transcend their circumstances through their talents. He recounts an emotional encounter between Ish and Ali, during which Ish and Govind visit Ali's home to offer consolation. Ish presents Ali with colorful marbles, prompting Ali to apologize for his previous behavior and touch Ish's feet. Ali's mother reveals that Ali spent the entire day crying and even canceled his marble competition. Despite suggestions to take Ali to district trials, Ish decides to aim higher, believing Ali should only go for national team selection. Meanwhile, Govind finds solace in Vidya's company. Although Vidya tries to initiate a closer relationship with him, Govind resists. In a subsequent meeting, Vidya is distracted from studying as she needs to oil her face. As she bends down to pick up a fallen bottle, Govind finds himself staring at her for slightly longer than intended. He then is self-conscious of his actions. Despite his reservations, he follows her instructions to oil her hair, blurring the lines between tutor and companion. However, when Vidya questions his role in her life and whether he considers himself her friend, Govind reaffirms his position as her tutor. (Singh, 2018)

As their dreams seem on the verge of fulfillment, a natural disaster strikes—an earthquake. Govind witnesses the devastation on TV before rushing to his shop in Navarangpura. Seeing the destruction, he recalls painful memories of his father leaving and his family's subsequent struggles, feeling a surge of anger at himself for investing so much in the business. This loss marks what he perceives as the first major mistake of his life. Devastated by the loss incurred from his investment in the mall, Govind isolates himself at home for a week. Vidya's visit brings a semblance of solace as she presents him with a hand-drawn card, depicting a boy labeled as Govind lying in bed, accompanied by a heartfelt poem. Despite his initial resistance, Vidya's words of encouragement resonate with Govind, reminding him of the fortunate circumstance of not being in the mall during the earthquake. She informs him of Ish and Omi's efforts in managing the mall in his absence, providing a glimmer of hope amidst his despair. Moved by Vidya's gesture and inspired by her words, Govind begins to reconsider his priorities, realizing that an air-conditioned mall may not be his true path. This encounter marks the inception of Govind's burgeoning feelings for Vidya, igniting a love that would eventually lead him down a path fraught with challenges. Encouraged by Vidya's support, Govind reignites his passion for business, seeking to revive his endeavors with renewed fervor. He approaches Bittoo Mama to renegotiate loan installments, signaling his determination to bounce back from adversity. As life gradually returns to normalcy, Govind recounts the anxiety-ridden test match between India and Australia, upon which their business success hinges. With Ish's intense focus on the match, Govind shares in the tension, knowing the outcome could significantly impact their fortunes. The unexpected victory of India brings relief and prosperity to their business, paving the way for further opportunities.

Driven by Ish's vision, Govind reluctantly agrees to accompany him to Goa to introduce Ali to Australian players. Witnessing Ali's remarkable talent firsthand, Fred Li extends an invitation for Ali to train at his academy in Australia, offering air tickets as a gesture of goodwill. Amidst the political fervor surrounding rallies led by Bittoo Mama and Ali's father on Independence Day, Govind finds himself embroiled in their conflicting agendas. Omi's insistence for Govind to spy on Ali's father prompts tension between them, with Govind vehemently opposing their involvement in the political and religious strife. His outburst at Omi underscores his frustration and disillusionment with the tumultuous environment surrounding them. Govind excitedly informs Vidya about their upcoming trip to Australia, eliciting her enthusiasm. She eagerly requests a gift from Australia to which Govind agrees. Upon their arrival in Sydney at 7 a.m., Fred Li takes them to the Academy grounds where they are impressed by the facilities. During practice, Fred assigns Ali to bat, breaking the pride of the kids who were used to bowling first.

The following day, Ali showcases his batting prowess by hitting marvelous sixes, but injures his ankle during a run-up. As they visit Bondi Beach, Govind's thoughts are consumed by Vidya, reflecting on his feelings for her amidst the allure of the beautiful women around him. He muses on his longing for Vidya, questioning the nature of his emotions and the significance of her presence in his thoughts. Amidst the scenic beauty of Bondi Beach, Govind calls Vidya, informing her of their location. They engage in light conversation, with Vidya directly asking if he misses her, revealing her own feelings as a good friend. She requests him to bring her sand from the beach as a souvenir, expressing her anticipation for their return. However, Omi's suspicion prompts Govind to conceal the true nature of the call, insisting it was to suppliers. During their trip, Govind recounts Ali's unwavering love for his motherland. When Ali was offered Australian citizenship to play for Australia, he firmly declined, stating his desire to represent India.

Upon their return to Ahmedabad, Govind rushes to meet Vidya first. He also presents her with a gift of sand from Bondi Beach. Overwhelmed with joy, Vidya touches his hand as she accepts the gift. Encouraged by her boldness, she kisses him, marking the beginning of their romantic relationship. However, Govind hesitates, reminding her that she is not yet eighteen, to which she reveals her

upcoming birthday. This moment signifies their first experience of love, followed by Vidya's request for a cake to celebrate her birthday. As Govind saves her number as 'supplier Vidynath,' Omi warns him to stay away from Vidya due to the potential complications of their budding romance. In the subsequent events, Govind recounts the celebration of Vidya's birthday and their first sexual experience. While Vidya is pleased with no longer being a virgin, Govind feels overwhelming guilt and recognizes the gravity of his actions as the second mistake of his life. He reflects, "I don't know if it was the candlelight or the birthday mood or the cushion or what it was then that I made the second mistake of my life." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 200) Govind grapples with a mental crisis as he knows that he has betrayed his best friends and jeopardized their friendship.

As tensions escalate, Mama invites them on a trip to Ayodhya as Car Sevaks, Govind declines but commits to taking part in a future trip. However, his anxiety heightens upon receiving an SMS from Vidya indicating a missed period. Urgently summoned by Vidya, Govind suggests marriage, but Vidya rejects the idea due to her age, leaving him sleepless and distressed. The narrative intensifies with dramatic events unfolding rapidly. Mama's son, Dhiraj, is tragically killed in the Godhra train burning incident, sparking Hindu-Muslim riots across Gujarat and the country. In the chaos, shopkeepers shut their shops, and violence grips Ahmedabad. Meanwhile, Ali, unaware of the turmoil, innocently visits the shop, seeking gloves from Ish. Concerned for Ali's safety, Ish takes him to his home, where Govind also seeks refuge. Later, Omi delivers the devastating news of Dhiraj's death to Govind, leaving him in tears.

As the violence escalates, Govind, Ish, and Ali find themselves trapped in a volatile situation. Mama, armed with a trishul and torch, seeks revenge for his son's death. Despite Govind's attempts at negotiation and persuasion, Mama is determined to avenge his son's death. Ish decides to confront the mob, prompting Govind's apprehension. Govind questions the logic of fighting against thirty people, fearing that they would all perish, including Ali. Reflecting on the dire situation, Govind implores Ish to reconsider his decision to confront the mob by highlighting the mathematical improbability of success against the overwhelming odds. Govind brings mathematics into the situation. But Ish is determined to save Ali, proclaiming him as a "national treasure." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 231) Ish pours kerosene on the mob causing some to catch fire as they attempt to flee. Ish then hides Ali in the vault, gives him with a phone and conceals the keys to the vault inside his sock. As the mob breaks into the branch manager's office, Ish demands Govind's phone to call the police, as his phone is with Ali. Despite Ish's efforts to contact the authorities, they received no response. Frustrated, Ish hangs up the phone. Ish then receives a message from Vidya, inadvertently revealing her affair with Govind and a potential pregnancy. This discovery prompts Ish to physically assault Govind, accusing him of selfishness and betrayal.

During the altercation, Mama enters the room and asks for Ali. Despite their efforts to protect him, Mama discovers Ali hiding in the vault and attempts to kill him with a trishul. In the chaos, Omi intervenes but tragically gets fatally wounded by Mama. As the situation escalates, Ish, wounded and held captive, urges Govind to act, signaling him to block Mama's advance towards Ali. In a moment of hesitation, Govind realizes and admits his mistake. "I wasted precious time thinking when I should have acted." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 246) Govind then lunges to protect Ali. Govind narrowly misses Mama's trishul strike but the delay in his action inadvertently causes an injury to Ali's wrist, marking the third mistake of his life. Ali and Govind sprint to the end of the room, where Ali grabs a bat from the floor. Meanwhile, Mama strikes his trishul at Ish's toe, causing him to fall. Mama then approaches Ali menacingly, but Ali skillfully pushes a ball towards Ish, who in turn throws it back to Ali. With remarkable precision, Ali hits the ball towards Mama, striking him hard on the temple and then on the center of his forehead with successive strokes, killing him. Ish embraces Ali and escorts him home, leaving Govind behind as if he were one of the casualties. This marks the culmination of the main narrative.

The epilogue picks up the story three years, two months, and one week later, with Ish still refusing to speak to Govind. Despite Govind's attempts to reconcile, Ish remains cold towards him. Govind struggles to reopen his shop, and eventually, Omi's mother persuades him to do so by dividing the shop into two sections. Vidya's parents send her to Bombay, while Ali stays with Ish. Filled with remorse, Govind admits that Ali's wrist was damaged due to his delay in acting during the altercation. He recounts Ish's relentless efforts to raise funds for Ali's surgery, even reaching out to hospitals in the UK and USA for concessions. Both Ish and Govind manage to save a significant sum, and Govind offers his portion to Ish for Ali's treatment. However, Ish refuses to accept Govind's money, wearing cricket gloves while returning the envelope to him, symbolizing his rejection of dishonestly obtained funds. Ish even offers Govind the money from his cashbox, stating that he refuses to fund Ali's surgery with "a dishonest man's money." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 254) This rejection deeply affects Govind, leading him to contemplate suicide because of his overwhelming guilt and remorse.

#### 4.2 Flashback

The first-person narration adds authenticity to Govind's emotional turmoil and internal conflict. The novel is divided into three parts: the prologue, main story, and epilogue. The prologue begins on December 28, 2005. The major story starts on March 17, 2000, and concludes on December 28, 2005. The epilogue ends on December 28, 2005. While the prologue and epilogue take place on the same day, the main story covers a span of five years. The main story is set in the past; the author employs the flashback technique to narrate it. The writer, Chetan Bhagat, receives an email on December 28, 2005, at 11:40 p.m. from Ahd\_businessman@gmail.com. The subject of the email is a final note, which combines a suicide and confession note. In the email, the sender writes: "My suicide is not a sentimental decision. As many around me know, I am a good businessman because I have little emotion. This is no knee-jerk reaction. I waited over three years, watched Ish's silent face every day. But after he refused my offer yesterday, I had no choice left." (Bhagat, 2005, Prologue I) The beginning of the novel is dramatic and horrific, with the note raising many doubts in the minds of its readers. The writer, in Singapore at the time, becomes curious about the story of G. Patel and decides to travel to Ahmedabad to learn more about the sender of the note. Govind narrates the story as if it were happening in the present, detailing the lives of three friends, their passions, business ventures,

cricket interests, love affairs, involvement in politics, and experiences during communal riots. Throughout the narrative, Govind also confesses to the three mistakes of his life. The story begins on March 17, 2000, with Ishaan, Omi, and Govind watching a cricket match at Ishaan's house. As they enjoy the game, Govind recounts their shared passion for cricket and their aspirations. They eventually start a cricket shop together and dream of expanding their business. However, their lives take unexpected turns with the introduction of Ali, a talented cricketer, and the occurrence of a devastating earthquake on January 26, 2001, which shatters Govind's entrepreneurial dreams.

Reflecting on the aftermath of the earthquake, Govind thinks to himself: "I found it, finally. Only the six storeys that were intact a day ago had now turned into a concrete heap. I couldn't concentrate. I looked for water, but only saw rubble, rubble, and more rubble. My stomach hurt. I grabbed it with my left hand and sat on a broken bench to keep my consciousness. This was the first mistake of my life." (Bhagat, 2008, p.107). Ishaan urges Govind to tutor his sister, Vidya, who is preparing for her medical entrance exams. Initially hesitant, Govind eventually agrees to tutor her at home; a pivotal decision in shaping the story. Govind, like Hari in *Five Point Someone*, shares a romantic entanglement with Vidya, but Govind hesitates to pursue his best friend's sister due to his shyness. Omi warns him to keep his distance from Vidya. Despite Govind's reservations, Vidya attempts to foster an intimate relationship with him, but he rebuffs her advances. One day, while they are at Law Garden purchasing books, Govind is struck by Vidya's beauty. She expresses a desire for them to become best friends, but Govind declines, citing their age difference and his role as her tutor.

Following a devastating earthquake, Govind falls into a state of depression, but Vidya becomes his source of inspiration. She visits him and presents him with a thoughtful card containing philosophical lines expressing support and encouragement. During their trip to Australia, Govind finds himself yearning for Vidya. He calls her from Australia and brings her a gift of sand from Bondi Beach. His thoughts remain consumed by her, even amidst the distractions of the trip. On Vidya's birthday, they engage in a sexual relationship, leaving Govind feeling ashamed and guilty, considering it the second mistake of his life.

The narrative takes a drastic turn with the Godhra massacre that endangers them. Bittoo Mama's son is killed during the massacre which fuels his rage and desire for revenge against Muslims. When Ali, who was unaware of the situation, arrives for practice, Mama seeks to kill him. Determined to protect Ali, the three friends intervened. However, Ish discovers Govind and Vidya's affair when her message about her missed period arrives during the crisis. In the chaos, Ish beats Govind, and Omi intervenes to stop him. As Mama closes in on Ali with a Trishul, Govind's delay in pushing Ali out of harm's way leads to Ali being injured. Reflecting on the moment, Govind realizes that his hesitation was his third mistake, a confession that acknowledges the gravity of the situation at the time and the consequences of his actions.

Ali discovers a bat and a ball on the floor. Ali pushes the ball towards Ish, who bowls to him. With a brilliant stroke, Ali strikes the ball forcefully and hits Mama's temple and his forehead resulting in Mama's immediate demise. They manage to safeguard Ali from harm, and Ish, without saying a word, takes Ali under his wing. Ish then exhibits an air of indifference towards Govind marking the culmination of the primary narrative. Subsequently, Ish maintains complete silence towards Govind for a period spanning three years, two months, and one week. They decide to partition their shop into two separate sections. In the meantime, Ish diligently saves money for Ali's wrist surgery; an act that demonstrates Ish's unwavering dedication to his friend Ali. Despite Govind's earnest attempt to contribute to Ali's medical expenses, Ish refuses to accept Govind's money and returns it while wearing gloves, symbolizing his refusal to associate with what he perceives as tainted funds. This rejection deeply wounds Govind and prompts him to turn to sleeping pills in a moment of despair; an event that terminates the flashback segment of the narrative.

#### 4.3 Satire

*The Three Mistakes of My Life* is a satire on politics, snobbery in the name of religion, education, immoral behavior of youths, obsession with cricket, and the societal behaviors. The author employs elements of satire, humor, exaggeration, sarcasm, irony, and ridicule. The writer receives an email from G. Patel containing a combined confession and suicide note. He then goes to look for G. Patel in an Ahmedabad hospital. The writer admonishes him for his actions, but G. Patel expresses no remorse. This interaction highlights the societal critique embedded in the narrative. Throughout the story, Govind narrates his life experiences to the writer, employing humor, wit, hyperbole, and irony. He exposes the hypocrisy of self-proclaimed religious individuals, critiques the flawed education system, and condemns the corrupt nature of politics infiltrating sports, all of which hinder the country's progress. The dreams and ambitions of the youth are stifled by a prevailing greedy system. At the novel's outset, Govind, Ishaan, and Omi are engrossed in a cricket match at Ishaan's house. Tendulkar's dismissal prompts tension among them, particularly for Ishaan, whose passion for cricket led him to leave the NDA. Their enthusiasm for cricket is portrayed humorously, illustrating the excessive interest the Indian youth have in the sport.

While reflecting on Ahmedabad's characteristics, Govind acknowledges its unique charm despite being labeled a small-town. He embraces his roots in Ambavad and takes pride in its authenticity, contrasting it with the superficiality of big cities. He asserts, "Yes, I am from the old city of Ambavad and proud of it." (Bhagat, 2008, p.8) This is a satire on the Metro-cities and their fashion shows. The new city is clean; it has gleaming glass and steel buildings, while the old city does not clear its rubbish on time; a distinct difference between the old and the new city. The shop opening and its description is quite amusing. Their first customer comes at 12 noon with his mother. Ish gives the boy some tips of batting and bowling. The boy compels his mother to buy the bat as his birthday present. When they leave, Ish remarks that his mother will stuff him with studies. For Indian parents, studying is particularly important. They do not bother with the interests of their children. Neither do they nurture the natural talents of their children. Ish asks a boy named Tapan to participate in cricket coaching sessions, but the boy refuses because his mummy would not permit it. Instead, Tapan's mother asks him to join the academic

tuition classes. Ish opines that due to this reason, India does not win all cricket matches. “Well, you saw that kid, parents will spend thousands teaching kids useless...Soon, they will turn into depressed adults.” (Bhagat, 2008, p.30)

Ish always thinks about cricket and criticizes most parents for not allowing their children to participate in sports. Bittoo Mama invites Govind, Omi, and Ish to Parekhji's residence. The description of the gathering is satirical: “Omi went to meet a group of two balds. Whites, one grey-saffron and one bald- saffron. He touches their feet and everyone blessed him. Considering Omi met these kinds of people often, he had one of the highest per-capita blessings ratios in India.” (Bhagat, 2008, p.41)

Govind enquires about the people. Omi states that the people in saffron are priests or other holy men from around the city. The people in white are members of the political party. Parekh-ji is a guide and the chairperson of the main temple trust who also knows politicians very well. Govind calls him hybrid, a poli-priest, exposing the politics in religion.

The speech of Parekh-ji is full of religious and political agendas. He praises carsevaks who have returned from Ayodhya. He talks about the injustices faced by the Hindu religion. In the end, he declares that they do not stand for hypocrisy or unfairness. They are not communal, they are honest. Govind's comments are quite satirical. He describes Parekh-ji's behavior as ironical. “The audience broke into full applause. I used the break to step out into the front garden of Parekh-ji's house and sit on an intricately carved swing. Parekh-ji spoke inside for ten more minutes, inaudible to me. I looked at the stars above and thought of the man on the velvet cushion. It was strange; I was both attracted to and repelled by him. He has charisma and lunacy at the same time.” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 45)

Three friends go to Ali's home to seek permission from his father for Ali's coaching. Initially, Ali's father refuses to let Ali attend coaching sessions stating that cricket is of no use to Ali. Ali is already busy with schoolwork and attending Madrasa. The discussion between Ali's father and Omi is a satire on political and communal differences. Ali's father is an active member of a secular party. He invites Omi to visit the party meetings, but Omi becomes angry and calls it a suck-cular party. They then discuss the Ayodhya temple issue. Ali's dad says, “Son, India is a free country. You have a right to your views. My only advice is Hinduism is a great religion but don't get too extreme.” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 69) Ish requests them not to discuss politics. Ali's father's response is a great satire on Indian politics. “Don't be silly, we are communicating our differences...Creating differences, taking sides, causing divides. They know this too well.” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 70) Ish thinks that India should win every match. Australia has twenty million people; India has one billion people. Moreover, India's population increases by two percent each year. India creates Australia every year. But Australia still outshines India. (Vishalakshi & Keerthika, 2018) Something is very wrong with this. Ish says that the team is full of people who are connected to relevant persons within the sport. Boys ask Ish to take Ali to the district cricket trials but Ish refuses because they would destroy Ali. If they rejected him, he would be disappointed forever. They would make him play useless matches for several years. This is the satire on the cricket selection criteria and people involved in the system. Ish and Govind go to Kendriya Vidyalaya to provide them with an estimate of the costs of the sports equipment. The mediocre quality of the office they visit is a sign of the quality of the education system in India and negligence by the government. The committee rejects the estimate due to its prohibitive cost despite Ish's persuasion. He asks the teachers to teach students teamwork, and to chase a goal with passion, discipline, and focus. He thinks that sports teach them all these skills. A sports culture is not inculcated in Indian Schools.

The writer comments on the education system and parents' mentality. Ish's sister Vidya does not want to study Mathematics and Physics. But her parents force her to study these subjects. The interaction between Vidya and her parents is a message to the youth to make decisions for their own happiness and not for the happiness of others and for civilization also. “Vidya marks at the egoism of most parents. They decide the future of their kids for the benefit of their so-called social image. They do not worry to invite suggestions from their children even in the critical matter of life. Bhagat ignores this attitude of the elders to the younger.” (Pandya, 2018, p.13). The speeches of Bittoo Mama and Hasmmukhji are satirical. They give speeches during the elections. Mama raises the Ayodhya issue. At another corner, is Ali's dad's rally. He also gives a speech. “The Gods we pray stayed away from politics in their time. If we truly want to follow our Gods, we must keep our religion separate from politics public.” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 152) Govind is sent to spy on the rally as if it were a war. Ali's father comes with Govind to see the rally of Hashmmukh-ji. People call him a traitor. This mentality is harmful for national integrity. Common people live in harmony. Parties do not want this harmony among the common people. This is a satire on the political parties.

“In *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, Chetan Bhagat presents a social-political concern with the vision of a partaker in the chain of events with action emerging from within rather than being imposed from without. The integrated vehemence of passion provides an additional force to action.” (Kolekar, 2016, p. 51) “Ish and all go to Australia for Ali. While discussing, Fred says, ‘Well you could, though right now you rely on talent more than training. You have a big population, a tiny number are born excellent, like Tendulkar or maybe like Ali.’” (Bhagat, 2008, p. 163) There are drawbacks to India regarding sport training. At the party, Fred says that Australians do not ask about money, car, or job. They ask about which games people play. In Australia, sport is a national obsession. He asks Ish what the national obsession of India is. “There are a lot of people and there's a lot of obsessions. That's the problem. But religion and politics are pretty big and then together, even bigger.” (Bhagat, 2008, p.175) This description shows the criticism of Indian politics and religion. This leads to communal riots.

#### 4.4 Epistolary Technique

Chetan Bhagat employs various forms of communication such as emails, SMS, and letters to enhance the plot of the narrative and create suspense in the story. These modern techniques engage readers and drive the narrative forward. The story begins with an email received by Chetan Bhagat from Ahd\_businessman@.com, titled “the final note.” The email, serves as both a suicide note and a confession letter,



and sets the stage for the entire plot. The sender expresses his despair and reveals his intention to end his life. He writes: "This email is a combined suicide note and a confession letter. I have let people down and have no reason to live. You don't know me. I'm an ordinary boy in Ahmedabad who reads your books. And somehow, I felt I could write to you after that I can't really tell anyone what I am doing to myself - which is taking a sleeping pill everything I end a sentence - so I thought I would tell you." (Bhagat, 2008, Prologue XI)

Prompted by this email, the writer embarks on a search for Govind Patel by traveling from Singapore to Ahmedabad. Govind then narrates his story and confesses to his mistakes to the writer. Following a devastating earthquake, Govind experiences a nervous breakdown and isolates himself at home. Vidya, his love interest, visits him and gives him a letter containing a heartfelt message: "To my maths tutor/ sort-of-friend, I cannot fully understand your loss, but I can try. Sometimes life throws curve balls and you question why. There may be no answers, but I assure time will heal the wound. Here is wishing you a heartfelt 'get well soon.'" (Bhagat, 2008, p.112) This letter from Vidya rejuvenates Govind and strengthens their bond, eventually leading to a romantic relationship between them, marking Govind's second mistake. Additionally, SMS messages play a pivotal role in the story's development. Vidya informs Govind about missing her menstrual period through a text message, indicating a potential pregnancy. Meanwhile, amidst a chaotic situation where Govind, Omi, and Ish are fighting to save Ali from a violent mob, Ish sends Govind a message urging him to stay safe. "Hey, stay safe tonight. By the way, just got my period!! Yipee!! Relieved no? C U soon my hot teacher. Love- me." (Bhagat, 2008, p.237).

Govind has cunningly saved Vidya's number under the guise of 'Supplier Vidyanath.' Out of sheer curiosity, Ish decides to dial the number, only for Vidya to answer the call. In that moment, Ish inadvertently discovers the clandestine affair between Govind and Vidya. Filled with anger and betrayal, Ish confronts Govind, labeling him as a cheater. A revelation then unfolds the secret love affair between Govind and Vidya and exposes the depth of their relationship. Throughout the narrative, letters, SMS, and emails serve as crucial elements in shaping the story's structure. Chetan Bhagat adeptly employs both traditional and modern epistolary techniques to advance the plot and add layers of intrigue to his storytelling.

#### 4.5 Stream of Consciousness Technique

In the narrative, Govind emerges as the central protagonist, driven by his passion for business and his role in uniting his friends. However, he encounters numerous challenges throughout his journey, including the loss of his father, the devastation of his business in an earthquake, and the three significant mistakes he acknowledges making. Amidst these challenges, Govind grapples with mental anguish, a turmoil subtly unveiled through the stream of consciousness technique employed by the writer. Govind's entrepreneurial zeal is palpable as he initiates the sports shop venture with his friends and harbors ambitions for its growth and success. His thoughts reflect his dedication to business development. During Vidya's math tuition, Govind muses in response to her lack of interest, "How can I tame the wild beast?" (Bhagat, 2004, p.46), showcasing his relentless pursuit of opportunities.

The small-town mentality often intrudes upon Govind's life, prompting reflections on societal norms. When faced with intrusive gazes while shopping with Vidya, Govind ponders, "Why do these old people poke their nose in our affairs so much?" (Bhagat, 2008, p.85). His ponderings reveal his exasperation with societal scrutiny. Amidst a call with Vidya from Bondi beach, Govind grapples with conflicting emotions, torn between expressing his feelings and maintaining a platonic facade. His vividly portrayed inner conflict "You can talk to me, but doesn't even freaking think about anything else you bore..." (Bhagat, 2008, p.170), highlights his struggle to navigate their relationship dynamics. After indulging in a physical relationship with Vidya, Govind experiences a wave of regret and self-reproach, as depicted by his internal monologue that underscores his turmoil over his actions: "What have you done Govind Patel?" (Bhagat, 2008, p. 201).

When Vidya fears pregnancy and seeks solace from Govind, his mind races with potential responses, showcasing his indecision and inner turmoil: "Make her laugh-bad idea... Hold her-maybe, maybe ok hold her..." (Bhagat, 2008, p. 208). Amidst his pondering, Govind grapples with the weight of the impending responsibility, contemplating their divergent futures and its potential impact on their lives. Through Govind's inner dialogue and contemplation, the writer employs the stream of consciousness technique to vividly portray Govind's internal struggle, the complexity of his decision-making process and offers insights into his psyche and emotional turmoil.

## 5. Conclusion

In "Exploring Narrative Techniques in Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life: A Critical Analysis*," we delve into the intricate narrative strategies employed by Bhagat to craft a compelling story. An exhaustive examination of Bhagat's techniques illustrates that his narrative prowess extends beyond mere storytelling to encapsulate a nuanced understanding of character development, thematic exploration, and reader engagement. At the heart of Bhagat's narrative architecture lies his adept utilization of various literary devices and techniques to immerse readers into his characters' world. From the innovative use of epistolary elements, such as emails, SMS, and letters, to the intricate weaving of stream of consciousness, Bhagat showcases a mastery of narrative craft that captivates and resonates with diverse audiences.

Moreover, Bhagat's narrative techniques serve as conduits for exploring complex themes and socio-cultural issues embedded within the fabric of Indian society. Through his characters' introspections and dialogues, Bhagat addresses topics ranging from politics, religion, and education to youth aspirations, societal norms, and interpersonal relationships. By interweaving these themes into the narrative tapestry, Bhagat not only entertains his readers, but also provokes thought and fosters introspection among them. Furthermore, Bhagat's narrative techniques facilitate a deeper understanding of his characters, their motivations, and their inner conflicts. Bhagat provides readers with intimate glimpses into the minds of his protagonists by using techniques like stream of consciousness for a richer and more immersive

reading experience. This depth of characterization enhances the narrative's emotional resonance and fosters empathy and connection between the novel's characters and its readers.

In conclusion, *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is a testament of Chetan Bhagat's prowess as a storyteller and his adeptness at employing narrative techniques to craft a compelling and thought-provoking narrative. This critical analysis, which explores Bhagat's innovative use of literary devices, thematic exploration, and character development, sheds light on the intricate narrative architecture that underpins Bhagat's literary oeuvre, cementing his status as one of India's foremost contemporary authors.

#### **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to my supervisor Dr. Subramania Pillai R for his invaluable guidance and support throughout the research process. He helped me in writing the research paper and also assisted me till the completion of the paper.

#### **Authors contributions**

Vimal A is the first author. He analysed the text, collected secondary materials and drafted the paper. Dr. Subramania Pillai is the second author. He reviewed and proof read the final draft.

#### **Funding**

Not applicable

#### **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper

#### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

#### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

#### **Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

#### **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

#### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

#### **Open access**

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

#### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

#### **References**

- Bhagat, C. (2008). *The Three Mistakes of My Life*. New Delhi, Rupa Publications
- Gupta, A., & Siddharth P. (2016), Social Awareness of Youth in the Three Mistakes of My Life. *Scholar, an International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), 1-5.
- Imaniyal, S. (2016). The Theme of Social Disintegration in Chetan Bhagat's The Three Mistakes of My Life. *Research Journey*, 1(S1), 3-8
- Khorana, M. (1987). Adolescents as Instruments of Change: The English-language Novel Set in Post-independence India. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 67-70. <https://doi.org/10.1353/chq.1987.0003>
- Kolekar, N. (2016). Communal Violence in Chetan Bhagat's Three Mistakes of my Life. *Daath Voyage: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary studies in English*, 48-52.
- Pandya, S. R. (2018). *Chetan Bhagat's Novels: A Critical Study*. New Delhi, Pacific Books International.
- Phelan, J., & Rabinowitz, P. J. (2008). *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. USA, John Wiley & Sons,
- Singh, K. K. (2018). *A Critical Companion to Chetan Bhagat's Novel*. Jaipur: Aadi Publication India.
- Suganya, M. (2023). Exploring the Narrative Techniques Used in The Selected Fictions. *International Journal of Creative Research*

*Thoughts*, 11(10), 1115-1120.

Vishalakshi, R., & Keerthiha, V. (2018). Patriotism in The 3 Mistakes of My Life. *Research journal of English Language and Literature*, 6(3), 260-262.