



A study of partition in Sadat Mantoos Toba Singh

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Abstract

'Toba Tek Singh,' which depicts the exchange of mental hospital prisoners between India and Pakistan after the partition, was probably the most well-known short tale by Saadat Hasan Manto. Manto's art was coloured by his mental disease experience, including alcohol abuse and potential depressive disorder. This article aims to utilise "Toba Tek Singh" as a lens to shed light on the significance of mental illness in Manto's life and work, by examining his personal experiences, the subjects of psychiatric disease in history, and his impact on the historical backdrop of South Asia after the partitioning.

Key Words: partitioning, historical, economy, linguistic etc.

Introduction

He was one of the most well known, outspoken, and controversial Urdu authors of the 20th century, Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955). Although he was a prolific writer of essays, plays, film writings and a book, his short tales made him best known. Born in Punjab, his career in writing really started in Mumbai. Then, in January 1948, he went to Lahore in Pakistan a few months after partitioning. His latter tales concentrated mainly on the subject of division and explored its human repercussions from a variety of perspectives. The tales of Manto are famous for their legacy of realism, linguistic economy, dependencies on internal components, and in particular for their abrupt and often troublingly ambiguous ends.

"Toba Tek Singh," published in 1954, may be the most renowned short tale of Manto. "Toba Tek Singh" describes the exchange of insiders in Lahore after partition by using insanity of the insiders as a mirror to the insanity of the outside world. As the tale goes on, the reader realises that the asylum seekers are really more healthier than the politicians who govern their fate. The main character Bishan Singh is emblematic of the dislocation experienced by millions of partitioned refugees in his agonising quest for identity. While the tale is fictitious, in 1950,



there was a real exchange of psychiatric patients between Lahore and Amritsar mental institutions. Although Manto's life and work has been extensively studied, as well as chosen psychology and mental health publications, few efforts were made in order to connect the two elements. "Toba Tek Singh" offers a valuable lens for exploring Manto in more detail and the significance of mental illness not just in his life and work but also more widely on the Indian sub-continent during the time of partition. This article discusses mental illness experiences of Manto and the topics in "Toba Tek Singh" in order to provide an integrated light on elements of Manto's work and mental disease.

Manto and mental illness

It has been known that Manto has had issues with mental health that would certainly colour his work. Manto's upbringing was characterised by a tough connection with his dad who died at the age of eighteen. Authoritarian and often harmful, Manto feared his father, even leaping from the roof to escape him from sometimes. The first wife of Manto's father was 'prone to mental instability.' This may be partly due to the tension produced by living with his father, and Manto would also have been subjected to a similar strain. Alternatively, this mental instability may have created disturbance in the household, which would be a source of stress for the young Manto. His mother, the second wife, was revealed to be despised by Manto's paternal family, who left a profound emotional scar according to Ayesha Jalal.

However, the traumatic upbringing of Manto left him with memories of negligence and rejection and he was exposed to extreme emotional outbursts. Restlessness and restlessness plagued Manto throughout his life. Referring back to the years after his father's death, he wrote: 'I felt continuously unsatisfied in these days of vagrancy. My heart and soul were struck with a peculiar restlessness... that trouble would not go away. Ali Madeeh Hashmi claimed this was partly because of Manto's ideology of existentialism. His knowledge of the ultimate conclusion of existence is death and all human connections and emotions thus inevitably followed restlessness and agitation. This may overestimate the situation, though, because Manto's thinking was also affected by his Islamic religion, although he was not very devoted in adhering to Islamic standards. Hashmi and Aftab have also indicated that Manto may have had a depressive illness. Among many studies, the incidence of mood problems in creative writers has been greater than in the general population. This is definitely possible because Manto



describes his sad mental condition, sometimes alluding even to suicide. Jalal recounted how, referring to his sister's miscarriages, 'Manto said that if he had been stronger, he would probably definitely have committed suicide, remembering his emotional and mental agony at that time. It is not clear if this was a clinically defined suicide ideation; nonetheless it lends weight to Manto's theory of depressive diseases throughout his life.

Alcohol dependence is probably the most important of Manto's mental health problems. Although he drank excessively constantly, Manto drank more after moving to Lahore. His family was so worried that, between 1951 and 1952, they admitted him twice to the antialcoholic ward of the Punjab Mental Hospital for treatment. Manto proceeded to drink binge, and became hallucinated as a sign of alcohol-induced psychosis. Hashmi and Aftab noted the high rates of co-morbidity of alcohol addiction and mood disorders, suggesting that Manto used alcohol for medicine, claiming that he "searched for shelter in drug misuse to alleviate his psychological anguish' (2013, 1096). It was a period when Manto was at his lowest, financially suffering and finding it difficult to locate his identity in Pakistan. It therefore seems not unreasonable to link its alcohol use with a possible depressed illness. In the end, liver cirrhosis was caused by drinking that kills Manto at the age of 44.

Mental illness as a theme in “Toba Tek Singh”

In "Toba Tek Singh," mental illness is a significant and persistent topic. In fact, the decision to write about partitioning through the lens of mental hospital is itself very important. The usage of Manto's patients to represent "the folly" of what happened outside was heartbreaking. Asylum reflects, in a way, the entire subcontinent (Ispahani 1988); the insanity of its people symbolises the insanity of the division of violence. As Tarun K. Saint stated, Bishan Singh's nonsensical words represent the arbitrariness and opacity of the administrative apparatus. It is becoming apparent that the "lunatics" of the asylum are healthier than government officials who decide their exchange. Astute observations by the asylum prisoners show the folly of the partition: all the asylum lovers who had at least a certain sensibility left were unsure whether they were in Pakistan or India. Where was Pakistan, if they were in India? If they were in Pakistan, how would it be possible if they had just been in India a short time before, without moving?



After his stay in the hospital, 'Toba Tek Singh' was written and inspired obviously by his own experience; maybe even the decision of writing mental asylum was the result of his hospitalisation. In a culture in which mental illness has been widely viewed as disgusting and disgraceful, Manto's open involvement with the subject would have been uncommon but effective.

Bishan Singh's persona is a symbolic reflection on the displacement tragedy. His severe sufferings mirror those of the refugees who were divided. The frequent interrogations and need for knowledge about his own country evoke fragmented identities and a loss of feeling of belonging. Maybe his persona is also a mirror of Manto's own struggle and identity uncertainty after his relocation to Lahore. Manto wrote, 'I discovered my thoughts dispersed. I couldn't distinguish India from Pakistan and Pakistan from India, even though I was trying hard (Hasan 1984, 89). He stated elsewhere, 'I felt it difficult to determine which of the two nations now was my home country.' In this sense, the figure of Bishan Singh may be understood as both a reflection of the general displacement experienced by so many and a more particular portrait of Manto's own experience. Pain and the emotional anguish of dislocation are important from both viewpoints and may contribute subtly or overtly to psychopathology.

Review of literature

(Tiwari, 2020) studied "*Memories of Partition: Revisiting Saadat Hasan Manto*" And it was discovered that Manto was born to the Muslim Kashmiri family on 11 May and constantly struggled because of the feeling of "dual membership." In 1912, Punjab district in Samrala. After hallucinating his early schooling at the Muslim High School in Amritsar and tions about his life in Bombay, he was granted refuge in 1953. He was not attached to the city since he entered the Hindu Sabha College in 1931. Historical, cultural or intellectual grounds, but Manto was strongly connected, since he "don't have asked me any questions," was a witness to the slaughter at Jallianwala Bagh in 1919. It took me to him at the age of seven.

(Singh, n.d.) studied "*Partition Through Literature: Toba Tek Singh*" It discovered that the tremendous hardship caused by population swaps in certain regions was a popular subject for Indians, Pakistanis and Sikh authors. Tackling the human tragedy suffered by individuals on both sides of this newly-created boundary in different ways, the authors share a subject, says



Alok Bhalla (editor of the main collection of these tales). "There is a single, common tone, which infuses almost all the written accounts of the Partition and the horrors that it unleashed.

(Jokinen & Assadullah, 2019) studied "*Saadat Hasan Manto, Partition, and Mental Illness through the Lens of Toba Tek Singh*" And it was discovered that, after a partition, "Toba Tek Singh" about the mental asylum exchange between Indian and Pakistan was perhaps Saadat Hasan Manto's most famous short tale. Manto's art was coloured by his mental disease experience, including alcohol abuse and potential depressive disorder. This article aims to utilise "Toba Tek Singh" as a lens to shed light on the significance of mental illness in Manto's life and work, by examining his personal experiences, the subjects of psychiatric disease in history, and his impact on the historical backdrop of South Asia after the partitioning.

(Hasan, n.d.) studied "*SAADAT HASAN MANTO'S TOBA TEK SINGH*" Partition, one of India's worst events in the 20th century, was discovered to be a dominating sorrowful subject of Indian literature, either English or in Vernaculars. The sorrow may be imagined by the fact that around 10 to 12 million Indians have been displaced in the course of the event, followed by murdering, killing, prostitution, and even rapes of women of other faiths. It was a host of authors such as Amrita Pritam, Khushwant Singh, Salman Rushdie, Bhisham Sahni and others.

Context and implications

The particular historical and geographical environment in which Manto wrote must be taken into consideration. This should include the underlying effects and consequences of his work. The exchange between India and Pakistan of mental hospital inmates really took place, as reported by Sanjeev Jain and Alok Sarin. After 1947, the division between Punjab Mental Hospital and Lahore took many years since patients were not sent elsewhere. In 1949 the Amritsar asylum was built hurriedly which could accommodate four hundred and fifty non-Muslim patients in 1950, albeit insufficient. Of them, 282 were held there, with the rest being transferred to Ranchi. Two hundred and thirty-three Muslim patients were transported from different Indian hospitals to Lahore, meanwhile. Patients were mainly categorised according to who paid the bills (Jain and Sarin 2012). Typical of the period was this almost total ignorance of identity and personality, in which the mentally sick were regarded simply as an administrative burden.



The ramifications of Manto's work were discussed above but were more specific regarding his literary impact. "Toba Tek Singh" was not his only storey on mental illness. Indeed, as Stephen Alter observed, 'madness became a leading motif of most of Manto's literature in the years after Partition. For example, in "Khol Do," the usage by Manto of the character of Sakinah, after the sexual trauma, is startling and profound. Mental illness as a literary subject has been utilised long after Manto's death by a number of authors writing on partition; in this sense, his work on mental illness has given a 'lasting shadow.' In fact, as Alter said, insanity has become the "only imaginable reaction" to the "ruthless inhumanity of Hindu-Muslim violence." As Saint stated, partition violence caused enormous psychological anguish, frequently apparent in late consequences. Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder impacted whole communities. The literature on partition and mental illness may perhaps have contributed to the start of this traumatic memory process. This was and still is a lengthy and hard process, but one of Manto's major implications was to assist get this under way.

Conclusion

The literature of Manto in general and of 'Toba Tek Singh' in particular was coloured by his personal issues of mental health, especially alcohol use and perhaps depression. Even the decision to utilise mental institution to reflect his "wrongness" was closely linked to his experience. More than just that, however, "Toba Tek Singh" and the figure of Bishan Singh are a symbolic comments about the psychological pain caused by partitioning the human relocation; maybe even its own displacement and identity confusion. In terms of views and care of the mentally ill at the time of partition, the particular subcontinental setting was significant. Importantly, Manto's work began a tendency to write about mental disease and partition. This might have enabled viewers to develop some method to treat their psychological pain. Although the study focused primarily on "Toba Tek Singh," in many of Manto's other tales allusions to mental disease and psychological anguish are frequent, "Khol Do" being just one example. Now the entire spectrum of Manto's work has to be looked at from this perspective to throw more light on the connection between his literature and mental illness in the Indian subcontinent.