

## Humanism in the Stories of Manoj Das

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### Introduction: -

Anglo-Indian writing flourished after independence in the real sense. In the Beginning Indians wrote in English but not with ease and comfort. Gradually they mastered this non-native language and wrote in with the same zeal and zest of their mother tongue. Manoj Das, 'being an Oriya writer', writes with the interest of his mother tongue in English. His '**The Different Man**', '**The Murderer**', '**The Crocodile's Lady**' and '**The Mountain**' focus the humanistic approach of the author. Humanism is man's concern with himself as an object of contemplation. It is roughly an interest in humanity. It is also described as an approach in study, philosophy or practice that focuses on human values and concerns. In Europe during the renaissance period the humanism was an intellectual movement. As Alexander Pope says 'the proper study of mankind is man' (p.14). The present definition by Pope is a multidimensional which stresses 'man in relation to mankind'. The chief ideology of humanism is that it glorifies the existence of man on the earth. Manoj Das' idea of humanism is reflected fully in his stories and he has not given any scope for negative thinking and escapism. '**The Different Man**' deals with a question that what a reformist needs to be? '**The Murderer**' deals with permanent qualities of human being. '**The Crocodile's Lady**' is another short story from the same volume of the stories by Manoj Das in which he describes human Faith in God. '**The Mountain**' depicts that Nature is the only object which offers peace and solace.

The present research paper principally deals with humanism in the selected works of Manoj Das. The paper discusses humanism in Indian context. It also highlights the theory of humanism. It is an attempt to find and bring in light the humanism in the works of Indian writer, though it was an approach in the renaissance period of Europe.

### **Humanism:-**

Though humanism is man's concern with himself as an object of contemplation, it has its properties and it can be defined properly. The chief ideology of humanism is to glorify the existence of man on the earth. The humanistic movement was first started in Europe in the Renaissance period. In the narrow sense, if we consider the humanist is one who devotes himself

to the study of classical antiquity where more stress is given to the existence of human being and human betterment. The properties of humanism may be summarized as –

1. Humanism glorifies the existence of man on the earth.
2. It says that the basic nature of human being is good.
3. Man can realize his destiny only by developing his human potentials.
4. Solving human problems with the help of reason is more important than religious beliefs.

### **Humanism in the stories of Manoj Das**

'*The Different Man*' deals with a question that what a reformist needs to be? In this short story Pratapsing is the protagonist. He is a reformist. He tries to reform the people living around him. But he lacks the ability to judge the persons, their mood and psychological aspects of man. He becomes the subject of derision. When he sees the young trio buying cigarettes, he says,

*"When did you take to smoking? Why did you pledge your health to the vampire of tobacco? You consider yourselves very clever. Don't you?..... Don't you know the cartoon announcing "Cigarette smoking is injurious to health"? The trio counter-attack in a contraction of anger with their question to him, 'Why did you get married when the ancient saints and seers thousand years ago had pronounced warning against sex?'"(p.129)*

The communication quoted above shows the humanistic approach of the protagonist as well as of Manoj Das. It is how the protagonist of the story tries to reform people but he is unable to do so. The hero, Pratap Singh touches important fabrics of human life. He wanted to shape the life of humans by correcting their vices attacking on them. This vision of the hero makes him humane in the real sense. Hence, in this connection Aliya Shobi says '*Reformation is welcome but one needs to see whether the man one is going to reform is mentally prepared and logically and situationally agreeable to listen to one's views. A reformist needs to be a psychologist capable enough to study the time place and person before sermonizing.*'(p.)

The disputes about cigarette between Singh and the young men make him unhappy. He feels disappointed when the young men say 'Please go on with your duty'. He was extremely vexed. Five kinds of people are not expected to be governed by reason: The child, the stupid, the wicked, the lunatic and the mystic. Singh does not find them fit for his advice. He tries to teach them humanity. But as the narrator says "*He would prefer them to be lunatic rather than wicked .That way there was some hope for mankind". (130).* Singh is a man who behaves consciously like a human being.

'*The Murderer*' deals with permanent qualities of human being. In this short story the writer introduces us a wicked zamindar. Binu, the major character in the story is supposed to

murder him. But at the end of the story the writer gives us humanistic description of a villainous zamindar as turned into a mendicant. Binu has also shown a superb example of servility and honesty till the end. The way human life presented in the story it is worthy to praise at our best. Here the writer tries to focus that nobody in the world is devil and a derailed man. And raises a question that can he /she set himself back to the tract of nobility by adopting simplicity?

As Swami Vivekananda has said “we are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN” (p.96). Really It is a human being who can create wonderful world to live in. Similarly he can transform the world into hell by his act. The sole purpose of the human’s life should be to create world full of peace and solitude. It’s in our hand. It is unlike the Satan in Paradise Lost who infills the evil amongst human beings. In the stories of Das the idea is reflected to the fullest extent giving no space for negativism and escapism’. In this story we find both the characters have matured themselves by tracing solutions with the proper justification in their life. The landlord takes to renounced life.

Binu himself finds shelter at Dabu Sahukar when the famine encompasses the village. He occasionally travels with Sahukar. One day while crossing the forest to reach home at the earliest both, Binu and Dabu Sahukar enter the forest but only Binu comes out of the forest. Then people comments about him. The head pundit describes him as “a man of uncommon practice” and the proprietor of the well known Chandi Opera troupe describes him as “the true male of the area”. These remarks about Binu makes him murderer, though in reality he is not a murderer. The widow of Bhupal Singh also identifies the hermit when she says “Sadhu baba! I think I knew you in your earlier phase of life. Perhaps my husband and yourself looked daggers at each other!” (46) The hermit doesn’t disclose his reality to the widow. Instead at the end of the story when everybody comes to know about the transformation of Dabu Sahukar into a hermit, he tells the crowd that Binu killed him. Binu lives his life as a murderer. In both the characters the humane qualities are fused to tolerate the world around them like uncommon men, though they are common men.

*‘The crocodile’s Lady’* is another short story by Manoj Das in which he describes human Faith in God. Here in this story the writer renders the great love of a foreigner towards ‘Indian Mysticism’. India is a land of Fakirs, snake-charmers and the people with Bohemian existence may not be having a place on the map for its great scientific and technological advancement but one thing the rest of the world is sure of is that life throbs and thrills in India for its mystery. As Dwijendra Lal Ray writes in his poem Bharat Amar “*India, my India, where first human eyes*

*Awoke to heavenly light!*

*All Asia's holy place of pilgrimage.....*

*Knowledge thou gav'st to man, God-*

*Love, works, art, religion is opened door " (38)*

Truly the Indians live with the notion that god will help them in whatever good they will do. They can overcome each and every obstacle because of the merciful god and his love. The Crocodile's Lady, despite her mysterious disappearance for a decade, is sympathized, honored, loved, and revered by the people. One of the features of the characters of Manoj Das' is that they love humanity with their tears and laughers. They give message that life should be accepted with smiles with its follies and fallacies. The crocodile's lady tells the story which is considered as a true story by the foreign professor when for others it is an imaginary story. The story also focuses the village life where human beings live their life fully with whatever they come across. They believe in ghost and supernatural. Human touch is observed more in the village people than the city dwellers. The crocodile lady gives up the thought to reunite with the crocodile with the help of mantra because her mother is on the deathbed. She wanted to serve her mother. It is her honesty that compels her to remain with her mother during her last days. Honesty is the best policy. Similarly, the crocodile is also humanized. The crocodile can't live without the lady and comes up out of the water to be killed. Thus not only human beings but also the crocodile also humanized in the stories of Das.

*'The Mountain'* underlines the message that the Nature is the only object of offering peace and solace for human being. The story reflects the beauty of Nature. Sagar Babu was the hunter in his past life. Now he is attracted towards the charm and beauty of the mountain. He leads the life of mendicant refusing worldly pleasures and luxuries. Nature throbs with life- a life with a divine existence; a life that attracts the world of human beings to its lap. It is because of temperament of Nature that the saints and experimenters of the undying values of life take to jungle, to live in solitude and peace. All the natural elements, the trees, the birds, the beasts sing the songs of glorification of Nature. Das presents an anthropomorphized Nature in the story. Nature, in the stories of Das is humanized, glorified and even integrated to the very spirit of human life.

In his stories Das presents live descriptions of abstracts and inanimate objects. His description of the atmosphere has a language and sings the glory of the creation of god. They all appear like human characters in his stories. He not only offers them the qualities of humans but presents as live as human beings.

The beginning of the **Son and Father** also highlights the nature in humanized form. It is depicted by the writer as a stimulating force. Alone Samir sees the drama of nature. It makes him understand the difference between reality and illusion. The atmosphere awakens the hidden writer from Samir. It is, though not speaking with him, 'explaining more than the spoken words'. It creates many ideas in his mind in a way that nature is talking to him indirectly. The following questions in Samir's mind disclose the humanoid form of nature. The questions raised in his mind show how nature speaks with humans "*What*

kind of theme and plot can make the best use of such a scene?, Can this be the backdrop to a romance- for a chance meeting between the hero and the heroine, both taking shelter under a banyan tree, the heroine shivering partly because of cold and partly for fright?"(.166). This very background of the nature makes the story live and interesting. It touches the different human feelings of different persons in a person, Samir. Nature plays vital role through its changing scenes in the beginning of the story.

One can observe Das's stories based on Humanism. His stories can best be studied from the point of view of humanism. Because when we study the stories of Manoj Das, we can come across the humanistic approach of the writer. His pen has been used masterly to convert inhuman into human. It is the skill which makes him distinguished for his handling of the themes related to human qualities. His stories are not only the stories of humans but he presents nature in a humanized form. His all the stories discussed here in this research paper deals with the concept of medieval humanism i.e. the creation of dedicated societies for the betterment of humans. It is in '*The Different Man*' reflected as need of moral values for healthy society. In '*The Murderer*' the permanent qualities of human beings servility and honesty are highlighted. In '*The Crocodile's Lady*' human Faith in God is shown and in '*The Mountain*' Nature is described as the only object of offering peace and solace for human being.

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