

New Historicist Aspects in Manto's Stories

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ABSTRACT: *The topic of this research is 'New Historicist Aspects in Manto's Stories'. New historicism integrates both literary and historical texts without discrimination and gives equal importance to both texts. New historicism upholds that the individuals and society or culture are mutually formative and shape each other. New historicism focuses on power structures, ways of interpretation and representations, and issues of identity and how these are fashioned. The present research seeks to analyze selected new historicist aspects in Saadat Hassan Manto's stories from his representative collection: Manto's World (2000) translated by Khalid Hassan, delimiting itself to the aspects of representation, identity and circulation of power. The stories picked to be analyzed are The Price of Freedom and The Great Divide. Relevant passages of these stories are analyzed to identify afore mentioned aspects. The study reveals that these aspects of new historicism are interwoven and reflected in these stories. The network of powerful creates identities and represent things in a self-serving method. They generate favorable cultural ambiance; in which these representations and identities become part and parcel of people's awareness; which serves to perpetuate their power. Moreover, Manto through the characters and setting transfers his far-reaching and open-minded vision, contrary to the conventional one.*

Keywords: Identity, new historicism, representations, power circulation.

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1. Introduction

This section includes the discussion of the emergence, background and different aspects of new historicism. Description of the writer's achievements and views of critics about the writer are also the part of introduction. Moreover, Research objectives, research questions and significance are also included in this section.

1.1 Origin and Background of New-Historicism

New historicism originated and developed approximately during eighties as a new movement after the shift in literary epicenter of Anglo American literary scholarship. Many scholars from English and American universities were in favour of "return to historical scholarship in academic study of literature" (n.p). They argued that the formalistic principles of New Criticism affected the "Historical nature of literary works" ("Myers blog"; Malpas 60). Stephen Greenblatt, and Catherine Gallagher, in the introduction of their co-authored book *Practicing New Historicism*, mentioning the same fact as well as its major traits state that new historicism: "at first signified an impatience with American New Criticism, an unsettling of established norms and procedures, a mingling of dissent and restless curiosity" (2).

New historicists were of the view that texts are the reflection of our day today life and are intimately related to our general culture and its power structures, so "poetic utterance" and cultural surrounding or context belongs to the same realm. Moreover, "such formal isolation that [New criticism suggests] drains literature and culture of any political or social importance" (Malpas 60). New historicism asserts to examine and analyze history, in a predominantly impartial manner, and reflects an excessively sensitive attitude toward various cultures than conventional historical approaches. They endeavour to read and interpret the cultures of distant eras like text. New historicists drew this idea of the culture as text from a cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Greenblatt and Gallagher restating the idea argue that they (new historicists) acquired this notion of culture rooted in a distant time period, as text not from historians as much as from Geertz and structuralists (Practicing 8).

1.2 About the Author

The stories picked for this study are penned by Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955), an eminent Urdu short story writer. His claim to fame is due to the stories he wrote after his migration to a newly born country Pakistan (Jalal Intro).

Manto's life has been short and so was his social circle but within this short span of his life, he brought the best and reflected human realities with regard to social, economic, civil, cultural, individual and natural life. His mastery of art lies in the fact that "he penetrates deep into human soul" (Shaheen 223). Manto's devotees regard him as brilliant and a fear less defiant who rebelled against conventional ways. "to drive home some plain and awkward truths" (Jalal preface). Many of Manto's critics such as Mumtaz, Shereen, Anees Nagi, Muzzafar Ali Syed, Waris Alvi, Iftikhar Jalib, Ali Sana Bukhari, Rawish Nadeem and Mubeen Mirza, appreciate him as a "great revolutionary and visionary of the age." (Shaheen 229). Manto has an acute awareness of political undercurrents of his time, but he only refers to these events with regard to freedom struggle, subcontinent and absurdity of partition (Daruwalla 126).

1.3 Significance

Manto's stories have frequently been read as partition narratives, which relegated other dynamic issues found in his stories. Through this study I intend to analyze two of Manto's stories and their settings implanted in the particular cultural background, focusing attention on the issues outside the partition issue. Furthermore, reading these stories and characters in the light of societal and cultural norms and values of that time that has its roots in the history would be significant, because it may provide objective and valuable insights into the cultural and historical milieu of that time. In addition, this study is expected to give a glimpse into the author's idiosyncratic vision, communicated through this alliance of setting and characters; representing that specific time period. This will be a source of gratification for anyone, who desires to be familiar with the author's acumen and learning about life.

1.4 Objectives

Objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine whether or not the cultural and social setting is responsible for shaping the decisions and behavior of the characters of the selective stories.
2. To determine how Manto has attempted to project his liberal and non- stereotypical vision on some of his characters

1.5 Research Questions

Research questions of this study are:

- Q1. How do the cultural and social setting and characters reflect various aspects of history different from commonly known facts?
- Q2. What insights can be attained from the descriptions of settings and characters about the author's open-minded and anti-establishment vision?

2. Literature Review

This part contains review of the emergence and salient features of new historicism along with the discussion of important critics. Moreover, views of major critics about Manto's works are also included in this section.

2.1 Theoretical perspective

The term new historicism was brought into existence by an American critic Stephen Greenblatt. His state - of - the - art book *Renaissance Self Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* became the source of inception of new historicism. Greenblatt distinguishes new historicism from other theories, by calling it a practice not merely a set of theoretical principles.

Discussing about new historicism's defining characteristics Peter Barry argues that a basic definition of the practice can be that "it is a method based on the parallel reading of the literary text, and non-literary texts, usually of the some historical period" (116). Greenblatt, who is regarded as the founder of this theory, asserts that new historicism involves a practice of taking interest in all of the textual evidence coming out of the past "with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts (qtd. in Barry 116). Jean Howard on the other hand, asserts that with the advent of new historicist approach, abruptly an uninterested attitude toward history has been transformed into a keen interest. "[It is] a part of a much larger critical movement in the Post-structuralist period to re-historicized literary studies." While Edward Petcher argues that new historical criticism tends to place "the text back into the context from which it was generated." Therefore, it caters to the political needs of the readers. In the light of this view, "New historicization of literary studies is equally a new politicization" (292).

Michael Warner observes that new historicism has a major belief, that is; a text will always be historical and history would be enclosed in texts (5). Explaining the same historical strand, Richter endorses that the meaning of the text cannot be anything beyond context, but can only be perceived within it; and the second part means that human actions, institutions and connections are always reflected in the language (1321). In conformity with this are the views, presented on an online research library "questia.com" that "New historicism tend to be willing to perform more textual analysis" like examining the back ground and "potential bias of the text." (n.p). While Hohendahl taking into account the same opinion, argues that new historicism attempts to proffer a critical history—"a way of thinking about literature and history that rejects the narratives structures of conventional literary history" (87).

New historicist criticism discusses various issues which are beneficial in analyzing how society and individual are mutually constitutive. This paper focuses on the following.

2.1.1 Identity

New historicists believe that human beings are not the sole architects of their own identity. Many other forces partake in the making of their identity. Greenblatt in his *Renaissance* states that "I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact [...] strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force" (256). Lois Tyson endorsing the same idea argues, for new historicism the appropriate question to ask is, "What are the processes by which individual identity and social formation such as political, educational, legal, and religious institutions and ideologies- create, promote, or change each other?" (284). Greenblatt and Gallagher, both find human beings a kind that is "astonishingly malleable" (5). Due to this flexibility and plasticity their identity can be molded into any form through training "and this is the reason [their] species is both perfectible and corruptible" (Practicing 5).

2.1.2 Representation

Representation is another term new historicism focuses on. New historicists assert that reality can be represented by adding and subtracting facts. Greenblatt and Gallagher in their essay "The Touch of Real" state that new historicism is the anecdotal, fragmentary method, which rests on the principle of representation" (Practicing 36). Both also consider representation a symbolic entity and argue that there is always a conflict between representation and physical reality. Varied ideas, passions like:

“The way bodies are understood to function, the difference between men and women, the nature of passion, the experience of illness, the borderline between life and death are all bound up with particular representation” (15) Richter, further explaining the idea states that new historicism adds in Foucault’s belief that we cannot perceive reality of the past because “we have access only to representations purporting to map the real” (1326).

2.1.3 Circulation of power

It is yet another key concept of new historicism, which helps in studying socio- cultural and political psyche of people. Lois Tyson observes that power is not a phenomenon that only rests in the top most political and socioeconomic institutions. Nobody can have “absolute power” in his own right. “To maintain dominance his power must circulate in a number of discourses, for example in a discourse of religion, science, law, fashion” (284-285). Greenblatt accepting this tenet of power circulation, views family and state as institutions that have supremacy over others, to put check on all kinds of social, religious and psychological organization as well as other alternatives, existing in a society. “We must say that there is a new assertion of power by both family and state to determine all movement within the society” (2). He perceives thus human beings as unfree subjects “the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society” (Renaissance 256). Leinwand, in his essay asserts that contemporary new-historicist works about English Renaissance Drama have focused on the operation and circulation of power, which brought on the forefront “on the one hand, of legitimation, surveillance, domination, appropriation and control and on other of destabilization, contestation, opposition and autonomy” creating binaries of power” (477). An online research library “questia.com” observes that new historicism talks about power structures within society and the ways this power is employed and circulated to serve the interests of the state and popular culture (n.p).

2.2 Scholarship on Saadat Hasan Manto’s Art

Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955) is an acknowledged writer of Urdu fiction. Manto through his fiction, depicts honestly multiple issues concerning society, and unfolds the hideous and intolerable ills of society. Many distinguished critics have been viewing Manto’s works and find him consummate and unparalleled in the beauty of his art. Here is a small coverage given to the critics who have evaluated his works.

Keki.N Daruwalla, in the essay “The Craft of Manto: Warts and All” argues that Manto was not an ill-intentioned person and his hatred for

“Hypocritical and sanctimonious was unmitigated” and he presented fanatics both as ominous and absurd. Manto’s whole oeuvre falls under the category of social realism. Moreover, Daruwalla agrees with Shaheen and Qadeer in this that there is a strong influence of Russian and French writers on Manto and asserts that the style of his writing was influenced by the French realists--- Maupassant and Balzac---and the Russian writers from Tolstoy to Gorky,” (Daruwalla 177-118 ; Shaheen& Qadeer 226). While Stephen Alter, in his article “Madness and Partition: The Short Stories of Saadat Hassan Manto” reflects complete conformity with Daruwalla’s view about Manto’s “Brilliance, uniqueness of his vision and controversial nature of his writings” and argues that Manto’s writings were always blamed to be controversial and remained under the consistent attack of his critics, albeit being a writer having “acute moral vision, who focused on the injustices and contradictions of society and the fraudulence of power”

An eminent Urdu critic Salim Akhtar, in his essay “Is Manto Necessary Today?” responds in affirmation to the question raised in the title of his essay, and opines that the reason of his affirmative answer is not Manto’s being a great or interesting story writer, but the reason that what we need the most today is moral courage and freedom from hypocrisy that has been the hallmark of Manto. Akhtar argues further that “Manto had the courage to face bitter truth, to analyze it and to express it openly.” Many other critics like Jalal, Shaheen and Qadeer also view the same features in his stories (Akhtar 1-3; Shaheen & Qadeer 226; Jalal preface).

Margit Koves, yet finds another unique quality in the narrative style of Manto. Comparing his narrative strategies in his partition stories with those of a Hungarian-Jewish writer Orkney’s stories about the Holocaust. Koves observes that both Manto and Orkeny by avoiding moral and sentimental strands in their narratives were able to keep readers unsusceptible from the numbing and devastating effects of “such traumatic experience”. Both of them were informed by the need for objectivity (2417). Moreover, Koves brings in to focus the trials Manto had to face due to this detachment and objectivity. In 1948, Manto had to face allegations of” turning tragedy into sensation in *Colder than Ice* (Thanda Gosht) and in *The Return* (Khol-do)”. Manto reacted to the condemnation of the Progressive Writers Movement by commenting that “I came to accept this nightmarish reality without self-pity or despair” Therefore, Manto like Orkeny intended to go beyond the conventional literary traditions to enable the readers to perceive and contemplate reality (2148-49).

2.3 Scholarship on Manto's Works

Numerous writers have analyzed Manto's stories from divergent angles, and have commented on them, few of them are as follows:

Dr. Ayesha Jalal in her article, *He wrote what he saw- and took no sides* argues that by his amalgamation of reality and imagination, Manto, who had firsthand knowledge of his time, obliterated the lines that separate fictional and historical narratives "turning history corpus into a treasure trove for historian of partition." In addition, Manto has another thing in common with a historian and that is; he regards partition not as an event but as a process. "Partition for Manto was part and parcel of an unfolding drama that gave glimpse into the best and worst in humankind."

While Dr. Abbas very aptly, unlike many critics who wish to reorganize gender issues in Manto's stories through political issues, is interested in the social and psychological aspects of this problem, particularly that of partition, depicting the ordeals and plight of women. According to him; "It is an historical situation rather than a natural fact" as its roots lay in history. While Friedman concludes that many issues raised by Manto, about gender figures such as dropping of their wombs, the acts of dishonoring and abduction, and after their retrieval unacceptance by families and unwillingness of women to return back homes are dealt in with sharp irony (21).

Gopi Chand Narang on the other hand, taking into account Manto's story *Toba Tek Singh* comments: Manto chooses his characters from the downtrodden and rejected strata of society (367-370). While Leslie Flemings taking into account the same story, in her article *Another Lonely Voice: The Life and Works of Saadat Hassan Manto*, opines that the story has an allegorical value and "the character of Bishen Singh, is also allegorical." Bishen Singh symbolically represents every secluded and confused person, who has to undergo experience of partition (83- 84).

Rosemary Marangoly George, in her article debating about Manto's story *Open It* points out that in the story Manto's portrayal of gendered violence presents women as "an object to be either violated or enshrined" while at the same time reducing both men and women to perfect binaries---rapists and raped, protectors and protected, villains and victims, buyers and bought, sellers and sold" (142- 143). On the other hand, commenting on the same story, SarvarV.Sherry Chand argues that the story *Open It* deals with silences and has intensely powerful impact, and "works as much through what it deliberately leaves unsaid as through what it actually says"(2).

Margit Koves argues that the transformation of the partition experience into writing has been of supreme importance in Manto's oeuvre. The short stories *The Price of Freedom* or *Doing God's Work* reflect a sense of disillusionment and disappointment in "History, politics and generation of freedom-fighters and the futility of all action" (2150). Daruwalla, spotting the same story finds the character of Hindu Baba weird and concludes that Baba's character is incorporated by Manto for artistic purposes to meet certain requirements of the story such as "to talk about freedom and perhaps hint at sexual abstinence" (121).

All the works viewed talk about different issues reflecting in Manto's stories. Ayesha Jalal links Manto's narratives with history, while Dr. Abbas, George and Friedman talk about Manto's stories with relation to gender issues, tracing its roots in history. Chand and Narang observe the story *Toba Tek Singh* in relation to marginalized and neglected and analyze circumstances of those detached from society, while Fleming views the story as reflecting symbolic values. Koves and Daruwalla, on the other hand observe the partition stories and trace the elements relating to freedom struggle of the time. The present research is different from these in this that it reads Manto's selected stories sans partition narratives, and studies them with regard to the new historicist aspects of representation and identities fashioned by the power structures of the time. Furthermore, this study also analyzes the manner, Manto had subverted these identities and representations by non-conforming with the views of the typical historian of the time.

3. Methodology

The research was qualitative and explanatory in nature. The mode of analysis used was close reading and textual analysis. After close reading of the selective stories, significant and relevant passages were selected from the texts to be used as components of analysis, along with reading and analysis of various articles, essays, research works and books available on databases.

3.1 Delimitation

The study deals with the new historicist issues delimitating itself to the issues of representation and relationship between identity and society, and circulation of power. The study is also limited in terms of stories selected. Only two stories of Manto, that are: *The Price of Freedom* and *The Great Divide* are analyzed from the representative collection of Manto's stories "Manto's World" (2000) translated by Khalid Hasan.

4. Data Analysis

The present research is the literary analysis of the short stories penned by a renowned Pakistani author Saadat Hassan Manto. The research intends to explore the aspects of representations, identity and power circulation, as components of the umbrella term new historicism, in the selected stories of Manto. The theoretical perspective of new historicism focuses on the aspect of representation of an event or people or time period. They believe that things can be represented in a particular light according to one's political agendas or ideologies, "If an entire culture is regarded as a text, then everything is at least potentially in play both at the level of representation and at the level of event" (Practicing 115). New historicism also focuses on the issues of identities and how these are created in a particular culture. Greenblatt believes that human identity is the product of his culture and not freely chosen: "I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact" (Renaissance 256). Hence human beings are not the primary architects of their own identity. Another aspect to be examined in the stories is circulation of power. New historicists believe that "Power is not something only "held by a ruling class of society and imposed upon those below them, but is at work in all interactions, conflicts and communications" (Malpas 61). This section discusses these aspects in the characters and setting of the stories *The Price of Freedom* and *The Great Divide*.

4.1 Price of Freedom

The Price of Freedom is the story of two young Congress workers, who while working together fall in love with each other. The setting of the story is in Amritsar which is at that moment the hub and very center of the freedom movement, because of being eye witness to Jallianwala Bagh incident. Shahzada Ghulam Ali and Nigar decide to marry after the announcement of his appointment as the next 'dictator'. At that moment a Baba, who runs an Ashram enters in the story. Baba despite being a religious figure, is somehow involved in politics, every movement that takes place in the city requires his consent. He joins both Nigar and Shahzada in the bond of wedding but declares that a marriage based on true sentiments should be without any lust. On which Shahzada takes a sentimental decision of not living as husband and wife until the freedom of India. Later Shahzada has to go to jail, and when he returns, disillusioned by the political situation of the time quits politics. He moves to another city and starts his life with Nigar.

In the story the *Price of Freedom*, the identity of the 'dictator' that congress leaders ascribe to their workers has manifold significance. Such identities are created in political or resistance movements to serve the purpose of those in power. Powerful create such identities to control the masses and perpetuate their power. Every now and then, Congress has to elect a 'dictator' (58) for their civil disobedience movement. The text reads: "In those days, the German and Italian dictators were new things in Europe, which is what perhaps inspired the Indian National Congress to designate certain party workers as dictators." (58). This very act of assigning identity resonates new historicist belief that human beings are not the only architects of their identity. Stephen Greenblatt, the founder of this school of thought, perceives human beings as: "the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society" (Renaissance 256). Here too, the creation of this identity is purposeful, it is a kind of consolation prize for these dictators because they ultimately have to go to jail. In order to get done the task of agitation against British government, Congress leaders have to invent such alluring identities that could fascinate young workers. Therefore, through this ploy the Congress leaders represent a romanticized view of freedom struggle before the impressionistic youth of the time, in order to use them according to their desires. These designations also bring into focus, the new historicist notion of the power of political institutions and their hierarchical structures. Thus power comes from various sources and it circulates in a culture "to generate particular identities and institutions" (Malpas 61).

Manto also deconstructs the historical perspective that elevates these freedom fighters, and illustrates that they were just being used as pawns in the game of chess by the powerful. In addition, by demonstrating the ultimate disenchantment of Shahzada Ghulam Ali with the leaders of the freedom movement, Manto further foregrounds this flawed historical viewpoint of the inviolability of these leaders. Disillusioned by the allures of freedom movement and politicians, Shahzada Ghulam Ali quits politics. Manto reveals that the double agenda of these politicians and the British Raj, causes Ghulam Ali's disappointment: "At that time most of us were convinced that the ousting of the British Raj was a matter of days only. However, the raj was cleverer than we were prepared . . . It let the movement come to boil, then made the deal with the leaders" (66). Here, the insinuation about the deal between British Raj and leaders deflates all the fervor of revolution and idealistic notions attached to it by the historians. Manto offers his own version of history, in conformity with the new historicist method of multiple interpretations of history "that rejects the narrative structures of conventional literary history" (Hohendal 87).

Baba, is another character from the culture of that time, who is the manifestation of the general image that religious parsonages supported the freedom movement without any personal interests. Historians represent these people as selfless, austere and beyond carnal desires and motives. But Manto's Baba is otherwise, he has political motives as well as political power which is evident from these lines from the text. "Although on the face of it Babaji had nothing to do with politics, it was an open secret that no political movement in the Punjab could begin or end without his clearance" (61). So, here Manto challenges the views of the historian and the representation of these people as being austere and non- worldly. Manto questions: "What had ashram got to do with India's freedom" (63). Unlike historians Manto rejects the idea of any association between religion and politics. This coalition of religion and politics also forefronts the control of social institutions as stated by Greenblatt in the introduction of his *Renaissance*, "power at once localized in particular institutions --- the court, the church, the colonial administration, the patriarchal family" (6). The character of Baba also reinforces the multiplicity of the sources of power; that is, power is not only invested in the upper crust but circulates through the various strata of society. Hence Baba is one such source that represents the religious institutions.

Manto has also touched the issue of following the religion blindly. A typical historian might elevate people, because of their appearances strictly in conformity with the religious code of conduct and consider it an act of piety or virtue. But Manto views it in another light:

"... look, man may be good or evil, but he should remain the way God has made him. You can be virtuous without having your head shaved, without donning saffron robes, or without covering yourself with ash, . . . [In this way] only ritual will survive" (69). Manto contests these stereotypical representations of religious personages which bestow on them virtuous identities just because of their outer appearances and enticing verbal skills, without probing into their inward virtue. We observe numerous instances of such Baba's or other individuals in our surroundings, pretending to be pious only due to the appearance that they have assumed. Commenting on this, the text reads: "Despite their five prayers a day, their faces never showed any trace of that inner light prayer is supposed to bring about" (63). He considers ritual without soul as useless. This outward phony holiness also validates the other new historicist aspect of representations that says reality can be represented by using props (Gallagher Practicing 15).

4.2 The Great Divide

The *Great Divide* is the story of a man, who loses his father during partition but this does not shatter his courage. He is neither interested in losses and gains like how many have died? And how much property has been lost? Nor harbors any enmity or malice towards the enemy, that is, India. Although due to the circumstances, people were commonly attributing most of their sufferings to India --- the enemy. The setting of the story divulges the time, when there was extreme animosity and bitterness between the people of both the countries due to the violence of partition days. Moreover, such circumstances facilitated the historians and those in power, to craft the identity of the enemy for India. These powerful are the controlling institutions having the power to put check on all sorts of social, religious and psychological organizations as well as other alternatives, existing in a society (Greenblatt 2). But through the character of Karim Dad and his impartial and logical vision, Manto dislocates this identity. Manto provides a fresh perspective on things that disapproves of the same widely believed and followed stereo types.

Manto uses Karim Dad as his mouthpiece and communicates his liberal vision through his words. Karim Dad, although being a victim of these upheavals of partition, sheds no tear of misfortune, instead "he was proud of the bravery of his father who fought nearly thirty armed men single handed till he fell" (106). Moreover, he thinks: "Whatever happened was because of our own mistakes" (106). Here unlike the tendency of a casual historian, a politician or a layman, Karim Dad refuses to put all the blame on enemy; acquitting himself from every responsibility, and thinks otherwise. Karim Dad detests people crying and indulging in self-pity as the text reads: "Karim Dad hated people crying or feeling sorry for themselves" (106). Although, during riots his father had been killed mercilessly, and he had to lose his two houses which were gutted down by the enemy along with his standing crop, but all this did not unnerve him. "Because it seem to him that if you gave in. you were less than a man" (105). Here Manto gives him the identity of a person, who believes in facing reality and resolving the issues realistically instead of shifting blame. Karim Dad interprets history in his own manner and not the way it is represented by the state or its institutions in the name of nationalism or religion. As Greenblatt and Gallagher explaining the aspect of representation state that "The spirit of representation sometimes corresponds to the boundaries of nation or class or religion or language..." (Practicing 37).

Karim Dad demonstrates the same self-control, when Bakhto, the village midwife, spreads the rumor that Indians are going to dam the rivers which irrigate the fields in the villages of Punjab. Everyone starts abusing the enemy except Karim Dad who says: “Don’t abuse them” (111). When an elderly person asks who they are to you? He answers “They are my enemies” (111). Here again, not conforming to the conventional notion of hatred against enemy or abusing, he thinks logically: “They can’t dam and divert rivers in a couple of days”; it will take them years, but you people will have vented all your anger in one day by abusing them. (112). Karim Dad breaks from the stereo typical identities and representations crafted by the state and historians. The new historicist assertion that the people are always the product of the society and time period, they are born in (Renaissance 256) can be witnessed over here. The reaction of the people to the situation is predictable because of the ideologies of the society they are part of, and the beliefs that were instilled in the minds of the people of that time, from which they could not set themselves free. In the same fashion, Karim Dad’s villagers, could not think otherwise but the way they are accustomed to. But Karim Dad with his mature vision is able to see things in the light of reason, he says: “They have every right to dam our rivers . . . I think it is fair” (112) . . . because “It’s foolish to expect your enemy to be kind to you” (113). Manto has been admired even by his critics for being impartial and even-handed particularly in terms of his portrayal of Indians and Pakistani’s in his partition stories. Here, too, Manto has envisioned and delineated the character of Karim Dad on the same lines. Manto always observed matters objectively without incorporating any bias or sentimentality, and that is what he is reflecting through his mouth piece Karim Dad. Karim Dad’s character is in line with the new historicist trend of unsettling the established norms and procedures; that always advocates alternative ways (Practicing 2).

Most of the run-of-the-mill type of people would be offended by such a viewpoint, and so would be those in power whose interests are in fueling these resentments. Manto, replicating the same new historicist antiestablishment stance, exhibits that this identity of the enemy has been crafted by the powerful to serve their interests, and because of the propagation of such notions, the people of India and Pakistan have to share a long history of spiteful racial antipathy and conflict. This fact has indeed cast a dark shadow on regional cooperation because playing this antagonistic card has been the most effective political tool of the powerful. The text of the story provides the opportunity to analyze the power structures within the society that serve the purpose of the powerful

(qeustia.com n.p.). Manto in this story not only tries to defy this political tradition followed by the partisans of both the countries, but also goes against the conventional perspective of the historian.

The similar vision of non-sentimentality and deviance from stereo-typical notions and identities can be seen in his decision of naming his newly born son as "Yazid." When Bakhto gives him the good news of his son being born and asks has he thought of a name? Karim Dad answers: "Yazid, that's what is he going to be called" (114). Bakhto's face turns white and Jeena, his wife almost screams, as the name Yazid is used as a metaphor and representation of evil for Muslims; "Because on his orders Hussain, prophet's grandson, and his companions were deprived of water and finally massacred" (114). But Karim Dad not conforming to the ideas of general public and that of religious historian remains resolved in his decision and says: "That Yazid dammed the water; this one will make them flow again". "It is only a name after all" (114). Karim Dad once again, by approving the name Yazid as normal, shows his rebelliousness to the identities fashioned by the religious historian. Thus, Manto has created the identity of Karim Dad, in harmony with the new historicist quest for "specific instances, images and texts that offered some resistance to interpretation" (Practicing 4).

5. Conclusion

This section includes the conclusions drawn from the study and few recommendations for future researchers.

The selected passages of Manto's fiction are analyzed which reveal that in both the stories *The Price of Freedom* and *The Great Divide* Manto has deftly intertwined the issues of representations, identity and power circulation in the society of that time in which these stories are set. The stories reveal Manto's broad and realistic vision towards issues, which Manto has mirrored through his characters. In the *Price of Freedom*, when, Shahzada Gulam Ali realizes that the tall claims of politician about their allegiance to freedom struggle are fake, he quits politics. Instead of treading the same timeworn path, he decides to carve a new route for himself. Manto unmasks the double agenda and hypocrisy of those in politics and power and the way power circulates in society through a classified system, and dashes down the conventional idealistic notions associated with freedom movement. Manto, confronting historical representation of religious figures, rips apart the mask of the pseudo-religious individuals, who behind the garb of spirituality actually crave for power. For Manto, these people are imposters because they are unable to

show any signs of real devotion accept outward appearances and the blind following of rituals.

The Great Divide, too, reflects the issues of representations, power, and the liberal and non-stereotypical ideas of Manto that he has projected through the character of Karim Dad. Karim Dad deviates from all the commonplace notions and disrupts the identities and representations favoured by those in power. In a nutshell, the stories testify that the characters are the product of their culture, and society. They cannot break apart from the values and ideologies of their society. The cultural environment and social setting control their decisions and behaviour. However, Manto brings on the forefront the possibilities of doing things or resolving matters other than the worn-out conventions direct us to do through certain characters. He brings out the fresh perspective on matters unlike the one that historians or power mongers have been imposing on people's sensibilities, by communicating his open-minded vision in these stories.

5.1 Recommendations

The possibilities are unlimited for research undertakings, due to our rich literary heritage. Manto has written many thought provoking stories other than these and so did numerous other writers, which can be picked up and subject to analysis.

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