



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**STYLISATION IN RETHINKING HISTORY THROUGH CHRONOTOPE
AND POLYPHONY IN SELECTED POSTMODERN INDIAN THRILLER
NOVELS IN ENGLISH**

SANTINI A/P PATHINATHAN

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By

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

September 2021

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2021

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Fiction writers have always been fascinated with history, especially historical fiction writers or writers who are inspired by history. It is, however, quite rare to have a novel that merges imagination and history to make it seem real. The selected novels are able to do just that. They have merged ancient history and imagination to re-present history. This research studies Ashwin Sanghi's novels *Chanakya's Chant* (2010) and *The Krishna Key* (2012) and Christopher Doyle's *The Mahabharata Secret* (2013) and *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret* (2014). These novels have been chosen because there is a surge in the thriller genre known as Bharathi Fantasy in India today. However, there has been a lack of research on the thriller genre, especially in terms of writing style, and as such, the current study hopes to explore the area of stylisation in rethinking history through thrillers that concurrently portray the glorious past and the current situation in the country in the form of novels. This study aims to explore the portrayal of chronotopes in the selected novels and investigate the multiple voices within the novels to show how history is rethought using the concepts of the chronotope and polyphony to develop the plots. This has ultimately led the researcher to finally show how the writers use Bakhtin's five features of stylisation to stimulate the rethinking of history. This study employs Bakhtin's chronotope and polyphony concepts to analyse plot development and to investigate the stylisation in the authors' writing to show how history is rethought. The findings show that the chronotope of crisis/threshold is the most prevalent in moving the plots in these thriller novels besides the chronotope of castle, which emphasises historical elements. Next, this study also shows that each character moves the plot from his or her perspective. Besides that, polyphony can also be used to show how history is rethought because throughout the

novels, the findings show history being discussed by different characters and also by the authors themselves. Though the authors' voices maybe indirect, their intentions seem very clear through their writing styles, which conform to all five features of Bakhtin's stylisation. Through the five features of stylisation, we can read the writers' voices as they narrate events. Besides that, the second feature shows the voices of the characters. The third feature involves the various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration that is used in the selected novels, and the fourth feature relates to the extra-artistic authorial speech which the selected novels include as philosophical records, archaeological records and so on. And finally, the fifth feature shows the characters' thoughts. All these features bring the characters to life and make the plots vivid, thus stimulating the reader to rethink history.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**STAILISASI DALAM MEMIKIRKAN SEMULA SEJARAH MELALUI
KRONOTOP DAN POLIFONI DALAM NOVEL-NOVEL PENGGETARAN
POSTMODEN INDIA TERPILIH DALAM BAHASA INGGERIS**

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Para penulis fiksyen sentiasa berasa kagum dengan sejarah terutamanya karyawan fiksyen sejarah atau para karyawan yang diaspirasikan oleh sejarah. Akan tetapi jarang terdapat novel-novel yang menggabungkan imaginasi dan sejarah untuk menjadikannya kelihatan realistik. Inilah keistimewaan novel-novel yang dipilih untuk kajian ini. Karya-karya ini menggabungkan sejarah silam dan imaginasi untuk mempersembahkan semula sejarah. Kajian ini mengkaji novel-novel *Chanakya Chant* (2010) dan *The Krishna Key* (2012) oleh Ashwin Sanghi; *The Mahabharata Secret* (2013) dan *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret* (2014) oleh Christopher Doyle. Karya-karya ini dipilih kerana terdapat peningkatan mendadak dalam penghasilan genre penggetaran di India dewasa ini yang dikenali sebagai "Khayalan Bharathi". Namun begitu terdapat kekurangan dalam kajian terhadap genre penggetaran terutamanya untuk menerokai daerah stailisasi dalam memikirkan kembali sejarah melalui karya-karya penggetaran yang memaparkan kegemilangan silam dan situasi mutakhir dalam negara. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menerokai pemaparan kronotop dalam karya-karya terpilih, menyiasat kepelbagaian suara dalam karya dan bagaimana sejarah direnung semula dengan menggunakan konsep kronotop dan polifoni untuk membangunkan plot. Hal ini seterusnya membawa pengkaji untuk mendedahkan bagaimana para penulis menggunakan lima ciri stailisasi Bakhtin untuk menstimulasi pemikiran semula sejarah. Kajian ini memanfaatkan kronotop dan polifoni Bakhtin untuk menganalisis perkembangan plot dan menyelidik stailisasi dalam penulisan mereka untuk menunjukkan bagaimana sejarah difikirkan kembali. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa krisis kronotop merupakan unsur yang paling ketara dalam menggerakkan plot dalam novel-novel penggetaran di samping kronotop istana yang menekankan unsur-unsur sejarah. Seterusnya kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa setiap watak

turut menggerakkan plot daripada perspektif masing-masing. Selain itu polifoni juga boleh digunakan untuk menunjukkan bagaimana sejarah difikirkan kembali kerana dapatan kajian sepanjang novel menunjukkan bagaimana sejarah dibicarakan oleh watak-watak berbeza dan juga oleh penulis sendiri. Walaupun suara penulis mungkin berbentuk tidak langsung, matlamat mereka nampaknya amat jelas melalui gaya penulisan mereka yang menepati kesemua lima ciri stailisasi Bakhtin. Melalui lima ciri stailisasi ini kita dapat membaca suara penulis tatkala mereka membicarakan sesuatu peristiwa itu. Di samping itu, ciri kedua menunjukkan suara watak-watak. Ciri ketiga melibatkan pelbagai bentuk naratif semiliterari (tulisan) harian yang digunakan dalam novel-novel terpilih. Ciri keempat pula meninjau pengucapan ekstra artistik pengarang dalam karya-karya terpilih seperti rekod-rekod falsafah dan arkeologi dan sebagainya. Akhir sekali ciri kelima menunjukkan pemikiran watak-watak. Kesemua ciri ini menghidupkan watak dan membangunkan plot serta mendorong para pembaca untuk merenungkan semula sejarah.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Thrills are much more about anticipation than action. An unfired bullet is more dangerous than one that has already met its target.”

-Ashwin Sanghi

1.1 Background of the Study

George Orwell claims in the *Tribune* that “History is written by winners” (63). This is further supported by Hayden White in “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact,” who states that history is indeed reconstructed through the historian’s “historical imagination” (452). This shows that historians employ narrative techniques that are usually used by literary writers to convey their messages (Shivakumar 2). This means that the history books used in school could be the writers’ opinions of events instead of actual facts. The only things that may be matters of fact are probably the most basic details such as dates that have been recorded in reliable sources. Other than that, the history writer would probably have to interpret what actually happened to be included in a book (Shivakumar 3).

Unlike historians, fiction writers are able to dig deeper and resolve certain historiographical notions. Of course, the fiction writers’ findings regarding certain historical events may be questionable, especially when it comes to colonialism, where the events narrated in the history books are usually written from the perspective of the colonisers and the voices of the colonised people are silenced. This is where fiction writers of the colonised countries write their stories by fictionalising history and mythology. Ashwin Sanghi and Christopher Doyle are two such postmodern Indian writers in English who have gained much attention in recent years.

History is a fascinating tool of imagination. Indian writers such as Ashwin Sanghi and Christopher Doyle, whose novels have been selected for the current study, fictionalise mythology and historical events in the form of thriller novels that consist of suspense and action. This form of writing is somewhat different compared to most other Indian English writers who focus more on postcolonial matters and issues such as the partition or the treatment of female members of society. Sanghi and Doyle also do this in a manner that blurs the boundaries between fiction and fact. Indian fiction writers may retell mythology because they may thus relate the ancient past to the present (Sawai 163). In the past, the epics of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* were only made available through comics and verbal communications. Today, authors are able to tell these stories from

different points of view in ways that are more acceptable and relatable to the current readers.

The contemporary writers of today reinterpret ancient events to relate them to present-day life. The writers who practice retelling these mythological and historical events usually restructure the ancient plots and characters in order to fit the setting of their story (Singh 147). The novels by these contemporary writers have thus revived Indian mythology from its deep slumber. They have awakened the glorious days that have been buried under the rumble of corruption and politics. They have done this with the flair of fantasy mixed with the mythology and history (Singh 148).

Moreover, the contemporary writers have also infused conspiracy theories in their novels by adding in codes and cryptographic messages of the ultimate 'truth' that the protagonists will eventually decipher. These writers have also done extensive research on their contents and the background of the mythology and historical events in which they intend to set their novels, thus, retelling ancient events which appeal to the present-day rational readers who tend to eventually question the history as it is presented in textbooks. As writers these days retell events from the past, historians find it difficult to accept that in the postmodern era, questions have suddenly been raised regarding the validity and accuracy of their historical accounts (Carrol 3).

The term 'postmodern' is frequently used in critical writing in two major ways: 'postmodernism' or 'postmodernity' (Malpas 9). We shall first look into the term postmodernism. Today, the term postmodernism seems rather cliché; however, the origin of the term seems to be rather vague. The term was used in a published work in 1934 by Federico de Onis in his *Antología de la poesía española e hispanoamericana* (Hassan 120). Then it was used by Dudley Fitts in *the Anthology of Contemporary Latin- American Poetry* in 1942 (Hassan 120). It was then later used in the late fifties and early sixties; however, the term was more persistently used only in the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s in European and North American society (Malpas 5). In those first few decades, the term began to be used frequently as a catchword, but it is not used as often now even though its ideas and concepts are still as important in the contemporary world today.

Postmodern opinions have close links with feminism, queer theory, postcolonialism, environmental studies, history, philosophy, and literary criticism to name a few. It should be noted, though, that its significance for a literature student may differ compared to other fields because each discipline incorporates its own sense of postmodernism and postmodernity into deliberations according to their own respective fields or subjects. As such, it is not easy to generate a 'one size fits all' type of definition.

There are many definitions of postmodernism, beginning with Hassan (20), who considered postmodern as an aesthetic formation, Lyotard (59) and Harvey (121) considered it as a condition, and Jameson (50) and Connor (38) defined it as a cultural influence and a culture, respectively. Then, there are Baudrillard (48), Fukuyama (289) and Vattimo and Snyder (138), who defined postmodern as a period when the “end of history” was reached, and finally Hutcheon, who considered postmodernism as “a set of artistic movement using a parodic mode of self-conscious representation” (200). In considering all these definitions in the context of literary study, postmodern literature has many defining characteristics, as well.

Postmodern literature has characteristics such as intertextuality, parody, pastiche, metafiction, historiographic metafiction, temporal distortion, technoculture, hyperreality, paranoia, and magical realism. Brian McHale (199) claims that postmodern fiction blends history and fiction. This is supported by Hutcheon (3), who upholds that postmodernist writing is best characterised as works of “historiographic metafiction,” which actually alter history by incorporating fake narratives of famous incidents of the actual past. Postmodern writing also contains temporal disorder, through which, as mentioned by Coover, “history does not repeat, there are no precognitions- and out in that flow all such assertions may be true, false, inconsequential, or all at the same time” (23). These characteristics are evident in the selected novels, where history is used as the base, but to what extent it is true is questionable. However, it should be noted that this study does not intend to question the validity of the historical events presented in the novels. The current study focuses on how time-space and the voices of different characters are used to develop the plots and to rethink history using chronotope and polyphony besides looking into stylisation.

Jameson states that “the writers and artists of the present day will no longer be able to invent new styles and worlds – they’ve already been invented; only a limited number of combinations are possible; the most unique ones have been thought of already” (7). This is precisely why many contemporary novels somewhat follow different forms of plot structure from the novels of olden days. Intertextuality, on the other hand, is a term that was introduced by Julia Kristeva in 1966 in “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” which she interpreted from Bakhtin’s dialogism. Intertextuality claims that a text does not exist on its own, rather it is moulded by imitating other texts. Therefore, it is normal to see references of another literary work or an adoption of a certain style in contemporary fiction. This is also evident in the selected novels, where we see the stories of ancient mythology being presented in the novels in relation to present-day events.

Paranoia is another feature that is intensely felt by characters in postmodernist fiction (Lewis 129). We can see many paranoid anxieties in postmodernist writing, such as the protagonists’ perception that society is conspiring against him or her, the protagonist not being able to trust the permanence of something,

or of being restricted to one place or identity. Identity, in postmodern terms, is described as floating and playful (Degele 1).

Another characteristic of postmodern fiction is the element where both the text and world are penetrable to the extent that we are not able to separate them, as mentioned by Lewis in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism* (129). This form of blending between the text and world happens when the author is found in the text, which is known as a short circuit. Another form of blur between a text and the world is when real-life people from history emerge in the text, which is known as a double bind (Lewis 131). This is also seen in the selected novels for this study, where the past and present times are blurred by the style of writing. The writers have portrayed some historical figures in ways that may surprise readers.

Hyperreality is a notion used to show the power of simulation (Firat 70). Baudrillard defined hyperreality as “the meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another, reproductive medium, such as photography” (29). Basically, in the postmodern era, it can be considered that a simulation or an imitation has replaced the original or real. This is because the postmodern era is also the era of what Fredric Jameson labels the “cultural logic of late capitalism” (461), which means it is a society of the information age, where technology is available for many. Because a simulation is readily available, a picture is considered to be more important than the original because it adds up the value of the original (Wolny 76).

Now, as mentioned previously, postmodern is usually mentioned in two ways, namely, ‘postmodernism’ and ‘postmodernity’. Woods (11), says that postmodernism describes the artistic and intellectual work of the contemporary society, whereas postmodernity refers to the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions. This is later supported by Malpas (9), who claims that postmodernism usually concentrates on style and genre, while postmodernity is used to describe or imply a particular cultural perspective or an era. For the purpose of this thesis, the researcher agrees with Malpas (9). This is because the novels chosen for this study are postmodern texts that are of a certain style and genre. The selected texts also indicate the cultural perspective of the country. Arnold Toynbee is one of the first people to have used the term ‘postmodernity’ in *A Study of History*, which was published in 1954. He defines the term as a historical era that began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which also marks a period of almost continual friction that has persisted until now. As far as Toynbee is concerned, postmodernity is an age of decline, a time when wars erupt relentlessly, and the humanist projects of the Enlightenment are neglected. This shows postmodernity as a time of calamity and thus linked with the deterioration of humanist and Enlightenment standards.

Postmodernism reached out to the world, including India. Indian English Literature is the result of the English education in India during the colonisation period. The beginning of the twentieth century saw a gradual increase in the number of Indian English novelists with writers like Romesh Chandra Dutt, whose books were translated into English, and T. Ramakrishna, Swarna Ghoshal, Sir Joginder Singh, but one of the undeniably talented writers, who is also considered a poet, playwright and painter, is Rabindranath Tagore, who was honoured with a Nobel Prize in 1912 for *Gitanjali*.

Many of these writers have written novels on politics, social issues, history and even religion and mythology. Although early Indian English novels focused mostly on social and political issues, the authors of the selected novels for the current study have focussed on the glorious days of ancient Bharat, and they have done so in the form of thriller novels. These days, Indian English Literature is known and accepted worldwide, and Indian English literary scholars consider it a challenge to evaluate postmodern Indian English Literature, which widely began after 1980 (Vithal 69).

In India, the postmodern period is described as having begun after the 1980s. India began to rise as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, post-colonial and postmodern nation after the 1980s (Subha and Jayasudha 64). Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, with its rare magical realism, marked the beginning of postmodernism. The older fictions usually highlighted the burden and suffering of the lower castes or poor people and other social realities and political themes. With the beginning of the postmodern era in India after the 1980s, different styles of writing began to emerge mostly because commercial Indian fiction seem to be on the rise compared to 'literary fiction' (Varughese 351). These postmodern writers leaned more towards social realism, mythical realism, historical romance, magical realism, extremity in portraying sexual aspects, and so on (Subha and Jayasudha 67). These writers portray two worlds, such as the past and the present. There are many writers apart from Ashwin Sanghi and Christopher Doyle (two writers whose works have been selected for my study) who revisit history in their work, namely, Amish Tripathi, V. Raghunathan, Nalini Rajan and Kavita Kané, to name a few. The fiction of these writers, who rely heavily on the epics of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and other literary traditions to include elements of fantasy, have been categorised as 'Bharati Fantasy' (Varughese 352). This is because these stories are set in the ancient days of India known as Bharat and involve teachings from the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* in addition to the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Not only do these writers include history and fantasy, but they also shed light on the postcolonial situation of the country. The 'Bharathi Fantasy' stories have been gaining popularity in recent years, the evidence of which can be seen in the sales and demand for novels of this genre (Varughese 353).

Ashwin Sanghi and Christopher Doyle are two writers chosen for this study due to their style of writing, especially in the form of thriller novels. The word “thrill” is derived from the Middle English word *thrillen* that means “to pierce,” which is from Old English *thyrlian* (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). To be thrilled is a feeling likened to having been pierced by something sharp. This relates to the nature of a thriller, which includes a visceral sensation. We cannot really consider the thriller genre in the same manner as other fiction genres. In other words, it is not the same as how we would consider science fiction as a genre. This is because the number of stories that comprise thrillers is countless. Thrillers have always been employed in literature, for example, Homer’s epic Greek poem *The Odyssey*, and the Indian epic *The Mahabharata*. There are many kinds of thrillers, such as those compiled by David Glover (139), which include racing thrillers, legal thrillers, psychological thrillers, political thrillers, futuristic thrillers, spy thrillers, and historical thrillers.

As explained earlier, many of the previous Indian writers have emphasised the social and political issues of the postcolonial era; however, the selected novels focus more on the glorious days of Bharat while also showing present-day India. As such, the researcher aims to first study how chronotopes cause the characters to act in certain ways which eventually develop the plots. Secondly, the researcher examines the multiple voices present in the novels by using polyphony to study the plot movement through different characters’ points of view. Finally, the researcher explains how the writers use Bakhtin’s five features of stylisation to rethink history.

The concepts that are taken into consideration for the purpose of this research are chronotope and polyphony by Mikhail Bakhtin. These concepts are utilised to analyse how time-space configurations (i.e., chronotopes) move the plot and the multi-voices that tell the stories in the novels. Moreover, this study aims to show how Bakhtin’s five features of stylisation are used in the writing to rethink history in the selected novels.

The Indian English novels that have been chosen for this study are *Chanakya’s Chant* (2010) and *The Krishna Key* (2012) by Ashwin Sanghi and *The Mahabharata Secret* (2013) and *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret* (2014) by Christopher Doyle. *Chanakya’s Chant* (2010) is a political thriller in which Chanakya, the kingmaker in ancient Bharat, tries to unite Bharat under Chandragupta Maurya. It also depicts present-day Gangasagar, who attempts to make his protégé the prime minister of present-day India. The second book is *The Krishna Key* (2012), which is an anthropological and historical thriller that follows a history professor, Ravi Mohan Saini, who is being framed for murder. He has to solve the historical and mythological riddles left by the murderer to stop the villains. The third and fourth books are *The Mahabharata Secret* (2013) and *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret* (2014), which are both historical thrillers. These novels follow Vijay Singh as he solves historical riddles

with his most trusted friends after the murder of his uncle in order to save his life and his loved ones' lives only to learn something new in the process.

These novels also contain fast moving action and elements of suspense. Suspense is inevitable in these novels as they are all thrillers, and suspense is a vital element in thriller novels. The action-packed episodes and the dialogues in these novels also develop and move the plots in certain ways that provoke many questions about the history that we have always learnt or read. Besides, these novels could also be considered to have inter-disciplinary grounds in literature and history. There are some episodes in the novels that depict history differently compared to what is usually taught in schools. They also show that mythology could indeed have been real as they show some characters using weapons from the ancient epic of *Mahabharata*. Therefore, the researcher aims to present the rethinking of history through chronotopes and polyphony. As such, in this thesis, the researcher will focus on stylisation and how time, space and interaction among the characters in the selected novels move the plots in the novels and re-present history.

It should be noted that Bakhtin emphasised stylisation in literary studies, especially in novelistic discourse. This is because there are many voices and a variety of social speech types and styles present in novels. In this regard, Bakhtin created a typology of styles known as heterogeneous unities. These typologies are related in a work of art within a unity of independent components. Bakhtin calls these various unities the five features of stylisation: direct-authorial narration, oral everyday narration, and the semi-literary everyday narration, extra-artistic, and individualised speech of characters (DI 262). Bakhtin also emphasises that novels are made of social and stylistic heteroglossia and the dialogic relationships of individual voices (DI 264). Therefore, this research still falls under literary study since it investigates the voices of characters, time-space of the events in the narrative and the five features of stylisation as described by Bakhtin.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although, in India, the postmodern era began in the 1980s, many previous literary studies have been carried out regarding different features of postmodernism such as magical realism, mythical realism, romance, postcolonialism issues, partition, political themes and gender issues, identity, cultural heritage, contemporary reality, human relationships and emotions. For example, Rege (350) explained how Rushdie celebrates the tension between personal and national identity in his *Midnight Children* (1981). Additionally, Sarker and Rahman (140) also highlight the issue of caste and politics in Roy's *God of Small Things* (1997). Dhar (20), on the other hand, discusses slavery and territorial colonialism in Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2008).

Shivakumar (6) categorises the novel *Queen of Kittur* (2009) as representative of historiographic meta-fictions. In her study, she analysed the text with regard to the writer's opinion that history is merely a human fabrication. Enoch (150-55), who studied *Chanakya's Chant* (2010), which is one of the selected novels for the current research, also presented a detailed study on the chronicles of time, present and past, where he detailed the fictional narrative and history-fiction in post-independence India. However, the researcher of the current study has chosen to focus more on Bakhtin's five features of stylisation utilised by the selected authors, who wrote the novels in the thriller genre to provoke the readers to rethink history. Stylisation is also an area that seems to be somewhat overlooked, particularly in the thriller genre in postmodern Indian novels. To date, stylisation has not been studied enough (Xodjaeva and Shevchenko 14). In the words of Bakhtin, artistic style "works not with words, but with the moments of the world, the values of the world and life, it can be defined as a set of methods for the formation and completion of a person and his world" (54).

In addition, most studies concerning Bakhtin's theories or concepts focus on his other two major publications: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and *Rabelais and His World* (Allan 308). In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin wrote about his analysis of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky's literary works. His analysis brought about interesting ideas about the dialogic influences in the novel. In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin wrote about his take on Francis Rabelais' literary work. This is the analysis where Bakhtin used the idea of the carnivalesque so frequently that the word itself often reminds us of Bakhtin. As such, the researcher has decided to focus on Bakhtin's other concepts, mainly chronotope and polyphony, under which he also describes the five features of stylistics.

While Bakhtin's chronotope and polyphony have gained attention in the West, it is still not widely applied in Indian English literature, at least not much in the thriller narratives. Bakhtin's theory of literary chronotope was not translated into English until 1981 and only included the modern and postmodern novels of the early 20th century. The "intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships" (DI 84) is what is known as a chronotope. A chronotope is a way of understanding a story because it frames the outline of a plot; however, Bakhtin considers it a "bridge" from the story's time-space to the real world (Lawson 384). Initially, Bakhtin's literary chronotope was created as an analytical instrument to establish general categories in the history of Western novels. However, today it is used as a conceptual tool to enrich various fields such as narratology (Scholz 162), reception theory (Collington 97), cognitive approaches to literature (Keunen 5), and gender studies (Pearce 10). For Bakhtin, time and space form a central unity similar to the reality of human experience (Bemong and Borghart 3). Basically, Bakhtin concludes that narrative texts are created of a certain fictional world or chronotope (Bemong and Borghart 6).

To date, there is a lack of research carried out on the Indian English literature of the thriller genre that applies Bakhtin's theory of literary chronotope. Therefore, the researcher would like to examine the time-space relationship strategy in the selected novels. This is because the style in which the novels are written is one in which the events of the past and present are told concurrently in such a way that the time and space of the two different times and places could be blurred for readers. This area itself is a grey area that needs analysis which is why this research is relevant.

The concept of polyphony, which was initially borrowed from music, was developed when Bakhtin read Dostoevsky's work. Bakhtin claimed that Dostoevsky's novel consisted of a "multiplicity of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness" (PDP 208). With that, Bakhtin developed the concept of polyphony by stating that the main feature of a polyphonic novel is the position of the author regarding the hero of the novel. He also stated that it is not the author's point of view that develops the plot; instead, in a polyphonic novel, the plot is presented from the hero's point of view, as well.

Less attention is paid to the concept of polyphony in Indian English literature, particularly in postmodern thrillers. To fill this gap, the researcher would like to address the multiple voices that are present in the selected novels to present how each character views his or her world and how the plot is developed through the characters' points of view. Finally, the researcher aims to present the stylisation aspect of these writers and how history is re-presented since that is also a gap in the current literature, where history is rethought or re-presented using a thriller novel.

1.3 Justification of Text Selection

Ashwin Sanghi has written several best-selling novels, namely, *Rozabal Line* (2008), *Chanakya's Chant* (2010), *The Krishna Keys* (2012) and *Sialkot Saga* (2016), *The Keepers of the Kalachakra* (2018), and *The Vault of Vishnu* (2020). However, only *Chanakya's Chant* (2010), and *The Krishna Keys* (2012) have been chosen for this study.

Chanakya's Chant (2010) is a political thriller, which includes the wit, deception, treachery, and jealousy that exist in Indian politics. Sanghi took the principles of the historical figure Chanakya, presents them in the historical setting and applies them to current political themes. *The Krishna Key* (2012), on the other hand, is an anthropological thriller. This novel follows a history professor, who has to prove his innocence of a murder that he was accused of. It revolves around the *Mahabharata* historical events and portrays the biography of Lord Krishna in his own words in parallel to the storyline.

The Rozabal Line (2008) was not chosen for this study because it is very much related to the theology of a religion. Since this study is not focussed on religious study and the researcher has no intention of questioning any sacred texts, the researcher has decided not to choose *The Rozabal Line* (2008). *Sialkot Saga* was published in April 2016, *The Keepers of the Kalachakra* in 2018, and *The Vault of Vishnu* in 2020; therefore, due to their unavailability at the time the books were being chosen for this study, they have been left out as well.

Christopher C. Doyle's best-selling novels are *The Mahabharata Secret*, which was published in 2013, *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret*, published in 2014, *A Secret Revealed*, published in 2016, *The Secret of the Druids*, published in 2016, *The Pataala Prophecy: Son of Bhriгу*, published in 2018, and *The Pataala Prophecy: The Mists of Brahma*, published in 2019. For this study, *The Mahabharata Secret* (2013) and *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret* (2014) have been chosen.

The Mahabharata Secret (2013) is about Vijay and his friends, who have to decrypt a series of clues, which lead them to an overwhelming secret hidden by a brotherhood known as the Nine Men, who were created by the emperor Asoka. Meanwhile, *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret* (2014) is also about Vijay and his friends, but this time, they embark on a quest to know about Alexander the Great's secret mission in India while battling bioterrorism.

Again, the first two books of the *Secret* series by Doyle were chosen due to their availability. All of these books, which are based on historical and some mythological themes, contain suspense and they are all thrillers, which are characteristics this research focusses on. Additionally, these books were chosen because they are structurally similar to each other whereby the story of the past and the present time are told concurrently but in different chapters.

These novels have also been selected for the current study due to their extensive references to historical events. Besides that, it is evident that the writers extensively researched the historical elements presented in the novels. The reference list provided at the end of the books and the intertextuality of historical documents incorporated into the writing of these novels also contribute to the rethinking of history within the selected texts.

1.4 Brief Synopses of the Selected Novels

Brief synopses of the novels are provided in this section. They have been included in this section of the chapter in order to facilitate the readers' understanding of the details of the novels that will be discussed in the findings in

Chapters 4 and 5. As such, the researcher would like the readers to know about the story of each novel.

1.4.1 Synopsis of *Chanakya's Chant* (2010)

In the year 340 BC, a young Chanakya vows revenge for his father's murder by an evil tyrant king of Magadha. He escapes the king, and grows up far away and attends the world's first university: the Taxila University. He becomes a powerful political strategist with an absolute disregard of moral values. As he advises the kings of other kingdoms against the invasion of Alexander the Great, he also guides the young Chandragupta and succeeds in making Chandragupta a king who would unite the whole of Bharat, thus giving birth to the Mauryan Empire.

A few centuries later, history is seen to repeat itself, except this time it is not war or kingdoms fighting to conquer each other. In present-day India, Chanakya is portrayed in the form of Gangasagar Mishra, a Brahmin teacher who guides a certain girl from the slums to become the next prime minister of India. The story of Chanakya during the ancient Bharat and of Gangasagar in present-day India is told simultaneously in different chapters.

1.4.2 Synopsis of *The Krishna Key* (2012)

The Krishna Key (2012) revolves around a history professor, Ravi Mohan Saini, who has to prove his innocence after being accused of the murder of his best friend, Anil Varshney. He escapes from the police with the help of his students and together they crack most of the clues that are left by the murderer. Saini realises that the serial killer who also killed his other friends thinks that he is the final avatar of Lord Krishna: the Kalki avatar. He also realises that the murderer is after four pieces of a seal which was used during Lord Krishna's time in order to gain entry into the city of Dwarka, which was created by Krishna. Therefore, Saini begins to uncover the clues by discussing the Mahabharata and goes to different parts of the country to solve the mystery. He also realises that his student is one of the antagonists and so, works with the police to detain her and get the seals again. Sanghi (the author) also narrates the memoir of Lord Krishna in parallel to the main storyline.

1.4.3 Synopsis of *The Mahabharata Secret* (2013)

Ashoka, the Mauryan emperor, finds a cave with an astounding secret from the Mahabharata war in 244 BC. He becomes anxious that it would become dangerous if it falls into the hands of the wrong people. Therefore, he creates the

secret Brotherhood of the Nine Unknown Men. These men were to guard the truth of the secret for centuries to come. Ashoka also removes the chapter in the Mahabharata epic that relates to the secret that he found in the cave: the Vimana Parva chapter.

In present-day India, a nuclear scientist named Vikram Singh is murdered by a LeT militant group led by a man called Farooq. Before he died, Vikram sent a few emails to his nephew, Vijay in the USA, the content of which Vijay will have to decipher with his business partner Collin, his childhood friend Radha, whom Vijay will soon become fond of, and her father, who is a linguist. Bheem Singh, who is a royal descendant and the current owner of the Rajvirgarh fort, offers to help the group with his friend Greg White, who is an archaeologist. Little does Vijay or his group of friends know that Bheem Singh and Greg White are not to be trusted.

The group manages to decipher the cryptic emails sent by Vijay's uncle and goes to many different places following the edicts erected by the emperor Ashoka. As they find and decode some of the clues, they find a library of the Brotherhood of the Nine Unknown Men that was created by Ashoka. Meanwhile, Imran Kidwai, the Intelligence Bureau official, begins investigating Farooq and suspects the involvement of Bheem Singh. As he investigates, he realizes that Bheem Singh works with Farooq. Kidwai confronts Bheem and learns about the Vimana Parva of the Mahabharata and about an element that could make it invisible. Bheem Singh in the end tries to kill Kidwai but ends up killing himself.

Back to Vijay, the group, having been caught by Farooq and his team, reaches Marang Buru hill, where they discover the secret vault of the Nine. They discover the ancient weapon, including nuclear weapons, unaware that Kidwai and the Indian commandos have surrounded them. Soon they are attacked on every side as Vijay and his friends are rescued by Kidwai. A grenade explosion destroys the secret cave of the Nine and its contents, killing Farooq and his team.

Back in his uncle's fort in Jaungarh, Vijay re-reads his uncle's emails and finds a clue within the surroundings of the fort. He finds a secret chamber that has some documents that had once belonged to the Nine. He also finds a letter from his uncle addressed to him requesting him to be the guardian of the documents. With this, Vijay becomes a member of the Nine Unknown Men of the present day.

1.4.4 Synopsis of *The Mahabharata Quest: The Alexander Secret* (2014)

In the year 334 BC, Alexander the Great discovers a secret while traveling to India with the help of Eumenes, his trusted general. However, Alexander dies; therefore, Eumenes eliminates the information about the secret that Alexander found from all historical records. In present-day Greece, Alice Wallace and her team of archaeologists exhume the tomb of the mother of Alexander the Great only to discover a cryptic cube. When a group of mercenaries kill her team, Alice escapes to India. There she meets her former boyfriend, his fiancée Radha, Colin, and Dr. Shukla. She explains everything that happened to her team. She then shows them the cube and realizes that the cube has six faces of scripts. The group immediately tries to decode the meaning of the scripts on the cube.

Meanwhile, Imran Kidwai, an Intelligence Bureau official, finds corpses in a lab that was burnt down and doubts it could be a bioterrorism attack. He asks for help from Vijay and his friends, who are now part of a special task force against terrorism. Later, Kidwai and Radha set off to interview the CMO of the burnt down lab, Dr. Saxena. Later that night, Kidwai is attacked in his home and ends up in the hospital, while Radha gets kidnapped and taken to Dr. Saxena's medical facility, where he explains to her about Alexander's secret and about his human testing. He also tells her that the secret might be helpful to reduce aging and enable one to become immortal.

Vijay, on the other hand, goes through papers left by his parents, who were archaeologists, and comes to an understanding that the cube is somehow related to Alexander's secret quest in India, particularly in the Kandahar district. Vijay then gets a call from the kidnappers asking him to solve the puzzle about Alexander's quest in exchange for Radha. Vijay then goes to meet the kidnappers only to find that Radha is not with them, and he is then met by Van Kleuck, who belongs to an ancient group called The Order. Van Kleuck also explains to Vijay about the secret of the immortality potion which Alexander found.

To make long story short, Vijay helps the villains to decipher the scripts on the cube with the help of his friends back home. Meanwhile, Radha somehow manages to email her location to Kidwai and tries to escape, but unfortunately, she gets shot by the guards. Saxena runs away with her remains and eliminates all information in the facility. Once Van Kleuck gets what he wants, he locks Vijay in a chamber in the mountain, only to be ambushed by the military, and Vijay is rescued. The group continues to look for Radha and The Order, although they suspect Radha to be dead. Towards the end of the book, Vijay receives a call from a person who claims to be his dad's friend and proposes to meet Vijay after six months.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that the researcher has chosen for this research is based on Bakhtin's concepts of chronotope, polyphony and his five features of stylistics. The term chronotope is a combined term from two Greek words: *cronos*, which means time, and *topos*, which means place. The term therefore covers the blending of inseparable connections of time and space within a novel. It is also a borrowed idea from Einstein's relativity theory. Einstein, in 1905, modified common perceptions of time, space, matter and energy. He postulated that "time and position at which an event occurred depended on how the observer was moving" (Stachel 103). When Bakhtin borrowed this idea and introduced it in literary studies in the late 1930s, it was considered a "revolutionary representation which is a unique way of depicting phenomena on the conceptual plane of physical reality" (Tarvi 208). This is because the depiction of physical reality is limitless in literature (Kuhn 97). When *The Dialogic Imagination* was first reviewed, chronotope was characterised as "a distinct set of presuppositions about time-space designed to draw attention to the way assumptions about time generate a certain articulation of space and to a significant degree the image of man in literature ..." (Kinser 304).

In 2004, Holquist updated the definition of chronotope as "particular combinations of time and space as they have resulted in historically manifested narrative forms" (109). Both these definitions are in line with the way Bakhtin introduces chronotope in his "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel," which can be found in *The Dialogic Imagination*, where he conceptualises chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (84). Bakhtin also emphasised that every genre in the literature of each culture has its own characteristics that are related to chronotopes that can be considered "monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members' image of themselves" (DI Bakhtin 84). In short, Bakhtin emphasised that people are inclined to encounter and acknowledge reality within a particular time-space setting.

He also stressed that a novel or other written work can display more than one chronotope and may have intricate interactions among them, exclusive to the particular work or author. These varying chronotopes are "mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another or find themselves in ever more complicated interrelationships" (Bakhtin 252). When one reads Bakhtin's work, one can identify four categories of chronotope: micro-chronotopes, minor chronotopes, major chronotopes and generic chronotopes. Micro-chronotopes involve units of language and minor chronotopes, also known as 'chronotopic motifs', show the way time-space functions. A major chronotope is the summary of the dominant notion that is left with the reader, and finally, a generic chronotope can be considered a

classification of chronotope that a few different texts can fall under.

Although the current research uses Bakhtin's concept of the literary chronotope, it should be noted that the researcher also refers to other Bakhtin scholars such as Eduard Vlasov (37-58) and Nele Bemong and Pieter Borghart (3-14) in order to understand some of Bakhtin's concepts that are sometimes ambiguous. In this study, the researcher also focusses on two types of chronotope, minor and the major chronotopes, which will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Bakhtin also developed the concept of polyphony. The term polyphony is derived from a musical term that refers to the synchronisation of independent melodies becoming whole (Williams 1). In a novel, on the other hand, polyphony is a metaphor for 'voice'. Bakhtin, in his poststructuralist view, claims that polyphony voices are independent expressions united in the creative episode (Petkova 2). Bakhtin considers Dostoevsky's work as the prototype of a polyphonic novel when he writes in *Problems of Dostoevsky* (7):

Dostoevsky is the creator of the polyphonic novel. He created a fundamentally new novelistic genre. Therefore, his work does not fit any of the preconceived frameworks or historico-literary schemes that we usually apply to various species of the European novel. In his works a hero appears whose voice is constructed exactly like the voice of the author himself in a novel of the usual type. A character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's word usually is; it is not subordinated to the character's objectified image as merely one of his characteristics, nor does it serve as a mouthpiece for the author's voice. (Bakhtin 7)

Lodge claims that a polyphonic novel is a "novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice" (86). Lodge's claim is in line with Bakhtin's argument in his paper called "Discourse in the Novel," which can also be found in *The Dialogic Imagination*. In his paper, Bakhtin argues that the main feature of polyphony includes a variety of viewpoints and voices. In a polyphonic novel, the writer avoids the dominant voice of one character or the dominant voice of the writer himself. Bakhtin also explains that a polyphonic novel:

Excludes all one-sided or dogmatic seriousness and does not permit any single point of view, any single extreme of life or thought, to be absolutized. All one-sided seriousness (of thought), all one-sided pathos is handed over to the heroes, but the author who causes them all to collide in the 'great dialogue' of the novel, leaves that dialogue open and puts no finalising period at the end. (Bakhtin 165)

This basically means that the characters in the text each have their voice and a story to tell. Not only do the characters have their own voices but also the external voice which comes from the historical background, sociocultural background and the context of the novel (Viswanathan 52). These various voices contribute in the way readers are influenced by the novel they read. A polyphonic novel undermines the concept of an all-knowing storyteller, and this allows the characters to depend on the core moralistic intent of the novel.

For Bakhtin, polyphony entails synchronisation of different views, which is very prominent in the selected novels wherein differing viewpoints exist between the protagonists and the antagonists. The diverse viewpoints that exist in the selected novels fulfil the criteria to be identified as polyphony, which Bakhtin considers “a plurality of fully valid voices within the limits of a single work” (34). This plurality of speech also includes the characters’ indirect voices, such as their thoughts and consciousness, and additionally includes the direct and indirect voices of the author and readers (Mohammad and Khan 286). Thus, a polyphonic novel engages its readers as they interact with the text.

Bakhtin’s perception of different voices, whether the voice of the author or the voices of the characters, seems useful in analysing the dynamic style of the writers chosen for the current study, namely, Ashwin Sanghi and Christopher C. Doyle. Since this study also examines stylisation in rethinking history, it is appropriate that the researcher explains Bakhtin’s views on stylisation. Bakhtin describes novels as “multiform in style and variform in speech and voice” (261). Therefore, when a reader reads a novel, he or she interacts with the novel and faces some ‘heterogeneous unities’ at varying linguistic levels that are manipulated by stylistic features (Cabrera 33). There are five features of stylistics formulated by Bakhtin (262) through which a novel is held together:

1. Direct authorial literary-artistic narration
2. Stylisation of the various forms of oral everyday narration
3. Stylisation of the various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration
4. Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth)
5. The stylistically individualised speech of characters

Based on the five features of stylisation, we can agree with Bakhtin, who states that “diversity of voices and heteroglossia enter the novel and organise themselves within it into a structured artistic system” (300). In order to avoid repetition in this thesis, the conceptual framework will be explained in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.6 Research Objectives

1. Firstly, the researcher aims to explore the portrayal of chronotopes in the selected novels and how history is re-presented through chronotopes.

As mentioned in the previous section, the chronotope is a means of comprehending a narrative as it establishes the storyline of a novel. Bakhtin considers it as a “bridge” from the narrative time-space to the reality of our daily life (Lawson 384). Bakhtin basically explains that time and space cannot be separated. In his essay “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel,” which can be found in *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin explains that the “narrative events of the novel” (250) show certain events in a valuable manner in order to show a culture and its traditions. Bakhtin also considers that the chronotope also shows the events in order and asserts that “the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins. An event can be communicated, it becomes information, one can give precise data on the place and time of its occurrence” (250). In addition, Bakhtin focuses on literary images while asserting the importance of the chronotope in a narrative. He also asserts that “any and every literary image is chronotopic” (251) since they assist the readers to understand the world which the writer attempts or intends to create. By applying Bakhtin’s idea of the theory of literary chronotope, the researcher intends to explore the portrayals of chronotopes that cause the character to act in a certain way such that the plots of the novels move towards closure and history is re-presented in thriller form.

2. Secondly, the researcher intends to investigate the multiple voices within the novel and how history is rethought using the concept of polyphony to develop the plot in the selected novels.

In “Discourse in the Novel,” which can be found in *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin states that a novel consists of diverse and opposing social voices. Other than multiple voices, a polyphonic novel also consists of multiple attitudes, opposing or different views about the world around the characters as they interact with one another resulting in outcomes where no character or voice is dominant over the other (Makaryk 416). This is because the characters in a novel have equal rights to express themselves and their views. As such, the researcher aims to utilise the concept of polyphony to present how each character views his or her world and how the plot is further developed through the characters’ points of view as well as how history is re-presented through the various voices of the characters.

3. Finally, the researcher intends to show how Bakhtin's five features of stylisation are employed in the writers' style of writing to rethink history.

Bakhtin states that a "diversity of voices and heteroglossia enter the novel and organise themselves within it into a structured artistic system" (300). He also lists the five features of stylisation in a way that "unity" of the novel can be organised. The list includes 1) direct authorial literary-artistic narration, 2) stylisation of the various forms of oral everyday narration, 3) stylisation of the various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration, 4) various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical, or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth), 5) the stylistically individualised speech of characters. Bakhtin points out that individually, these "heterogeneous stylistics unities" (300) merge in a novel and "form a structured artistic system and the stylistic uniqueness of the novel as a genre consists precisely in the combination of these subordinated, yet still relatively autonomous, unites into the higher unity of the work as a whole" (300). This is why a novel is defined by Bakhtin as "a diversity of social speech types and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organised (262). As such, the researcher of the current study aims to examine how these five features of stylisation are utilised by the writers in their style of writing in order to provoke readers to rethink history.

1.7 Research Questions

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do chronotopes develop the plot and re-present history in the selected novels?
2. How is the plot developed and history re-presented through different voices in the selected novels?
3. How do the writers use Bakhtin's five features of stylisation to stimulate the readers to rethink history?

1.8 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the chronotope, polyphony, rethinking history and stylisation in Indian English literature of the thriller genre. Today, India is witnessing a rise in thriller writers. Their style of writing, especially that of Sanghi and Doyle, differs slightly from most western thriller writers, where there are two stories being told simultaneously. Since studies on suspense thrillers are quite scarce, this

research is expected to shed some light on the Indian English literature in this genre by exploring the time-space strategy employed by the novelists. Secondly, this study provides a new view on Indian English literature that is not concerned about common themes such as politics, identity and such. This study is significant because it examines not only the plots but also the dialogues in the novels. It explores how the plots are developed not only by the novelists but also as they are developed from the characters' points of view, where part of the story is told from characters' views instead of the authors', and by using this strategy, we may also identify how history is re-presented.

Finally, this study is significant as it sheds light on rethinking history. This is quite rare in the thriller genre of Indian English literature. Thus, it might be beneficial for instructors of literature or other writers of the thriller genre so that they may use the outcomes from my study to instruct future literary students or to include certain styles of writing in their novels.

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on how the selected books expose history and how they run parallel to the current time. This is because the style of presenting the past and present concurrently by the authors of the selected novels is also a grey area that needs to be researched. This will be done by using Bakhtin's theory of the literary chronotope. The researcher will also consider how the plots are developed and presented through the use of different voices within the novels by using Bakhtin's concept of polyphony. Additionally, the study shows how history and mythology are represented through chronotope and polyphony.

The main idea of this study is not to question recorded histories or to stand against the past. However, it tries to stress the interpretive and assumptive quality of histories in the selected novels. The attributes of ancient periods could be traced through historical writings where literary metaphorical dialogue dominates the subject. Much like Hutcheon claims, "history is not made obsolete; it is however being rethought-as a human construct" (6). Moreover, the researcher is more concerned with the stylisation, plots, and the different voices present in the novels. In addition, the researcher disregards the roles of female characters as this is not a gender study.

Additionally, this study will not consider the religious elements that are portrayed in the books as it is not the intention of the researcher. This study is also limited to novels of the thriller genre, particularly postmodern Indian thrillers. The researcher has also limited the chosen concepts to only Bakhtin's literary chronotopes and polyphony and his five features of stylisation. Although the novels selected for this study focused on political, anthropological and historical

aspects with a little fusion of fantasy elements, the researcher only focuses on the research objectives and questions set out in this chapter.

1.10 Definitions of Terms

This section presents the definitions of terms that are used throughout this study.

Chronotope: This is a term created by Bakhtin by combining two words: *cronos*, which means time, and *topos*, which means place (Bakhtin 259). Bakhtin also claims that “the sign of time is to be revealed in space and space must be understood and measured by time” (260). Basically, in a narrative text, the progress of the story happens through time and space, and they can never be separated. This term is explained in detail in section 3.3 in Chapter 3.

Polyphony: This term is a borrowed term from music. In literature, it is a feature used to present a variety of viewpoints and voices in stories (Bakhtin 208). Polyphony is innate in a literary text because of the existence of both author and narrator; however, it can also be explicitly used to structure a narrative through different voices of various characters (Stolp 3). Bakhtin also adds that “the character’s word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author’s word usually is” (7). In other words, a character’s perception of him/herself makes him/her authentic just as much as the author or any of the other characters in the novel. This term is explained in detail in section 3.4 in Chapter 3.

Heteroglossia: This term refers to ‘other-languagedness’. It generally refers to the ideologies that are natural in the different languages to which we are all socially connected and by which we are formed as individuals (Bakhtin 324). Heteroglossia refers to philosophies that are innate to various languages with which everyone is involved as individuals. These are the languages that are used in professions and languages used by groups of people who belong to certain ages, social classes, or regions. This term is explained in detail in Section 3.4 in Chapter 3.

Stylisation: This term refers to a process by which writers integrate different (literary) languages. It is invoked when a writer borrows or assumes a style or notion from some other writers but not in a controversial manner. He/she may do so with the purpose of merely expressing his/her own view. Bakhtin also asserts that the act of appropriating a style itself changes the idea from the original source. Stylisation can be found in many narratives because each created character has unique characteristics and speech style that differs from the author (Xodjaeva and Shevchenko 15). Stylisation is intended to replicate existing discoveries in the artistic area, overcoming boundaries of genre and time.

Therefore, stylisation is “one of the forms of reviving the past” (Xodjaeva and Shevchenko 15).

1.11 Thesis Structure

In this section, the researcher has explained the background of the study, problem statement, justification of the text selection, objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, and significance, scope and limitations of the study, ending with definitions of important terms used in the thesis. In the following chapter, the researcher will discuss the literature review. Since this study focuses on the thriller genre, she will explain about the thriller genre in more detail. This study also examines rethinking history; therefore, the researcher also provides a brief explanation about the historical events that are related to the selected novels. In addition, the researcher will also provide brief backgrounds of the writers. Previous studies that employed the same theoretical concepts used in this study will also be discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, the researcher will describe the conceptual framework in detail before explaining the methodology of the study. Chapters 4 and 5 will present the findings and discussion, which will be discussed in order according to the research questions and objectives of the study. Finally, in Chapter 6, the researcher will present a summary of the key findings, recommendations for future studies and final remarks.

1.12 Conclusion

To conclude, this research still belongs to literary studies even though it examines the time-space in plots and characters' voices in plot development. It should be noted that character and plot are elements of literature. Besides that, this research also considers stylisation as described by Bakhtin, who emphasises that there are many voices and a variety of social speech types and styles present in novels. Although certain people may consider that writers have the tendency to romanticize history, that is not the case with the selected novels as the authors have provided extensive reference to historical events, which shows that the authors have researched to a great extent.

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