

MANTO AS A REALISTIC OBSERVER ON THE DEPICTION OF PARTITION: A STUDY OF MANTO'S SELECTED SHORT STORIES

Afrasiab Bashir[–]

SST Teacher Elementary and Secondary Education Department Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan
afrasiabbashir@gmail.com

Hina Mustafa

Lecturer Department of English Abbottabad University of Science and Technology Havelian Abbottabad
hinamustafa122@gmail.com

Tahir Rehman

M.Phil Applied Linguistics & SST General, Elementary and Secondary Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan
tahirrehman0024@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Saadat Hasan Manto was a celebrated Urdu writer known for his realistic portrayal of the human experience during the partition of India in 1947. His stories and sketches captured the social, political, and psychological impact of the partition on ordinary people. Manto's realism was characterized by his ability to depict the raw emotions, pain, and struggles of individuals and communities affected by the partition. His writings explored themes of loss, displacement, identity crisis, and the dehumanizing effects of violence. Manto's sharp and poignant writing style combined vivid imagery, dark humor, and an acute understanding of human psychology. His stories continue to be celebrated for their ability to evoke empathy, challenge conventions, and provide a deeper understanding of the human condition in the midst of historical turmoil.

Keywords: sociopolitical, psychological, realism, dark humor

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the reflection of life, a record of social, cultural, political and historical believes norms, rules and regulation, custom and tradition and mirror of society. Literature is superior then history and philosophy, because history teaches with example and philosophy with ideas, while literature combines the both. Norms, values and culture of a society affects the artists. It is through literature that one gets into the values and norms of a society. The more you explore values and norms of a society through literature, the more it obtain and develop perfection and convey about that age. Manto is one of the famous writer of his age and most of his short stories directly or indirectly related with the partition of subcontinent. Manto's stories explore the historical incident of partition, a true picture of society, political disturbance and religious differences.

Manto wrote on sufferings of public in partition time and mentioned picture of societal and political turmoil. Manto was born on May 12, 1912 in Samrala; Amratsar. Manto later joined Aligarh Muslim University. He was introduced to European literature by Abdul Bari Alig whom he met after going back to Amritsar. His first short story “**Tamasha**” was an inspiration from an incident at Jallian Wala Bagh at Amritsar. He started working as editor of weekly Urdu film Magazine Mussaver in 1936. It took him to Bombay. He worked in film industry as story writer and gained the popularity. In 1948 he migrated to Pakistan and continued his creative writing. In Pakistan the only means of earning was his

[–] Corresponding Author

short stories. In the initial years of partition, as the film industry of Pakistan was almost nonexistent, Manto used his short stories to earn a living.

After migration to Pakistan in 1948, this period proved to be the most influential in his life. He wrote more than one hundred and fifty short stories in time period of seven years. Short stories in which he portrayed the torture of abducted women, the woes of divided families, the agony and trauma of partition, the tormenting experiences of countless people and the plight of migrants gained popularity.

The partition of the Subcontinent in 1947 was and is still a dark and black period of our history. A lot of fiction has been written about partition. Some of major writers are Taslima Nasreen, Bhisham Sahani, Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh, Salman Rushdie, Mohan Rakesh, Kurr-e-tul Aain Haider, Sadhat Hassan Manto, and many more. Manto depicts life as it is, he does not sugarcoat the brutalities of life. Manto do not follow the path that has already been traveled but he followed and introduced a new style of realism as Dr.B.A. Ashraf('1992) says: "Manto represents the natural depiction of facts like an x-ray". ". Another individuality of Manto's realism is that, he is not the follower of any ideology and movement. No personal interest is involved in his writing and his concern is not limited about one aspect of life but he covers all the aspects of life. (p.75)

According to (S.Aqeela, Q.Riaz, 2012) "Manto, s short stories provides us a detailed history of our past, political, social and religious believes, happening, incidents, destruction and deaths at the time of partition." (p.2)

As Manto himself says, "I paint life. If it is unendurable and un-acceptable that means the society we live in it oppressive and intolerable, my stories contain the evils of the day and I have only unveiled them. (P.15-16)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Immigration is something that is not good in any case because native place always attracts its habitants and there is spiritual relationship between native place and its inhabitants. The partition of sub-continent is one of the biggest partitions of world that created a lot of problems for the people from both sides. N.Sayyed (2014) says that "after the decision of partition, world's largest human interchange on the name of religion took place".

Manto describe the situation of partition in such a realistic way that the whole picture of partition is portrayed. (N.Sayyed, 2014) "People who were earlier neighbors, friends, and co-workers were labeled as Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christians. They became thirsty of the life of their friends". He depicts that how the people become murderers, on the name of religion, the past friends co-workers, relatives become selfish, cruel and brutal. According to (N.Sayyad , 2014) "They were so savage that they have forgotten the respects for elders and women, love and affection towards children and their safety" (p.8)

Through his writing he tries to show the mirror to society about its injustice and inhumanistic manners. He just portrays a picture in front of reader and keeps his stories open ended. Not the side of stronger or cruel, not in favor of weaker. People were mentally/psychologically retorted like the character of "Bishan Singh" in short story "Toba Take Singh" as N.Sayyad says that, "Manto was being held on the threshold by the society, which forces a human to be a regular criminal". (Ibid)

Manto's stories carrying the religious, social, cultural and historical background of the characters. His stories showed how the partition has caused to divide the personalities of people and consciousness of the people who suffered. His depiction of the psychology of characters that belong to different religions is fantastic. Wentik (2014) describes "Farishta" (The Angel) and "Phundne" (Tussles) as most of the innovative short stories of Manto. Both stories incorporate the progressives' social concerns with their technical experimentation and attention to the characters' inner lives. (p. 13)

A tribute is paid to Manto by Asif Noorani (2014) by giving his works a title of "Timeless Appeal". He says that though his works were relevant to his times, they are still relevant to our times as well. (p.20)

His depiction of political disturbance explores that the partition of sub-continent is a way to promote war and violence in this part of world that will never end. Rafia Zakaria writes in the article "A Moment for

Manto" that Manto's literature is still relevant in the current political scenarios because "His rebellion was directed at the demarcations that remain the Curse of India-Pakistan relations even to this day" (p.22)

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Human feelings and thoughts is expressed in literature. Literature has been declared as the exploration of human values, sentiments and feelings. Literature has powerful meaning because of which it attracts thoughts, feelings and human sense for the sake of communication experiences and ideas. Literature is an imaginative process in which feelings of the artist are expressed and communicated through imagination. This study examines Manto's short stories which focus on the impact of partition on characters rather than its causes. He shows its effect on the characters by presenting scenes of conflict, chaos and violation. For example, some of his famous stories depict the psychological disorders due to the partition issue, people who have lost everything, and still not accepted the new boundaries and still confused.

For example, in the story "**Toba Tek Singh**", the main character-Bishan Singh- is bewildered by the illogical conviction of sending citizens to new location by dividing their property into two halves. The trauma of displacement affects him so much that he gets broken down in a no-man's land between Pakistan and India. Bishan Singh, a psychologically retorted person symbolize those people who are the real sufferer of the partition, who are confused by the division of the country, who represent the love for native land and nostalgic about their real place.

Finally the day of the exchange came and all the madmen from both countries were brought to the Wagah border in Punjab, a cold winter evening and all the madmen were out of control as they were unable to understand what was happening to them. There was chaos all around, slogans of 'Pakistan Murdabad' and 'Pakistan Zindabad'. Some shouted abuse while others tore off their clothes. When Bishan Singh was taken out of the bus, he asked one of the officials where Toba Tek Singh was, the official replied that he was now in Pakistan. When he heard that his home town was in Pakistan, he tried to escape, caught by officials who called him Toba Tek Singh. Bashan Singh could not move and remained standing on the spot with swollen legs. A loud scream was heard and Bashan Singh was lying dead on the ground. The land where his body lay was neither Pakistan nor India. "There behind the barbed wire on one side was India and behind another barbed wire on the other side was Pakistan. In between, on a piece of land that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh" (Toba Take Singh, p. 7). The pain, agony and sufferings of common people is shown through the character of Bashan Singh under forced migration. Religious concerns even in the state of mentally ill person are depicted as Bashan Singh, who claims about his prayers. It is shown that mentally ill people were aware of their religious identity and believed that the god of Muslims is different from the god of Sikhs. Manto's social awareness, along with religious beliefs, is what grabs our attention; he rejected the idea of division on religious basis.

In essay "Zaroori Hai" (Wanted), Manto expressed the painful experience of being alone and an outsider in the foreign land. This essay also presents the racism between insiders and outsiders who are local Pakistanis and the new migrants from India respectively. Manto himself lived a diasporic life. In the essay "The Last Salute" and "The Dog of Titwal" he presents the sufferings of displaced and uprooted people and the trauma and destruction caused by the dissonant notion of nationality. Manto, in his short story "Khol Do" presents a Muslim character Sirajudin who was forced to move from India and who also lost his wife in the bloody practices of that time. Additionally, he also lost his daughter Sakina whom he found later that she was repeatedly raped by men. Because of the trauma that she went through she was socially dead.

Women had a very precarious or vulnerable position during partition, rape and abduction by the men of both nations in order to prove their masculinity and the effeminacy of the other community. Many young girls and married women were left to their fate after they were raped.

These women were not accepted by their families as they were considered to be disgraced and lived the life of the living dead. The story suggests how Partition cost human lives, killing not only individuals but also their family ties and social relationships. "They were so savage that they have

forgotten the respects for elders and women, love and affection towards children and their safety” (S.Aqeela, Q.Riaz, p.3)

Every one totally lost the moral values and become irrational, brutal and animal. The brutal and animalistic treatment during the time of partition as depicted in an article (The Influence of Manto and Maupassant on Social Life, 2012) as: “After the decision of partition, world’s largest human interchange on the name of religion took place. People who were earlier neighbors, friends, and co-workers were labeled as Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christians. They became thirsty of the life of their friends. (S.Aqeela, Q.Riaz, p.3).

Manto is very well aware of the sufferings of people, the hardships that they had to face, and the destruction that partition had caused. “The Return” Explores the losing relatives and their situations during partition and especially the women who lost, or kidnapped during partition. Sakina is lost during partition and her father Sarajuddin wanted to search out them. He met a group of youngsters who were helping children and women to bring them back. These youngsters were working voluntarily. Manto writes that “These young volunteers were hope for him.” (p-7)

Sakina was found out by one the team but they did not send her back. They kept her in their custody and raped her continuously. She was left by them in a hospital after a week. Sirajudin found his daughter in an unconscious state in hospital. He told the doctors that she was his daughter. This example shows the moral destruction of the society, the cruel picture and the cruelty that were faced by the women, mental and physical abuse. Manto depicted the society as the society is, “I paint the life as the life is” (Manto), he explores the hypocrisy ruthlessness, brutality, war and violence and animal nature of the society and socially created norms, rule and regulation under which the aspirations of an individual are getting suffocated as a realistic observer. He himself (Preface to Manto's short stories) says about his stories as: “If you are not familiar with the age in which we live, read my short stories. If you cannot endure my stories it means that this age is unbearable.” (P.15-16)

In the last sentence of Gormukh Singh's story, "as you wish" Manto portrays the pain, the trauma of that time, the result of a partition that destroyed social rules and moral values, a partition that left most of the people helpless and poor. There was hope for good as presented in the story "Gurmukh Singh Ke Wseat". In this short story, Justice Mian Abdul Hai hoped that the inhuman behavior would end. The short story "Sharifan" sees the same hope. In this story, when the girl's father went to avenge the death of his dead daughter, he covered the Hindu girl's naked body with his shawl on his way. Manto sees hope. Saadat Hassan Manto rejected the basis of partition which was religion and faith. Manto was considered as a writer of society, so he portrayed the selfishness and cruelty of people. He knew about all of the disasters, riots, hardships and condition of the people. He wrote about human psychology and hence produced some extraordinary characters in his short stories like Mozail, Sakina, Sirajuddin and Toba Tek Singh etc. these characters bring up the true face of partition. It brings up the effects and the damages humanity had to bear because of this event of partition. Manto portrayed the reality for his readers. He wrote so that his readers can read, analyze and then feel the loss of people. The characters in his short stories are designed in a way that they tell true and a lot about the customs and traditions of the society. The behavior of the characters are being justified in his short stories. It becomes visible in the eyes of readers that the behavior of any character is justified and it is a consequence of the things that have been happening.

CONCLUSION

Writers produce literary masterpieces in which the reality of life is represented. Manto is known as one of the leading Urdu short story writer. On human relationship his stories make a fine commentary on the woes of materialism, and those materialistic approaches even today decided the social relationship. Like an honest artist he carries with him the burden and suffering of pain. He has written about those who were negatively impacted by the partition. Manto wrote on the lives of the people who are the real sufferers of the partition. Manto's stories are like windows to explore the suffering of ordinary people, and who were swept up in the madness of violence and pain. He criticizes the tag of madness in both India and Pakistan

over religious differences. In his writings Manto has pleaded against cruelty, violence and against any kind of further division.

The senselessness of violence claims many innocent victims and his stories are a mouthpiece for millions who suffered during the Partition. The well-crafted strokes of his pen drive to our hearts the viciousness of human passions better than any writer of his time. Manto's short stories provide a detailed history of our social, political and religious beliefs, happenings, incidents and deaths at the time of partition. Manto has expressed his view of life in his short stories. The sensitivity of Manto in writing about the physical and emotional violation of women is commendable. Manto was a truthful and realistic man, who had enough courage to say what is right and wrong, who say whatever came to his mind. He saw the outcome of the partition in his own point of view. He was a man of a society and human values. That is why he has presented the impact of partition on the society and the human values as a true observe.

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