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Manoj Das' Characters as Abundant Expression of Indian Human Emotions and Sentiments: A Critical Study

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Abstract: One of the most distinguished short story writers of Indian literature, Manoj Das, has remarkably contributed to the growth of portrayal of the socio-cultural life of India with his subtle characterization. His characters are deeply rooted in the Indian milieu and echo the complex interplay of emotions, traditions, and societal norms. This research paper focuses on investigating the way of Manoj Das character's to authentically represent the Indian human emotions and sentiments. Through a critical analysis of some of the short stories like *The Misty Hour*, *The Owl*, *The Bull of Babulpur*, *Lakshmi's Adventure*, and *Trespassers*, themes of poverty, faith, social hierarchy, innocence, suffering, and psychological transformation are discussed. The paper defends the idea that the characters of Manoj Das are not just fictitious characters but living representatives of Indian emotional and cultural realities. His narrative technique, usage of symbolism and his deep understanding of human psychology contribute to the authenticity of his character, making them relatable for all despite their uniquely Indian nature.

Keywords: Manoj Das Indian Psyche, human emotions, rural India, realism, social hierarchy, sentiment, short stories, characterization

Introduction

Indian English literature has played a long role in voicing the cultural reality, emotional reality, and the social reality of the country. Among the great writers to have contributed to this tradition, Manoj Das holds a unique position. Writing in both English and Odia, he has done so far being the bridge from Regional to Global literature. His short stories are known for their simplicity, depth, and ability to speak volumes about the nature of human nature.

Manoj Das literary creations have mainly dealt with the lives of common man, especially those belonging to the rural and semi urban India. His characters are derived from commoners but they have a depth to them that makes them extraordinary. They are a reflection of the complexities of human sentiments such as joy, sorrow, fear, hope, faith and despair, within the ambit of the Indian society.



The authenticity of his characters is that they are based on a true reality. They are determined by socio-economic situations, cultural beliefs and moral values which define Indian life. As mentioned in the given research article, Manoj Das stories "envisage the Indian psyche through his powerful technique of narration" and he presents "the simplicity of living, tradition and beliefs, innocence, poverty-stricken conditions, and social life of rural masses."

This paper attempts to analyze critically the aspects of how the characters created by Manoj Das portray the true representative of Indian human emotions and sentiments concerning both the literary and social standpoints of the same.

Manoj Das and the Indian Literary Tradition.

Manoj Das is usually considered a superb story-teller, blending elements of realism and fantasy and mysticism. His works bear the influence of Indian philosophical thought, folklore and oral story-telling traditions. Unlike many contemporary writers who are interested in the urban experience, Das is still embedded in rural India.

His stories have the following characteristics:

- a) Realistic description of Indian society
- b) Discussion of moral and ethical dilemmas
- c) Use of irony and satire
- d) Supernatural integration of religious phenomena.

The authenticity of his characters is based on his powers of observation and interpretation of the behaviour of the human being with sensitivity and insight. His characters are not the idealised heroes but real people confronting real-life challenges.

Representation to Rural Life and Innocent

One of the defining characteristics of the characterization of Manoj Das is his description of the rural life. His stories brilliantly recapture the simplicity, purity, and richness of feeling of rural communities.

In *The Misty Hour*, Auntie Roopwati is depicted as a character who is complex, of strength and vulnerability. Her intellectual background and emotional depth represent the changing role of the women in Indian society. At the very same time, her desire for recognition and affection shows the need for validation to motivate the human being all at one moment or another.

The rural environment makes her feelings even more authentic. The mist in this story symbolises uncertainty and the blurred lines between what is real and imaginary, as well as *The Giver* satire; in this sense it is representative of the inner turmoil of the characters.

Das' characterization of rural characters attempts to counter stereotypes, in that they are shown as characters who are rich in emotion and intellect. Their simplicity is not a sign of ignorance but it reflects their true connection to life.

Poverty and Human Suffering: Depicted

Poverty is another common theme in Manoj Das stories and his characters are often from the marginalized section of society. Through their experiences, Das shows the reader the harsh realities of life while still maintaining sense of empathy and compassion.

In *Lakshmi's Adventure*, Lakshmi symbolises the tragic effects of poverty. Her act of stealing bananas from a temple is an act of hunger but it causes her death. This story reveals the cruelty of the social structures and the cruelty of society to the sufferings of the poor.



Lakshmi's feelings, fear, hunger, innocence and helplessness, are presented with a high degree of authenticity. She becomes a symbol for the innumerable number of children in the rural area of India who suffer because of socio-economic inequalities.

The article highlights that Manoj Das' stories portray "poverty-stricken conditions, social life and miseries" of the masses of the rural India as which it strengthens the candidness of his characters.

Faith, Superstition and Psychological Facts

Faith and superstition play a significant role in developing the emotions of the human beings in the Indian Society. Manoj Das masterfully uses such elements in his stories and creates characters that are realistic psychologically in terms of their environment.

In *The Owl*, the belief in the supernatural power of the owl by villagers shows the fears and insecurities of the villagers. The owl is then a symbol of the unknown, signifying all the fears that come with being uncertain and without control.

The reactions of the villagers, fear and curiosity and helplessness are all deeply rooted in their cultural context. These feelings are not exaggerated but presented in a realistic way, which depicts the influence of belief system in human behavior.

Das doesn't deny these beliefs to be mere superstitions, instead he portrays them as part of the emotional and psychological landscape of his characters.

Social Hierarchy and the Exploitation

In many cases, Manoj Das' stories are critiques of the hierarchical structure of Indian society. His characters represent the power struggle between the various social classes and expose the exploitation and manipulation of the poor by the elite.

In *The Bull of Babulpur*, Mr. Boral is a person who represents opportunism and political ambition. He uses the religious sentiments of the villagers in order to gain some amount of influence which brings out the manipulation of emotions in a effort to gain some sort of profits. The villagers, on the other hand, are the symbols of innocence and vulnerability. Their emotional attachment to bull is their faith and collective identity. However this very sentiment is used to the advantage of those who are in power.

The article says that Das stories explore "the supremacy of bureaucrats, pundits, zamindars, and politicians over the downtrodden masses" emphasizing on social realities portrayed through his characters.

Psychological Transformation and Human Relationships

Manoj Das' characters are dynamic and experience great psychological transformations. This evolutionary process is an aspect of the complexity of human emotion and relationship.

In *Trespassers*, the transformation of Roy Saheb from an authoritative figure to a lonely old man brings out the impermanency of power and the inevitability of change. His pride (or arrogance) earlier in the novel is replaced by vulnerability with an emphasis on the human need for companionship and emotional connection.

This transformation is described with subtlety and realism, which makes the character relatable and authentic. It relates to the wider theme of time as a change agent in human life.

Description Narration Technique and Symbolism



The authenticity of the characters in Manoj Das is increased by the techniques of narrative. He employs:

- 1) Symbolism
- 2) Irony
- 3) Satire
- 4) Mysticism

Symbols like the mist, the owl, and the bull add more layers of layers of meaning to his stories to represent some deeper emotional and social aspects.

His language is simple but evocative, and lets readers connect to the characters on an emotional level. The use of humor and irony also contributes to his story-telling, making his characters more relatable.

Universality of Emotions in Humans

Although Manoj Das characters may be very much rooted in the Indian culture, their feeling is universal. Themes like love, loss, fear, and hope appeal to readers from different cultures.

This universality adds to the appeal of his stories and makes them transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. As mentioned in the article that in reading his works, the readers from other countries can manage to understand the "realistic scenario of pastoral India."

Critical Evaluation

Despite the merits of the characterization of Manoj Das, some critics seem to suggest that his portrayal of rural life is sometimes idealistic. Plus, the use of mystical elements may be interpreted as detracting from realism.

However, it is true that these aspects are part of the Indian storytelling traditions and add to the richness of his narratives. They don't turn out to be less authentic, but spell out the cultural dimension of his characters.

Conclusion

Manoj Das' characters are certainly genuine portrayals of the human emotions and sentiments of the Indians. Through his perceptive delineation of the rural life, social hierarchy, and psychological complexities he captures the essence of the Indian society.

His characters embody:

- 1) The innocence and simplicity of the rural life
- 2) The pains and sufferings due to poverty
- 3) The Power of faith and superstition
- 4) The politics of power, exploitation
- 5) The Complexity of the Human Relationship

By layers of realism and symbolism, as well as drawing upon cultural depths, Manoj Das situates characters who are in one sense unequivocally Indian, yet with the projectivized enjoyment of a universally applicable ethos. His works are a testament to the richness of Indian literature, and its potential to depict the human condition in all its complexity.

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