

Urdu Studies, Vol 4 Issue 1, 2024

Description

Precarious Homes in Saadat Hassan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh:" Insanity, Illness and Displacement

Takbeer Salati
Huzaifa Pandit

DOI <https://zenodo.org/doi/10.5281/zenodo.13292510>

Abstract: The short stories of Saadat Hassan Manto, who is acknowledged to be one of the pioneers of the Urdu short story, have been read variously as resorting to obscenity to demonstrate the obscenity of partition and attendant nationalism. The paper examines the short story 'Toba Tek Singh' arguably Manto's most well-known and translated story, to understand the interrogation of 'home' in the post-colonial future which is perpetuated through the fiction re-interpreted across time, space, and different frameworks. By focusing acutely on traumatized and split subjectivities, Manto demonstrates the performative potential of cultural memory to serve as a testimony of the enduring power of memory. Moreover, it depicts the determination and disruption of current imaginings of a 'self' shaped by a perpetual dialectic of exclusion and inclusion, lately accelerated by the rise of muscular nationalism. Manto's short stories protest the perpetual denial and postponement of the question of 'home', and hence provide a valuable insight into the postcolonial dilemma of imagining the nation as a coherent and linear space. This paper approaches this aesthetic of denial by examining the wide semiotic range of possibilities offered by an examination of the vocabulary of Manto, and thereby illuminate the contours of Manto as a practitioner of writerly writing.

Keywords: Manto, dislocation, memory, national culture, protest, language

[Read / Download Full Article](#)

Works cited:

Ali, Kamran Asdar. "Progressives and "Perverts": Partition Stories and Pakistan's Future." *Social Text* 29.3 (Fall 2011): 1-30.

Chowdhary, Supriya. *Poetry, Protest and Politics: A Study of Progressive Urdu Poetry*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2016.

Farooqi, Mehr Afshan. *The Oxford India Anthology Of Modern Urdu Literature: Poetry and Prose Miscellany*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

Ghalib, Mirza Asadullah Khan. "Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib." *Paiman-e-gazal-avval*. Ed. Mohammad Shamsul Haq. Karachi: National Book Foundation, 2008. 143-153.

Manto, Saadat Hasan. *Bitter Fruit: The very best of Saadat Hasan Manto*. Trans. Khalid Hasan. New Delhi: Penguin Random House India, 2008.

Mir, Ali Husain and Raza Mir. *Anthems of Resistance: A Celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry*. New Delhi: India Ink, 2006.

Mufti, Aamir R. "Faiz Ahmed Faiz: Towards a Lyric History of India." *Daybreak: Writings on Faiz*. Ed. Yasmeen Hameed. Karachi: OUP Pakistan, 2003. 216-257.

Mukhia, Harbans. "The Celebration of Failure as Dissent in Urdu Ghazal." *Modern Asian Studies* 33.4 (1999): 861-881 .

O'Farrell, Clare. *Michel Foucault* . London: Sage Publications, 2005.

Rahman, Tariq. "Language, Religion and Politics: Urdu in Pakistan and North India." *REMMM* 124. Langues, religion et modernité dans l'espace musulman (2008): 93-112.

Randhawa, Mandeep Kaur. "Madness as a Symbolic Device in Manto's Selected Short Stories." *IIS University Journal of Arts* (2023): 29-43.

Smith, Anthony D. *Myths and Memories of the Nations* . London: OUP , 1999.

Vohra, Dr Anupama. "SAADAT HASAN MANTO : SHORT STORIES." Vohra, Dr Anupama. *Indian Writing in English Translation* . Kolkata: Directorate of Distance Education Jadhavpur University , na. 64-79.

Waheed, Sarah Fatima. *Hidden Histories of Pakistan: Censorship, Literature, and Secular Nationalism in Late Colonial India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Takbeer Salati was born and raised in Srinagar, Kashmir. She is pursuing her doctoral research on Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories and attempts to explore life and its marginality across Partition of South Asia. She writes short stories and fiction that are influenced by the daily struggle of life in Kashmir. Her various short stories are published in Samyukta Fiction, Muse India, Cafe Dissensus, Nether Quarterly, Life and Legends, Parcham, Outlook, Cerebration, From My Window anthology, etc. A forthcoming essay appears in the food journal *On Eating: A multilingual Journal of Food and Eating*, edited by Sumana Roy. Her work has also been longlisted in the list of Best South Asian Short Story Writers 20 under 30 in *The Bombay Review* 2021.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3739-6712>

btakbeer@gmail.com

Huzafa Pandit is an Assistant Professor of English in the Higher Education Department, Jammu & Kashmir. For his PhD he worked on a comparison between Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Agha Shahid Ali, and Mahmoud Darwish under the rubric of 'Poetics of Resistance', at University of Kashmir. His first book—*Green is the Colour of Memory* (Hawakal Publishers)—was published as the winning manuscript of Rhythm Divine Poets Chapbook Contest 2017. His poems, translations, interviews, essays, and papers have been published in various journals like *Post-Colonial Studies*, *Indian Literature*, *PaperCuts*, *Life and Legends*, *Jaggery Lit*, *JLA India*, *Outlook*, and *Poetry at Sangam*.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5349-7936>

huzu84@gmail.com

[Precarious Homes in Saadat Hassan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh:" Insanity, Illness and Displacement](#)

by Takbeer Salati & Huzaifa Pandit is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

Date Created

August 10, 2024

Author

hashmiam

default watermark