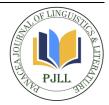


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The Representation of Identity and Belonging in Toba Tek Singh

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ARTICLE INFO			ABSTRACT	
Article History:			Saadat Hassan Manto is well known for his portrayal of society through skillful integration of personal, historical, and cultural experiences. This study looks at	
Received:	September	26,2023	3 "Toba Tek Singh," a masterpiece of Saadat Hasan Manto's fiction that provides a	
Revised:	October	30,2023	an narrative explores significant historical events as well as challenging issues of identity and belonging. This article examines the several ways in which Manto employs these ideas to express division. The themes that are emphasized are examined by exploring the surroundings, symbols, and characters. The study	
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Keywords:			investigates at how the narrative emphasizes the difficulties in building an identity and trying to find a sense of belonging in a divided society due to political upheaval. The objectives of the study call for the thematic analysis. This study examines the attachment of identities and a sense of belonging to people	
Identity crisis, Belonging, Partition			that cannot be replaced or removed. Through a close analysis of characters, symbolism, and narrative techniques, the study unveils the complex interplay of cultural, social, and personal elements that shape the characters' sense of self	
			and their connection to their surroundings. The research argues that Manto's portrayal of the inmates, particularly the eponymous character Bishan Singh, serves as a microcosm reflecting the broader human struggle for belonging in a world marked by divisions and chaos. The narrative skillfully employs elements of absurdity, tragedy, and dark humor to underscore the arbitrary nature of borders and the resulting displacement of identities.	
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INTRODUCTION

From 1912 until 1955, Saadat Hasan Manto, a renowned and prolific Urdu dramatist, essayist, and short story writer from British India, lived. His realistic and straightforward depictions of social problems, human feelings, and the upheaval of his day have won him the highest accolades. He continues to be known for his unrelenting investigation into the intricacies of human behavior, his frequent examination of sensitive topics, and his exposure of the worst social outliers.

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Saadat Hassan Manto had the good fortune to have a deep appreciation of books and a keen sense of storytelling as a child. He was born in Samrala, Punjab (now in Pakistan) on May 11, 1912. He started writing while still a student at Aligarh Muslim University, and he quickly shown his extraordinary talent for conveying the subtleties of psychology and the complexity of social connections.

In South Asian history, Manto's literary career began during a volatile period that included the struggle for Indian independence from British colonial control and the ultimate separation of the nation in 1947. His work was greatly influenced by this environment; it made him feel stressed for time and motivated him to investigate how individuals acted in times of political turmoil.

Raw sentiments, razor-sharp realism, and reckless bluntness in confronting harsh facts are often what set his work unique. Many of his works are set in colonial and post-colonial India and offer an unbiased look at the social, cultural, and psychological challenges that everyday people face.

The short story "Toba Tek Singh" by Saadat Hasan Manto is a masterpiece in the literature concerning the partition. The narrative illuminates the complex network of identities and nations while also highlighting the physical upheaval brought about by India's division. This study looks at how identity and nation are portrayed in the text in order to shed insight on the particular problems and the larger implications for comprehending the human condition during a trying period. This research looks at issues like identity and belonging and evaluates the significance of various characters and circumstances that are employed as symbols in the narrative.

Statement of the Problem

This study provides a detailed analysis of "Toba Tek Singh," a notable contribution by Saadat Hasan Manto, filling a gap in the scholarly research on division literature. Though Manto made substantial contributions to our knowledge of human behavior amid political unrest, there is a paucity of scholarly work that delves into the complicated issues of identity and belonging in this story. The deep consideration of the ways in which political activities affect people's lives, the symbolic context, and the diversity of personalities/characters offer opportunities for an inquiry. Comprehending Manto's portrayals of nation and identity in the story is essential, and one of the main outcomes of the investigation is realizing what it means to be human amid political turmoil.

Research objectives

- To examine the characters in "Toba Tek Singh" with particular attention to how they handle identity shifts and how political events affect their perception of themselves.
- To evaluate Manto's use of surroundings and symbols in the story and explain how they support the investigation of identity and belonging.
- To examine how the characters bridge the boundaries between national and cultural identities in the tale to show the connections between cultural heritage and patriotism.

Research Questions

- 1) In light of the historical context of India's division, how do the main characters in "Toba Tek Singh" manage the challenges posed by changing who they are?
- 2) What role do the narrative's symbolic locations and objects play in the investigation of identity and belonging?

3) How does Manto's depiction of the story's protagonists' intersection of cultural and national identities help us comprehend their search for a sense of belonging?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have remained intrigued by Manto's literary works. Manto's works have been examined from a number of aspects by academics. Saadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" is an essential piece of partition literature because it eloquently depicts the complex network of nations and identities that existed during the turbulence of India's separation. The literature evaluation for this study highlights how the story explores national, cultural, ethnic, and language affiliations. Studies emphasize how Manto depicts the difficulties people have while trying to find a feeling of belonging as well as the more serious effects of forced identities via the use of symbols and narrative devices. "Toba Tek Singh" provides a universal reflection on the challenges of nationality and identity that goes beyond its historical setting in the midst of social and political unrest.

An extensive examination of Saadat Hasan Manto's life, moments, and writings in relation to the division of India and Pakistan can be found in Ayesha Jalal's book "The Pity of Partition". Manto's writings, especially "Toba Tek Singh," are explored in this book within the political, social, and cultural framework of the partition era. Jalal's research examined Manto's creative contributions as a reflection of the greater human experiences during the division, going beyond a simple biographical narrative. In the midst of the violent events of the division, Jalal's book illuminates how Manto's stories, like "Toba Tek Singh," illustrate the complexity of identity, belonging, and the human condition. (Jalal, 2013)

Prasad's thesis "The Syntax of Partition: Manto's Toba Tek Singh" delves deeply at Saadat Hasan Manto's short story "Toba Tek Singh," which is related to India's partition. Prasad focuses on the literary and narrative techniques that Manto employed in the midst of the unstable political climate to illustrate the basic questions of nationality and identity. By dissecting the grammatical structure of the story, Prasad shows how Manto's language depicts the people' fractured identities and the ridiculousness of the borders produced by the break down. The study looks at the characters in Manto's works as they try to reconcile their sense of self with the new national identities that are forced upon them. "The Syntax of Partition" demonstrates how Manto's storytelling technique mimics the linguistic tension and mental dissonance faced by the masses. (Prasad, 2005)

"Partition and National Identity in the Works of Saadat Hasan Manto," a study by Nighat Sahiba, provides an analytical analysis of how Saadat Hasan Manto grapples with the problem of partition and its profound implications on national identity in his literary works, particularly "Toba Tek Singh." Within the context of India's partition, Sahiba's research delves deeply into the many layers of identity formation. Her analysis of Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" characters' responses to the new established national identities and the resulting sense of displacement is exhaustive. Her study demonstrates how the no-man's-land is depicted as a symbol for the characters' liminal identities, effectively conveying their ongoing quest for a place to call home in the dynamic socio-political situation. Sahiba's article essentially focuses on how "Toba Tek Singh" serves as a microcosm of the more in-depth accounts of grief, confusion, and identity crises that impacted the partition phase. This sheds light on Manto's deliberate narrative choices,

including character development and representation, in conveying an overall message about how political conflicts can divide and reconsider person as well as social identities. (Sahiba, 2007)

The scholarly article "In-Between Texts: Language and Cultural Translation in the Works of Saadat Hasan Manto," authored by Yaqin, offers a perceptive analysis of the pivotal role that language and cultural translation play in the literary works of Saadat Hasan Manto, particularly "Toba Tek Singh." Yaqin's work delves into Manto's detailed portrayal of linguistic and cultural identities within the volatile context of partition. The article sheds light on the more universal challenges of articulating one's identity and experiences in a fractured society by vividly describing how Manto's characters struggle with the linguistic and cultural barriers that result from separation. (Yaqin, 2006)

In Sahu's article, "The Other Side of Silence: Saadat Hasan Manto's Toba Tek Singh," the significant short tale "Toba Tek Singh" by Saadat Hasan Manto is thoroughly and perceptively studied. In order to demonstrate how Manto's literary mastery flawlessly encapsulates the spirit of the partition era, Sahu's study delves deeper into the story's intricate narrative structure, characters, and symbolism. Sahu skillfully investigates the way "Toba Tek Singh" 's "representation of individuals trapped inside a mental institution vividly portrays the absurdity and tragedy of partition." Her study demonstrates how Manto's narrative decisions deftly reflect the characters' internal and external conflicts, highlighting the characters' substantial struggles with problems of their identities, nationality, and a sense of connection. (Sahu, 2012)

Gupta's paper, "The Ultimate Challenge of Identity: A Critical Analysis of Saadat Hasan Manto's Toba Tek Singh," offers a thorough and insightful analysis of the well-known short tale "Toba Tek Singh" by Saadat Hasan Manto. An analytical analysis of the film's central identity issue by Gupta centers on Bishan Singh, who lives in a borderless area between Pakistan and India and suffers with the confusing imposition of national identities. In addition to deftly illustrating how absurd the situation is, the work examines Bishan Singh's psychological and emotional challenges. Gupta skillfully highlights how "Toba Tek Singh" serves as a microcosm of the larger narrative of the partition, embracing the upheaval, displacement, and the agony of sacrificing one's sense of self on a deeply personal level. (Gupta, 2013)

In summary, these published studies provide light on the complex examination of nationality, identity, and the human experience in Saadat Hasan Manto's well-known short story "Toba Tek Singh," all of which are set against the larger backdrop of India's division.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Saadat Hasan Manto's well-known short story "Toba Tek Singh" deftly incorporates the ideas of identity and belonging into its storyline. The narrative goes into great detail on the psychological and emotional pain that people experience as they struggle with changing identities and a sense of displacement. It is set against the backdrop of India's 1947 partition. Manto uses a large cast of characters and the unique setting of a mental hospital to produce a poignant analysis of how identity and belonging are affected by political turmoil. This study aimed to analyze the representations of identity and belonging in the short novel Toba Tek Singh by closely examining the environment and character development.

Identity Crisis and Liminal Spaces

Identity crisis is a significant theme in the story. The characters—Bishan Singh in particular—

showcase individuals who are caught in a transitional state, torn between their traditional religious beliefs and the current political environment. The institution serves as a transitional setting that reflects the general confusion of both the people living there and society at large. When political boundaries separate long-standing ties, Bishan Singh refuses to acknowledge his nationality, illustrating the complicated nature of identity.

The partition of India caused a great deal of identity crisis for countless individuals. This is exemplified by Bishan Singh, the Sikh prisoner in the story. When the governments of Pakistan and India agreed to trade each other's insane people, Bishan Singh's identification became unclear. He is a Sikh by faith, despite the fact that his nationality has now spread. The binary choice between India and Pakistan becomes an existential struggle and reflects a larger dilemma that many individuals faced throughout the partition process.

Within the storyline, liminal zones are regions that balance on a verge of transformation and unpredictability. A notable example of this kind of setup is the mental health center in "Toba Tek Singh". Because of its proximity to the border between India and Pakistan, it functions as a microcosm of the greater sociopolitical turmoil caused by the division. The institution represents the individuals' precarious life, divided between their new national identities that were imposed upon them and their previous affiliations.

A powerful illustration of Bishan Singh's identity crisis is his refusal to reveal his nationality. He refuses to leave his location in the region bounded by the borders of India and Pakistan. His sense of belonging is destroyed when this rejection transforms into a form of protest against the arbitrary character of the political borders. The stance adopted by Bishan Singh illustrates the intricacy of identity and shows how it isn't always able to be kept behind national boundaries.

The transitional space within the mental institution reflects the disjointed identities of individuals during the partition and worsens the characters' precarious mental conditions. The asylum's proximity to the border emphasizes the liminality of the characters. Similar to Bishan Singh, the inmates experience psychological unease and uncertainty as a result of their inability to reconcile their past and present.

The prisoner swap across international borders demonstrates how the division dehumanizes people. Individuals who are unjustly classified according to their nationality are reduced to commodity. The ironic process is intended to make a statement about the harsh ways in which political activities rob individuals of their basic identities and connections.

Intersection of Cultural and National Identities

Manto persuasively argues that cultural and national identities are not mutually incompatible, therefore establishing connections between them. People who have a same nationality, such as Bishan Singh and the Sikh guard, form a strong kinship that shows how cultural ties can withstand political divisions. Manto uses these data to illustrate how shared experiences and cultural heritage may transcend geographic boundaries, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human identity.

Manto highlights how people from many cultural origins may come together by showing people in connections that go beyond national allegiances. The Sikh guard's bond with the prisoner Bishan Singh is proof positive that common cultural traditions are still strong. This family

demonstrates how cultural bonds can cross political and physical boundaries, as seen by the fact that it still exists despite the division of India and Pakistan due to the partition.

The Sikh guard's dedication to protecting Bishan Singh is indicative of the strength of their shared cultural identity. His unwavering commitment triumphs over the chaos of the divide, proving the inherent peace that cultural ties may provide. This dedication becomes a statement on the resilience of human connections and their ability to withstand the challenges posed by political changes.

Manto uses the Sikh characters to symbolize cultural resistance in the face of political unrest. The separation has no impact on their cultural identity. This adaptability demonstrates the strength of cultural bonds, which typically persist even when borders shift between countries. With these figures, Manto emphasizes the importance of cultural legacy as a unifying force.

Manto employs sarcasm to highlight the arbitrary nature of national boundaries. The Sikh prisoners, who have a cross-border cultural connection, have been divided as a consequence of political decisions. The irony serves as a critique of the division's impact on those who have close cultural links yet are wrongfully split along national boundaries.

The story illustrates how shared cultural experiences may foster international ties. The shared struggles and experiences of the prisoners create a bond that transcends the artificial boundaries of the barrier. This portrayal shows how individuals can still get along even when there are disparities in the outer world.

Manto's exploration of the connection between national and cultural identities has universal implications. It serves as an example of the idea that interpersonal connections usually cross geographical borders. Manto emphasizes the need of recognising our shared humanity by hinting via his characters that cultural ties may unite people from different backgrounds.

The Struggle for Belonging

Manto skillfully captures the fundamental human urge for belonging despite a backdrop of upheaval and dislocation. The psychiatric institution, which was unanticipatedly a sanctuary, turns into a microcosm of the greater societal unrest. The inmates' reluctance to leave the prison is a reflection of their loyalty to a place that provides some protection despite their anxiety over being separated. Manto's portrayal emphasizes the irony that even marginalized places may offer a sense of belonging.

The inability of the asylum's patients to leave is a reflection of everyone's need for brotherhood and belonging. This reluctance emphasizes how powerful settings that offer safety from the outside world may be. Despite shifts in national boundaries, the yearning for a safe place to belong persists.

Manto highlights the irony that individuals seek solace in places that society would otherwise overlook during turbulent times. The inmates find solace and companionship behind the confines of the institution. This contrast between inner comfort and societal disarray shows how people may find a sense of belonging even in the most remote and improbable locations.

Manto questions the notion that a person's national identity is the exclusive source of their sense of belonging. Cross-national ties are made by characters like Bishan Singh and the Sikh guard, showing how a feeling of cultural belonging may cut across political divides. Manto argues that

the urge for belonging is rooted in relationships and shared experiences, regardless of geographic limits.

The irony of moving is illustrated via the experiences of the protagonists. Once a place of seclusion, the institution is now a safe refuge. The inmates' resistance to the exchange plan is a reflection of how ridiculous the larger political decisions are that force individuals to relocate away from their communities. This irony highlights the high cost of political turmoil to the public.

"Toba Tek Singh" shows how people search for a sense of belonging that is independent of time and place. The narrative relates to the basic human yearning for a place where one's uniqueness is appreciated and nurtured, which makes it appealing to readers of all ages and ethnic backgrounds.

Satire and Irony

In Manto's narrative, sarcastic and ironic elements underscore the ridiculousness of political policies and their impact on human life. The prisoner's perplexed responses to the swap decision underscore the arbitrary nature of borders established by authority. This satirical presentation is meant to criticise the wider political system for occasionally ignoring the significant effects of its choices on people.

Manto's narrative is packed with ironic critiques of how arbitrary governmental decisions are. The decision to trade insane individuals across national boundaries is a disconcerting example of how people are mistreated and used as mere props in larger political schemes. The fixation of the authorities with the nationality of mentally ill convicts highlights the absurdity of prioritizing identity over humanity.

The inmates' response to the exchange decision is one of passivity and apathy, which is a sharply ironic critique. The captives respond with indifference rather than rage or confusion to the manipulations of the governments. This apathy highlights the differences between the concerns of the powerful and the problems of the marginalized.

Importantly, Bishan Singh's refusal to choose between Pakistan and India marks a turning moment. His stance is in opposition to the fundamental ideas of identity politics that have sprung from the split. By declining to respond to the request for an alternative, Bishan Singh exposes the capricious nature of the split. His acts are a continuation of the larger satire on separation, which emphasizes the immorality of pressuring those who have strong emotional and ethnic ties to accept new identities.

The mental health facility transforms become a symbol for the madness of separation. Even though the inmates are already marginalized because of their mental health difficulties, they are further put at the mercy of political judgments. The asylum serves as a little example of the larger sociopolitical context, where individuals are abandoned and their lives are impacted by decisions made by an outside authority.

Manto challenges the legitimacy of governmental institutions via humor. By demonstrating the prisoners' disinterest in the exchange option, he challenges the notion that governments are infinitely knowledgeable creatures. This disruption highlights the divide between the powerful and the weak and casts doubt on the superiority of those in positions of authority.

Coping Mechanisms and Adaptation

The narrative "Toba Tek Singh" by Saadat Hasan Manto examines the many coping strategies people employ to manage the chaos caused by India's 1947 split. Manto explores the human capacity for adversity adaptation by focusing on the many ways individuals strive to preserve a feeling of stability and belonging. This is done via a wide range of characters and their responses to shifting identities.

In spite of the uncertainty surrounding the split, some characters choose to embrace their new identities and allegiances. This adaptability suggests a survival strategy: accepting change to fit in with the new political landscape. The story depicts individuals who, in a realistic manner, invade other countries and frequently prioritize survival and safety over earlier commitments.

Manto also features characters who resist having to assume new identities. This is referred to as identity clinging and resistance. A powerful symbol of this opposition is Bishan Singh's intransigence in refusing to pick between India and Pakistan. He stays true to his Sikh identity and rejects the binary choice that has been presented to him. This resistance, despite immense pain, emphasizes the deep emotional connections individuals have to their cultural and national past.

The story's characters illustrate the complexity of coping mechanisms. While some choose to freely embrace new identities, others reject their prior memories or struggle to come to terms with them. Manto's depiction of adaptations acknowledges that they are a highly personalized and intricate process influenced by a range of factors, including cultural background and individual experience, rather than a uniform response.

The Use of Familiar Places: Despite appearing out of place at first, a mental facility turns out to be a people's safe refuge. It represents consistency and comfort in the midst of the chaos of division. The fact that the prisoners are reluctant to leave the jail highlights their attachment to this cozy environment, which is proof of human nature's need for security and the importance of cozy settings as coping mechanisms during trying times.

In his examination of coping strategies in The Human Capacity for Resilience, Manto highlights the resilience of the human spirit. Characters may respond to problems in a variety of ways: they may adapt, resist, or run for cover. The reactions from the characters show that even in the face of extraordinary situations, they have the natural ability to adapt, keep their identities, and look normal.

Symbolism of "Toba Tek Singh"

The story "Toba Tek Singh," written by Saadat Hasan Manto, is a powerful metaphor that encapsulates the main ideas and emotions of the narrative. When India was divided in 1947, "Toba Tek Singh" became more than simply the name of a place; it came to symbolize the terrible effects that political boundaries had on people's identities and quality of life. The terrible death of Bishan Singh on the border with Toba Tek Singh is a stark illustration of the devastation that political barriers do to real lives. His death is a depressing reminder of what happens when people are encouraged to sacrifice their natural sense of belonging in favor of arbitrary boundaries. This emotional gesture serves as a somber example of the personal expenses. Tension resulting from the country's division has arisen in the village known as "Toba Tek Singh" on the Pakistani-Indian border. This contested region symbolizes the bewilderment and

disorientation caused by the breakdown. Just like the town, the identity of individuals like Bishan Singh, who are imprisoned in the border region between two countries, are called into question.

The horrible death of Bishan Singh at the border serves as the most important emblem in "Toba Tek Singh". Ultimately, his failure to choose between India and Pakistan results in his death at the site that personifies the same division he battled for. This deed is a shattering declaration of the disastrous effects of enclosing people's life with governmental borders. Bishan Singh's death highlights the cost of putting aside one's sense of internal belonging in favor of superficial disparities.

Toba Tek Singh's border serves as a metaphor for the larger identity issue that many went through during the divide. Just as Bishan Singh continues to live on the border, separated between two nations, his struggle symbolizes the wider suffering endured by those forced to give up their cultural and personal connections in favor of new national identities.

One of the border's main significances is that Bishan Singh is unable to choose the course of action that ultimately decides his fate. This ironic statement highlights the ridiculousness of imposing straightforward choices on intricate individuals. Bishan Singh's inability to make a decision is a commentary on the far-reaching effects of political decisions that ignore the particulars of individual life.

The narrative's title functions as an ongoing reminder of the human cost of political action. The stories in "Toba Tek Singh" portray a multitude of people who were uprooted, scattered, and robbed of their sense of identity due to the partition. The town's name is a metaphor for the millions of lives that the division of the countries has impacted.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the exploration of identity and belonging in "Toba Tek Singh" reveals a complex interplay of cultural, social, and personal elements that shape the characters' sense of self and connection to their surroundings. Through the lens of the partition of India, the narrative delves into the profound impact of political events on individual identities and the profound dislocation experienced by the characters. Saadat Hasan Manto's poignant portrayal of inmates in a mental asylum and the eponymous character, Bishan Singh, encapsulates the broader human struggle for belonging in a world marked by divisions and chaos. The symbolic space of Toba Tek Singh becomes a microcosm of the larger socio-political landscape, highlighting the arbitrary nature of borders and the resulting displacement of identities. The characters' search for a sense of home and belonging is not limited to geographical boundaries but extends to the fundamental question of what it means to be human in the face of societal upheaval. Manto skillfully weaves together elements of absurdity, tragedy, and dark humor to underscore the absurdity of dividing people based on identity markers. Ultimately, "Toba Tek Singh" challenges the notion of a fixed, singular identity and emphasizes the fluidity of human experiences. The work prompts readers to reflect on the universality of the quest for belonging and the enduring impact of historical events on shaping individual and collective identities. In its exploration of the human condition, the narrative serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring need for empathy, understanding, and the recognition of shared humanity across perceived boundaries.

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