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DISPLACEMENT AND UNHOMLINESS OF THE COLONIZED IN MANTO'S TOBA TEK SINGH

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Abstract

The paper in hand attempted to highlight the post-colonial issues of the colonised. Even after gaining freedom from the British, the natives were unable to regain their identity. They faced many psychological problems. They could not come to terms with their present identity. In this term paper, the researchers used the lens of postcolonial theory to identify postcolonial issues in Manto's Toba Tek Sin. In the analysis, the researchers claimed that mimicry, displacement, and unhomeliness are major post-colonial issues faced by natives who have been dissected by the colonisers in Manto's Toba Tek Singh. Being preoccupied under the yoke of colonial power, the natives faced psychological trauma, which caused their alien identity, displacement, and unhomeliness.

Keywords: British, Manto, Toba Tek Sing, mimicry, displacement, postcolonial theory

Introduction

Sahadat Hassan Manto has been taken as great writer of sub-continent. He has been discussed as great socialist writer. We are taking Sahadat Hassan Manto's story *Toba Tek Singh* in post-colonial perspective. The purpose of this study is to highlight the aftermaths of colonialism. The characters of this story face identity crisis, alienation, unhomeliness and double-consciousness because of colonialism. One of the striking features of post colonial theory as discussed by Lois Tyson "problematic of post colonial identity" and "the need for continuity with a pre colonial past" (449).

Manto, the post colonial writer, tries to highlight the major issue in post-colonial period that is identity issue. Even after getting the independence from British Empire, the Natives of sub-continent were unable to get their identity back. Mentally they were in state of imprisonment. They could not come to term with their present.

The natives of sub-continent were under the British Empire. They lost their political and cultural 'self'. In 1947 British Indian Empire had been partitioned into two states: the union of India and the union of Pakistan. Apparently it was the freedom, freedom from British colonizers, but inwardly the natives were imprisoned psychologically. They were suffering from



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psychological disorders. They are disintegrated both physically and mentally after British departure.

Manto has described these post-colonial problems. The character, Toba Tek Singh, is presented as Lunatic. His mental instability represents the conflicted and confused state of mind. The lunatics of the story show the mental condition of the native of sub-continent. They all suffer from cultural displacement. They all feel unhomeliness. Unhomed is quite different from homeless. Natives do not have pre-colonial culture that was their own. They quested to get their past back but they could not.

Manto witnessed colonialism and observed the British colonizers not only suppressing the rights of natives but also snatching their identity. Being post-colonial writer, Manto noted and penned down the dark experience. Even after their departure from sub-continent, the natives felt themselves overpowered by the colonizers in one way or other because they could not own the new culture and territory since they had lost their original being. They tried to recreate their pre-colonial identity. But they felt insecure in new situation. They were forced to live in this situation. When they were forced to live in such situation, they reacted, though their reaction was not intense to get identity, against the colonizers' culture, imposed upon them

Research Questions

- 1: How does Sahadat Hassan Manto explore identity crisis in Toba Tek Singh?
- 2: how does the writer present the issues of homeliness and displacement?

Significance of study

Sub-continent has been suppressed and ruled by British colonial power. Although Indian writers have been discussed in post-colonial perspective, yet Pakistani writers have not been much discussed in this respect. Similarly Manto is praised as social writer and his stories have been taken in different perspectives. But his story *Toba Tek Singh* is not analyzed in post-colonial perspective. Our research may pave the way for new researchers to work on Pakistani writers in this respect.

Literature Review

Post-colonial theory has become the point of focus. Many articles and journals have been written in post-colonial perspectives. Samet Guven in the article Post-colonial Analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (2013), asserted that Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* relates the journey of Marlow and Marlow comes to know the exploitation of the natives by the white men. The novel is an attack on imperialism and mal treatment of European colonizers in Africa. The book addresses the issues of racism, imperialism, identity, and gender. It also exposes the hidden realities and true faces of European. (Guyen, 2013)



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Julie Mullaney in her article *Postcolonial literature in context (2010)*, throws the light on the postcolonial literatures in English and their contexts. Postcolonial literatures address the issues like, old and new Diasporas, postcolonial nationalism, indigenous identities and globalization. The literature from Australia, Africa, Palestine and South Asia diasporas highlight the crucial questions. (Mullaney, 2010).

Ahmed Gamal in his work *The global and the postcolonial in post-migratory literature (2013)*, is of the view that from the past thirty years migrant literature has become an important literary subgenre of postcolonial writings. The main objective of this article is to highlight the main characteristics of post-migratory literature as represented by the Anglo-Pakistani writers, namely Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist(2007)* and Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows(2009)*. Post-migratory literature offers a new perspective to post-colonial theory. (Gamal, 2013)

Framework

Theatrical frame works are the lenses through which a researcher, in a systematic way can analyze a text in a best possible and conceivable way. We have used some strands of post-colonial theory as lens to analyze Manto's story *Toba Tek Singh*. Lios tyson says that there is a "struggle for individual and collective identity and the related themes of alienation, unhomeliness, and double-consciousness". He further says that "double consciousness often produced an unstable sense of self . . . this feeling is being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather them to both". And "the need for continuity with a pre colonial past" (427-244-449).

Since Manto's *Toba Tek Singh* highlights, explicitly, the issues of both Pakistan and Hindustan after when they got independence from the British crown. The characters, narrated in the story, give the readers a feeling of unhomeliness, alienation, and psychological ambivalence; they are the representatives of all those who had been alien to the so called division. So may focus is analyze the characters, through textual references, having the feeling of 'unhomeliness', 'alienation' and 'double-consciousness'.

Text analysis

The text of *Toba Tek Singh* has mirrored individual as well as collective identity issues of the natives of sub-continent after the departure of British colonizers. Manto has presented various lunatics in this story. The Lunatics highlight the "unstable sense of self" of the natives(444). After the independence from British powers, the natives were still in a state of chaos. As story starts, the writer brings forth the plan of exchanging lunatics between Pakistan and Hindustan. But there is no one who tells whether the idea is right or wrong. Muslims lunatics are to be shifted to Pakistan and Hindu lunatics to Hindustan, but none of them knows the meaning of Pakistan and Hindustan, the realm where they are being shifted. They are astonished at their being shifted; for the separation is absolutely alien to them and they do not know what is going



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to happen to them in the realm where they are being shifted. Manto, through this situation depicts sense of alienation on the part of both Muslim and Hindu lunatics. For instance a nameless Muslim lunatic ask “Molvi Sa’b what’s this Pakistan? (1)

The very question put by this nameless Muslim lunatic does have an inference that they “being under the control of British power” viewed the sub-continent as a collective territory where both hindues and muslims had been subjugated remained for a long time that their sub-conscious hammers their conscious and they remain ambivalent about the division. This post-colonial division of their Native land is alien to them; for they cannot comprehend the idea of Pakistan and Hindustan because they are ignorant about the new names of the division. The Natives, who are being ‘exchanged’, feel alienated. For them the places like ‘Pakistan and ‘Hindustan’ are strange. As Frantz Fanon in his “Black Skin, White Masks” suggests that, “Colonialism, with its explicit conceptual under-pinning of white racial superiority over non-white peoples, has created a sense of division and alienation on in the self- identity of the non-white colonized people”(67)

Similarly, one of the Sikh lunatics, out of confusion asks, “Sardarji, why are we being sent to Hindustan? We don’t know the language of the of that place” (1).

The lunatic has a feeling of being caught between two cultures; the culture in which he used to live and the new culture about whose language he is worried. As language is the component of culture, his unsimilarity with language leads him to an alien culture, the culture of Hindustan that may be incomprehensivable for him. Hindustan is also new place for him so he is confused about the place and its culture as well. This Sikh lunatic suffers ‘double-consciousness’. He is unable to understand post-colonial situation. He is being shifted to place ‘Hindustan’ he does not know what kind of place it would be. As Lois Tyson says that post colonial period faces double-consciousnes, “double consciousness often produced an unstable sense of self. . . this feeling is being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather them to both”(244). The lunatic finds himself between two cultures, colonial and post-colonial. He does not belong to one of them. In colonial period, he was alienated and did not own the culture and Post-colonial culture is also strange for him because of division of unity.

He feels sense of alienation. Fear of unhomeliness is shown in his question. He feels unhomeliness even in his own land. According to Tyson, ‘unhome’ is different from homeless. It is state of mind in which someone feels homeless even at his own home because that person is not at home in himself(244). Similarly, this Sikh lunatic does not feel at home even in sub-continent. His question highlights mental condition of the Natives of that time.

Natives are trapped in the dilemma of displacement. Displacement means having the desire to get their pre-colonial past back. They used to live in sub-continent, without the division. In their confused questions, not only alienation and double consciousness are visible but also there is desire for pre-colonial past. Where there were no new ‘homes’ like Pakistan and



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Hindustan. As Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* argues that the significant step for 'colonialised' is to reclaim their pre-colonial past. The British colonizers had taken away the 'self' of natives. Now they are living like strangers in their land. Another lunatic is much depressed with the idea of migration. He does not know how to tackle this new situation. He climbs up the tree and gives 'unbroken two hours speech' about the issues of Pakistan and Hindustan. He feels enslaved after the departure of British power. Although they are free from British power yet they are not independent or free regarding their identity. Post-colonial identity is not the real identity of natives. Actually, they are the slaves of British plans and rules that have divided the land. This same lunatic does not want to live either in Pakistan or Hindustan. His hanging on the tree saves him, to some extent if not completely, from double consciousness or displacement that had been a cause of ambivalence and confusion. His decision to make tree a home shows a kind of resistance against post-colonial identity. Where, their pre-colonial identity has been crushed. He cries at the thought that his fellows lunatics would leave him. His cry, though weaker one, also shows the resistance. He shows the resistance against to be the part of either Pakistan or Hindustan. For him they are strange lands.

Manto has highlighted the reaction of another Muslim lunatic, who was an M.S engineer. That man removes his clothes and begins to sprint around the garden. Dress is basically culture code and his removing of the dress refers to the compulsion imposed by the colonizers upon the colonized to make them culturally naked. His nakedness signifies that he has been robbed of culture and identity, even self. His nakedness shows that in post-colonial period, he has no distinguished features of culture. It also highlights his resistance against the post-colonial identity.

The writer has not only discussed Sikh, Hindu and post-colonial status but also Anglo-Indian's status. In European ward of lunatic asylum, there are two Anglo-Indian lunatics. Who are shocked at the news of freedom of sub-continent. The first question that comes to their mind is also about their new status in the asylum, "And for hours they privately conferred about the important question of what their status in the lunatics would be now?"(3)

Their astonishment, on hearing the news of British departure, is one of the aftermaths of the colonialism. The roots of the colonialism were very strong and left everlasting effects on the colonized. They are confused whether they would be provided "breakfast" or "Indian-Chapattis". The two opposite items of eatables highlight two different cultures. Natives are entangled in double-consciousness. Breakfast is the culture of British and Chappati depict sub-continent culture. These two words are the representatives of two different cultures. So the issue is not only with eatables but also whole culture is mixed. So the lunatics are confused about which kind of culture would be practiced in post colonial period.

The writer has presented various lunatics, who belong to different religions. But they face same problem. Every native is in state of confusion. After discussing these lunatics, the writer culminates the issues of "unhomeliness" "identity crisis" and "double-consciousness"



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through the character of Bishan Singh. Like all characters, Bishan Singh tries to find his identity and 'home'. He is perplexed about the new changing. Bishan Singh is called Toba Tek Singh, after the name of area, where he had his land. The connection between land and name clearly shows the significance of identity. The identity is always associated with name and land. The rest of story follows the struggle of Bishan Singh to be stick to the land so that he may able to retain his identity.

This Sikh lunatic gives very "frightening appearance" but he is "harmless". This shows that the natives have shown some aggression and resistance against post –colonial identity but they were helpless. 'Harmless' for the post- colonial culture. Harmless means that they in spite of their anger, their protest , their decision to make tree home and in their nakedness, share post-colonial identity

Toba Tek Singh has been in lunatic asylum for fifteen years. He always utters strange words. During these years, he has not slept. He is still in the same insane condition. There is no change between colonial and post colonial period. Toba Tek Singh utters the same words and still does not lie down. The pressures and oppressions are still faced in the shape of 'unhomeliness' and 'alienation' .Like other lunatic, Toba Tek Singh asks the same question, "Where Toba Tek Singh was? Where he had his home?"(4)

The question about 'home' is not entertained. No one is able to answer this question. Everybody is trying to solve the riddle of identity. Toba Tek Singh's past reveals the past of all natives. The writer informs "he had some lands in Toba Tek Singh. He was a prosperous landlord, when suddenly," His mind gave away. His relatives bound him in heavy iron chain, brought him to the Asylum got him admitted and left". (4)

The writer has indirectly related the story of the colonized of sub-continent. Toba Tek Singh represents the colonized. Who were rich, having their identity and culture. But after the arrival of invaders, they suddenly got mad. This employs British power as a result, people lost their reason. The relatives are the powers that chained the natives in mental instability and they left. But the natives are still in the same situation.

Bishan Singh starts questioning about Toba Tek Singh from another lunatic. But he does not get reasonable answer because the question about Toba Tek Singh is the question of identity. And the post-colonial identity of the natives is vague identity. So no one is able to give the clear answer. Bishan Singh does not know where does Toba Tek Singh lie? Before post-colonial period, at least he was certain about the place, he knew that Toba Tek Singh was in sub-continent, in their home land. And that Toba Tek Singh was under the control of British power. But after getting freedom from colonialism, the post colonial identity has shaken the existed understanding about identity. The natives of sub-continent have paid the heavy price of freedom. They had to lose their identity. Everything was mingled and confused like the mind of Bishan Singh and the other lunatics.



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Mimicry is one of the concepts post colonial theory. Homi, K, Bhabha described mimicry as sometimes unintentionally subversive. He says, “Mimicry is kind of performance that exposes the artificiality of the symbolic expression of power” (83).

In fact the essence of the line is that the natives of the colonized land mimic the colonizers—the mimicry is in fact the expression of the natives’ repressed desires which remain suppressed, owing to the power and pressure of the colonizers. The natives, out of ambivalence, mimic so that they could attain a sort of identity but this artificial expression does not get them the real identity.

For instance, one of the characters in the story assumes himself to be God. His assumption, basically, refers to his desire of getting power like the colonizers who presented themselves, throughout colonial period, to be power gods.

As he is asked by Bishan, “Whether Toba Tek Singh was in Pakistan or Hindustan” (4).The lunatic abruptly replies that: “it is neither in Pakistan nor in Hindustan. We have not order yet” (4). This shows that he through mimicry, representing the power of the colonizers but it is just an assumption and symbolic expression of power.

Some days later, a friend of Bishan singh, called Fazal Din comes to meet Bishan. Through him Bishan comes to know that he is being shifted to Hindustan. Bishan asks the same question about Toba Tek Singh and is replied as “in Hindustan . . . no, no in Pakistan”(5).

Fazal Din is also confused because to come to term with this situation was not easy for the natives. Colonialism had left the natives with countless questions. They could not find reasonable answers. The marks of colonial suppression had been pasted on the natives’ minds. People got much agitated. Although fazal Din gives the answer yet he himself becomes confused. Because this is not satisfactory and confident answer, the answer makes fazal Din confused.

The preparations for shifting the lunatics are completed. On the fixed day, the exchange of the lunatics begins. It is the cold day. It is as cold as the exchange of the lunatics. The lunatics do not want to be shifted. They are thinking why they are being uprooted from their land, why they are being forced to leave their homes. This ‘why’ is not answered as it cannot be answered because the creator of the very ‘why’ has left the land.

When Bishan’s turn comes, he again asks the question from the accompanying officer, “where is Toba Tek Singh? In Pakistan or Hindustan”(6).The accompanying officer replies, “in Pakistan” On hearing the answer Bishan Singh gets more confused and runs back to his fellows. The Pakistani guards seize him but he refuses to move. He states that “Toba Tek Singh is here “at last he comes to know that his origin and home, Toba Tek Singh, is here from where he is forced to remove. He is not willing to be uprooted(6). He stands with swollen legs and there is no power that can move him from that place. This is kind of resistance but of no use. Because he cannot



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bring any change in the situation. He is left alone because he is harmless. He is allowed to stand there.

In pre-dawn, Bishan's terrible shriek is heard. Bishan Singh, who has not been sleeping for fifteen years, lies prostrate. He lies between the grounds, which has no name. He dies with the wish of getting identity, the wish that is, in fact, the wish of all the colonized who have been struggling with the problems of 'unhomeliness' and 'double-consciousness' and striving for getting the real identity. But he dies without name, home and identity. Manto has expressed the same idea of 'unhomeliness' and 'double-consciousness' in his story *The dog from Tithwal*. In this story he has discussed the post-colonial identity through the character of dog. The dog has been accused of being other while running between the trenches of Pakistan and Hindustan; it dies without any identity and home.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that it has post-colonial features. We have found identity crisis, 'unhomeliness', 'double consciousnesses', 'displacement' and mimicry in this story. The characters of Manto's story *Toba Tek Singh* depict the aftermaths of colonialism. Not only individual but collectively, the natives of sub-continent faced different psychological issues regarding identity. It is not the story of individual identity issue. The natives experienced 'alienation' and identity issues as whole. They tried to resist against post-colonial identity but they failed to get their pre-colonial past back. The sense of alienation haunted them. They were bewildered. They died without home.

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