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To Concentrate on the Fresh, Difficult Issues Facing Contemporary Indian Society

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Abstract

Short stories often have a shorter reading period and the aim is "to give pleasure," but they also convey moral lessons. The purpose of storytelling is to expose human frailties, such as stupidity and hypocrisy, rather than to depict the actual events. In addition to being a widely read literary genre, short stories may cover a wide range of themes, but their authors are limited in their vocabulary and must utilize simple language that is nonetheless engaging. It teaches a moral lesson, and after reading the story, the reader feels renewed and content. Aristotle believed that the play's central idea was the short story's storyline. He interprets the short story as a compilation of events. The author arranges a variety of events to develop his subject. Despite its many configurations, the brief story is straightforward and solemn. The short narrative is fairly simple to write in terms of plot. Second, a short story's conciseness is another important quality. Long and superfluous descriptions are avoided. The short story's language should be used with precision and rigor by the author. The short story's conversations are essential to the plot and are straightforward and succinct. They are quite perceptive; even with little descriptions, readers may learn a lot about the individuals. Here, lengthy lectures and discussions are avoided. The right setting is one of the most amazing aspects of short stories. The story's setting could be depressing, tragic, uplifting, decent, scary, tense, humorous, etc. When we read Ruskin Bond's Face in the Dark, for instance, we are always excited when the narrative finishes, but we are also constantly afraid and surprised. The story's setting is a horror story, but the other story, The Train Stops at Shamli, has a romantic tone.

Keywords: Depressing, Tragic, Uplifting, Decent, Scary, Tense, Humorous

Introduction

As a result, the short story defies easy categorization and description, continuing to be a dynamic and adaptable literary art form. It is difficult to identify the genre of short stories due to its nearly infinite range of form and topic explorations. However, a number of definitional attempts have been undertaken. According to famous critic Walter Allen, "A short story is the fruit of a single moment of time, of a single incident, a single perception" (7). However, Tutun Mukherjee provides a more expansive definition:

The short story, presenting diverse situations and contingencies, focuses on moments of crisis, consistently evoking a sense of mystery, elision, or the uncertainty of the unexpected (94).

Rather of offering a precise description, H.G. Wells offers insights into the core and intent of the short story:

The jolly art lies in creating something vibrant and captivating. It may be horrifying, poignant, humorous, or profoundly enlightening, but it must have one essential quality-it should be concise enough to be read aloud within fifteen to fifty minutes (Mundra and Sahni 39).

This begs the question: How can "something vibrant and captivating" be completed in such a constrained amount of time and space? Somerset Maugham asserts that a rigorous commitment to form is essential to producing the desired effect. He says:

A short story must have a definite design, which includes a point of departure, a climax, and a point of view; in other words, it must have a plot. The short story, as a literary form, is often characterized by its emphasis on a structured narrative that includes a clear point of departure, a climax, and a resolution or point of test. In essence, it must possess a well-defined plot. The plot serves to encapsulate a fragment of life within the framework of its own construction. By doing so, it magnifies the complexities of life, much like examining it under a microscope, allowing for a sharper and more vivid understanding than mere observation would provide (Mundra and Sahni).

Hugh Walpole says the same thing when he says

A story should be the story; a vivid record of occurrences filled with incidents and accidents, brisk movement, and unexpected developments. It should progress through suspense, build to a climax, and conclude with a satisfying denouement (Mundra and Sahni 139).

In a similar vein, Edgar Allan Poe emphasizes the crucial unity and uniqueness of purpose in a short narrative, arguing that each component must work together to form a coherent whole. "No word should be written unless its tendency, whether direct or indirect, aligns with the one pre-established design of the narrative," he says (Mundra and Sahni 139).

However, this traditional view of the short tale as a standalone, comprehensive piece of art is contested by Anton Chekhov. He argues that a short narrative does not have to follow the conventional format of having a clear beginning and a finish. Instead, it should only depict a "slice of life," leaving readers free to infer their own meanings from the unresolved plot points of stories. He sets up a scenario, and just as we are about to discover the outcome he is aiming for, the story abruptly ends. The famous maestro of the short story, H.G. Wells, offers the following perspective:

A short story is, or should be, a simple creation; its purpose is to evoke a singular, vivid effect. It must captivate the reader's attention from the beginning, maintain this engagement without wavering, and intensify it until the story reaches its climax. Human capacity for sustained attention is finite, imposing a natural limit on its length. Therefore, the story must deliver its impact and conclude before the reader's interest wanes or fatigue sets in (Rees 203).

Though insightful, the aforementioned definitions do not provide a whole description of the genre; rather, they merely try to convey the essence of a short tale. Some essential components of storytelling are absent from each definition. Even though they are important, elements like economy, shortness, brief duration, and a single effect are not enough to define the form on their own. Nonetheless, the definition that follows finds a balance and is, to a certain degree, universally accepted:

A relatively short narrative, typically under 10,000 words, crafted to deliver a unified, impactful experience." A short story is designed to produce a single, dominant effect and typically incorporates elements of drama. It concentrates on a specific character in a defined situation at a particular moment in time. Even if these conditions are not strictly adhered to, a short story maintains unity as its fundamental principle. The dramatic conflict-the clash of opposing forces-forms the core of the narrative. (Quoted from *Major American Short Stories*, edited by Walton Litz 4).

This encapsulates the core of a short narrative and, with a small modification-it can concentrate on a single character or a group of characters-is widely acceptable. Short stories have historically been linked to systematic design and continuity. But in more recent times, their purview has expanded to include disjointed concepts and the representation of psychoanalysis-both of which are blatant examples of the doubts and disappointments that characterize contemporary society. These discontinuities reflect a time of widespread cultural change. Walton Litz lists "consistency of style, rationality of structure, and constancy in viewpoint" as qualities of a well-written narrative (695-696). These components guarantee a coherent and captivating story.

It is clear from the definitions given above that a short tale can be any condensed prose fiction. Its immense appeal can be attributed to its distinctive fusion of unity, brevity, thematic variety, and singularity of impact. The potential of a short narrative to generate deep meaning in a concise format makes it a unique creative form. It is neither a novel nor a sketch, but it does include the necessary components of one. In contrast to a sketch, which gives a static depiction of a place or person in which the character stays the same and doesn't change, it tells the story of something occurring to someone (Singh 13-14). A short story's narrative scope is more constrained than that of a novel. Compared to novelists, short story writers are more limited in their ability to introduce complicated consequences or a variety of scenarios. A short story grows and ends within its condensed framework with little room and a tiny cast of characters. It should ideally be no more than 1,000 words long and follow A.J. Merson's unities of Time, Place, and Action:

The scope of a novel is generally broad; it may encompass the lives of several generations and span settings across the globe. Its central theme often intertwines with multiple subplots and side issues, none of which can be removed without disrupting the structural integrity and continuity of the story. In contrast, a short story focuses on episodes rather than histories. It restricts itself to a single event or the experiences of one person or a small group, confined to a limited timeframe and geographic scope. Consequently, it aligns more closely than any other literary form with the classical unities of Time, Place, and Action." (9)

A short story's main goal is to amuse the reader, usually by making them laugh. Therefore, the key to writing a

successful short tale is drawing in and holding the reader's attention. It may use humor to highlight moral teachings or human frailties, but it must do so in a way that is interesting and captivating. The narrative should engross the reader and provide a little reprieve from everyday worries. Regardless of its other qualities, a short tale cannot be considered effective if it fails to achieve this degree of participation.

A well-written short narrative follows certain structural guidelines and is fascinating. The general structure of a short narrative usually consists of five key elements. Along with its ability to entertain, these structural components—such as story, character, and others—are essential to its excellence. Gaining knowledge of these essential elements improves the story's legitimacy as a work of literary art and offers insight into its structure. One may better understand these structural components' function in forming the story by looking at how various authors handle them. These components provide the outward structure that the tale is constructed upon.

Review of Literature

Mateer of Work: Moharana (2012) published a piece titled Manoj Das – The Making of an Artist in the Rock Pebbles Journal. According to the article, one of the most well-known Indian English writers of the post-independence era is Manoj Das. According to the publication, Manoj Das is regarded as India's second Vishnu Sharma. The study also notes that although Manoj writes mythical stories, he is not as well-known as R.K. Narayan, Raja Raj, and Mulk Raj. The article also asserts that Manoj Das is a well-known Odia writer in Orissa in addition to being a well-known Indian English writer. The expert here also compares Manoj Das to Western authors like O' Henry and Edgar Allan Poe. Manoj Das draws inspiration from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. So is Manoj Das. Manoj Das has his own town in his stories, just like R.K. Narayan. The Marxist author, according to the document, is Manoj Das. Shri Arbindo is another inspiration for Manoj Das. According to Manoj Das, a writer of short stories ought to draw inspiration from the natural world. Manoj Das began his writing career in Odia. His short stories have depicted Odia culture. The names of other Indian authors from before India gained its independence, like Manjari Isvaran, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan, are also mentioned in the text. Ruskin Bond, G. D. Khosla, Bunny Reuben, Khushawant Singh, Ruth Jhabvala, K. A. Abbas, and Bhabhini Bhattacharya are among the post-independence writers that the author discusses. Additionally, the study notes that Manoj Das has drawn inspiration from the diverse aspects of Indian society. The article also observes that his works touch on a variety of subjects, including Marxism and Existentialism. Manoj Das's stories also make use of humor and sarcasm.

Matter of Work: Deivedi (2011) published an article titled "A review of Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Short Stories" in the Journal of Postcolonial Culture and Societies. According to the paper, Tagore has written about nineteen short stories with a variety of themes. The study demonstrates how Tagore made reference to Bengali culture in his short stories. A woman's conversation with Islam, The

Post Master, Sacrifice, Kabuliwalla, The Professor, Number One, and other topics were covered in the publication. According to the study, there are many different manifestations of happiness, joy, darkness, and other emotions throughout Tagore's short stories. Tagore's tales touch on Indian traditions and practices, such as the sati system. According to the study, we learned about force from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekanand, Nehru, and Subhash Chandra Bose. They helped to strengthen our country.

Work Matter: Mukherjee (2000) [6]. Mukherjee's paper, "Development of Rabindranath Tagore as a Short Story writer," was published in ILELLH. A selection of Tagore's stories are discussed in the article. The core identity of Tagore's stories is what Mukherjee wishes to convey. His characters yearn for the love of his childhood. The majority of Tagore's tales are new and modern. Nearly all of Tagore's characters respond to the circumstances, and they are all mouthpieces for Tagore. Tagore has paid close attention to the characters' mindset and ideals. The article also notes that Tagore possesses every quality that short stories must have. In his short works, Tagore employs everyday vernacular. Holiday learns about the inner self of a human being in one of his stories. It tells the tale of an emotional reaction. Another story by Tagore, I Neelkantha, about a Brahmin boy who must seek refuge at Sharat Babu's home following a shipwreck, is also covered in the publication. Nilkanta longs for affection. Despite having stolen an ink stand, the author explains that Nilkanta is not a thief. Kabuliwalla is one of the best stories. When Rahamt spotted Mini, he thought of his daughter. In the story, Tagore displays fatherly affection. Rahamt and his daughter shared a bond. Nimka, Pathik, and Kabuliwalla are Tagore's metaphorical characters. According to the article, Tagore's stories are appealing to people of all backgrounds. Through his stories, Tagore shared the lesson of love.

Objectives of the study

1. To critically analyze the significant contribution Indian short stories provide to the dissemination of a compelling social message among readers.
2. To concentrate on the fresh, difficult issues facing contemporary Indian society.

Research Methodology

Since no practical or experimental investigation in a live setting is necessary, this study will be entirely based on secondary data. The following is the suggested research procedure:

thorough examination of the numerous books and periodicals that have been consulted from different libraries in order to do study in the field of English literature from India. The research gaps will be determined based on the literature review. The creation of research will follow the identification of gaps.

The history of contemporary Indian short stories will be thoroughly examined, along with a selection of pre-independence short story writers' thematic works by authors. A conclusion will be drawn to explain how the goals of the study were met.

Results and Discussion

Different short stories have different narratives, climaxes, and designs. A fairly common literary form is the short narrative. Short stories are a difficult genre of literature since they exhibit a variety of styles, narratives, and characterizations. The interesting thing about short stories is that, although they are a brief form of literature, writers tend to overlook them. However, in the current period, we can claim that short stories are a highly popular form of writing and reading. The claim that short stories are more akin to prose fiction may not be incorrect.

Short stories are one of the most impressive and concise literary genres; they contain a wide range of themes and components that are present in novels and plays. Plot, characters, themes, dialogue, setting, and so forth are examples of these types of aspects. In a short narrative, the authors combine different episodes to create the story's conclusion.

There aren't many happenings in the story, and there aren't many characters either. Character development would be hindered if the plot had more characters. Characters would be developed if two or three were highlighted. Because short stories are so brief, it is quite challenging to classify them; yet, they usually contain a variety of position events and characterizations. Wells, H. G. defines:

“A short story is, or should be, a simple thing; it aims at producing one single vivid effect; it has to seize the attention at the outset, and never relaxing, gather it together more and more until the climax is reached. The limit of the human capacity to attend closely therefore set a limit to it: it must explode and finish before interruption occurs of fatigue sets in (Rees: 1998, 203).”

Short stories often have a shorter reading period and the aim is "to give pleasure," but they also convey moral lessons. The purpose of storytelling is to expose human frailties, such as stupidity and hypocrisy, rather than to depict the actual events. In addition to being a widely read literary genre, short stories may cover a wide range of themes, but their authors are limited in their vocabulary and must utilize simple language that is nonetheless engaging. It teaches a moral lesson, and after reading the story, the reader feels renewed and content. Aristotle believed that the play's central idea was the short story's storyline. He interprets the short story as a compilation of events. The author arranges a variety of events to develop his subject. Despite its many configurations, the brief story is straightforward and solemn. The short narrative is fairly simple to write in terms of plot. Second, a short story's conciseness is another important quality. Long and superfluous descriptions are avoided. The short story's language should be used with precision and rigor by the author. The short story's conversations are essential to the plot and are straightforward and succinct. They are quite perceptive; even with little descriptions, readers may learn a lot about the individuals. Here, lengthy lectures and discussions are avoided. The right setting is one of the most amazing aspects of short stories. The story's setting could be depressing, tragic, uplifting, decent, scary, tense, humorous, etc. When we read Ruskin Bond's *Face in the Dark*, for instance, we are always excited when the narrative finishes, but we are also constantly afraid and

surprised. The story's setting is a horror story, but the other story, *The Train Stops at Shamli*, has a romantic tone. The protagonist falls in love with the basket vendor while passing by the Dera, but he doesn't speak to her. Nevertheless, he tries to find the girl in the Deoli station but is unsuccessful. If the theme of the tragic story is very tragic, the atmosphere is also very sad. For example, in Ruskin Bond's story *The Funeral*, the setting is tragic; a young boy has lost his father, and the story ends with a description of death, sadness, and loneliness. As a result, the story is embellished with a variety of colours, the author depicts a range of perspectives, and the author creates an appropriate atmosphere. The short story serves as a mirror of society, allowing the reader to comprehend the true nature of civilization.

Conclusion

Many authors have used irony as a defining element to portray the subtleties of reality. While carrying on the Big Three's tradition in Indian English literature, these writers have added their own skills and viewpoints to enhance their narratives. One of the most exceptional authors of English short stories is Khushwant Singh. His writings, which are profoundly impacted by political and historical situations, produce a genuine and timeless literary universe. Khushwant Singh concentrates on Punjab and its culture, much like R K Narayan depicted the complex lives of small people in his novels and Raja Rao in *Kanthapura*. He crosses boundaries to acquire a global appeal by embracing both the macrocosmic and microcosmic facets of existence.

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