

Space within the Space: The Subject-Other Dichotomy in Manto's "Ten Rupees"

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Abstract:

In Manto's stories about prostitutes, set in Mumbai (then Bombay), the city is presented with a kaleidoscopic projection of space. In the story, "Ten Rupees," the volumetric space of the city, conventionally dominated by the male characters – Kishori, Kifayat, Anwar, and Shahab, is overshadowed by the abstract space created in it by the female protagonist – Sarita. Sarita, a fifteen-year-old prostitute, is presented in the story as an Object (the Other in the Subject-Other dichotomy) of men's desire. However, she switches to the Subject position in her interactions with her customers Kifayat, Anwar, and Shahab in a car ride, and, as a matter of fact, she creates a gynocentric space of her own in the phallogocentric space inside the car. In a theoretical framework drawn from both Simone de Beauvoir's notion of the Subject-Other dichotomy, and from the prominent ideas of space in the twentieth century architectural discourses, this paper, with a qualitative method, shows how Manto portrays the character of Sarita as the Subject rather than an Object within the spaces she inhabits.

Keywords: space, subject, Other, gynocentric, phallogocentric

What makes Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955) a great literary figure in Urdu literature is not the controversy caused by the series of obscenity trials he faced in his lifetime. It is rather the wide range of multidisciplinary scopes his stories can offer to any reader to perceive and interpret the characters and their psyche depicted in those stories. Though a great number of Manto's short stories are based on the India-Pakistan partition in 1947, many other stories are about prostitutes, mostly set in Mumbai (then Bombay in Manto's lifetime, hence to be mentioned as Bombay in this paper). Apart from the dazzling Hindi film industry of the mid-twentieth century India, Bombay also has this dark chapter of prostitution of which Manto was an observant witness. In his stories (just to mention a few), "Ten Rupees," "The Insult," and "Khushiya," the protagonists are all prostitutes of different ages, living and working in Bombay. Out of these, this paper will take into account the story "Ten Rupees" in which the protagonist is a prostitute named Sarita. In an approach unbiased and free from any general prejudice against prostitutes, Manto portrays her in his story as a character who is capable of defining a gynocentric space of her own within the phallogocentric or male-dominated space of the city, Bombay. In doing so, Manto presents a Subject-Other dichotomy in a paradigm of space through Sarita's interaction with her customers – Kifayat, Anwar, and Shahab. To identify the volumetric space of both the overall and the individual settings of the story, and also to show a connection between the Subject-Other dichotomy and this space in which the Subject and the Other dwell, both architectural and feminist perspectives of space can be considered. In the subsequent



discussion, the paper will examine the idea of space as developed throughout the twentieth century and the idea of the Subject-Other politics from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949).

Since its inception in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Gottfried Semper's volumetric idea of space influenced most of the proto-modern European architects like Adolf Loos, H. P. Berlage, Peter Behrens, and Camillo Sitte to take space "as a matter of enclosure" (Forty 257-258). His idea founded the school of architecture that took space as an element being enclosed three-dimensionally in a volume by another element, "wall" and thus be given a concrete visibility. There is another school of architecture that generated the aesthetic idea of space. Though great philosophers like Kant, Schopenhauer, Vischer, and Nietzsche contributed to the aesthetic definition of space substantially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was not until the year 1893 when the topic received elaborate and definite attention from Adolf Hildebrand, August Schmarsow, and Theodor Lipps (Forty 258-259). Hildebrand regarded space to be something "animated from within" (cited in Forty 260); Schmarsow took it as "a property of mind, and not to be confused with the actual geometrical space present in buildings" (cited in Forty 261); and Lipps said, "... in the art of abstract representation of space, the spatial form can exist purely, unmaterialized" (cited in Forty 261). All three of them implied the abstract version of the volumetric space which later inspired many architects to develop distinctive theories on space and spatiality in the upcoming years of the twentieth century. However, while the modernist approaches to space as an architectural property hailed it as "a normal category in architectural discourse throughout the world," the postmodernist approaches to space rather lessened the amount of importance attached to it (Forty 268). One major work of this postmodernist approach is Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974) which shows "space" as a more general discourse to be relevant to many other disciplines. His idea of the "social space" is able to incorporate "social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who die, who suffer and who act" (Lefebvre 33). Taking cue from this line of discussion, it is possible to define the volumetric space of the story "Ten Rupees" to be generating a social space for the characters in it. The volumetric space, in this case, would be the chawl where Sarita lives with her mother, the hotel rooms where she has mostly been taken to by her customers, and the interior of the car in which she goes out with Kifayat, Anwar, and Shahab. The social space would be the actions she does and interactions she makes in those volumetric spaces. In explaining Lefebvre's social space, Forty says, "...societies 'secrete' space, producing and appropriating it as they go along" (272). So, the chawl, the hotel rooms, the interior of the car – all secrete a kind of social space in the context of this story which is phallogocentric in character as they are male-dominated.

In feminist discourses, space can be taken as an abstract idea, not a volumetric one. Space here is more about emancipation of women from social conventions; a sexual equality in the society to advocate woman's individual choice and voice; and also a share of equal rights in any social, political contexts irrespective of gender. That a woman needs to create that space of her own and how a woman can do so have long been a discussion among

feminist scholars. Mary Wollstonecraft, in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), has pledged for an equal space in education by addressing Charles Maurice Talleyrand-Périgord to demand "JUSTICE for one half of the human race" (Wollstonecraft 7). John Stuart Mill's call for "a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other" upholds a similar notion of space as well (133). When Woolf states that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (6), the requirement for a woman to become a writer does not limit itself only to a volumetric space of a room; it rather transcends the walls of that room and creates an abstract space for a woman who can uninterruptedly write about her true feelings. The arguments of Wollstonecraft, Mill, and Woolf, show a history of a movement that has been advocating for woman's own independent space from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. In the mid-twentieth century, Simone de Beauvoir's theory of the Subject-Other politics as expressed in her book *The Second Sex* (1949) sheds light on the concept of space from the perspective of a sexual politics between man and woman. In the Introduction, she shows that, traditionally, man is always the Subject and woman always the Other in any man-woman relationship. Referring to Aristotle and St Thomas's remarks on woman "to be afflicted with a natural defectiveness" and to be "an imperfect man" respectively (cited in Beauvoir 16), she states, "Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. ... He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other" (16). Beauvoir also highlights that the reciprocal claim that the Other can make to the Subject is absent when the Subject is the man and the Other is the woman (17). This makes the traditional version of the Subject-Other relationship between the sexes problematic in itself, and, therefore, leaves a possibility for advocating an independent space of woman as the Subject.

To form a connection between these two threads of discussion in the last two paragraphs, how the social space, generated from the volumetric space, gets gendered is relatable. In an attempt to investigate "how space as a social, cultural and political structure produces specifically gendered identities and how the construction of difference has been inscribed in our notion of space," Rachel Mader and Marion von Osten initiated a project entitled *Sex & Space* in Zurich in 1996 which showcased an exhibition along with lectures and films. In an essay on this project, Osten identifies "polarisations in social space" on gender grounds and remarks, "Although there were wide-reaching socio-political measures to reduce women to their reproductive role, it was the capitalist city that pushed women more and more into public space, acting as workers and employees, as dancers, femmes nouvelles, prostitutes and consumers" (Osten 215, 224). So, the social space itself is compartmentalized on the basis of gender, and thus woman's position as the Other in it is confirmed as it is largely based on the objectification of woman's body. Being a Marxist philosopher himself, Lefebvre, too, brings in the point of capitalism in his explanation of social space when he discusses the nature of abstraction in it (Forty 274). Now, if Manto's Bombay is viewed from this connection, it would appear as an emerging capitalist city with the advent of the Hindi film industry and the establishment of the textile mills. Popularly known as the city of dreams, Bombay attracted eighty-four percent of its work force from

outside the city as the 1921 census reveals (Matt Reeck xxii). This capitalist environment of the city eventually generated a phallogentric social space in it as the ratio between male and female workers was always too wide. With lack of employment for women and growing economic need among the working-class families they belonged to, Bombay served as a platform for prostitution to thrive. Also, to take R. K. Gupta's opinion, as expressed in his essay "Feminism and Modern Indian Literature," on how critics should work on the "re-interpretation of literary texts from a new critical feminist stance" (180), it is possible to read Manto's "Ten Rupees" from an interdisciplinary perspective of space. Krishan Chander's comment on Manto's metaphors to have "a well-organized and well-balanced geometrical diagram" confirms that possibility further (25). On this note, the paper will discuss how this framework of the concept of space presented in it can be applied to understand how Manto's portrayal of Sarita in the story, "Ten Rupees," cancels her position as the Other in the space she creates on her own within the phallogentric space of the city.

In the story, "Ten Rupees," Sarita is a fifteen years old girl who lives with her mother in a typical Bombay chawl. Manto defines this volumetric space of the chawl as "a big building with many floors and many small rooms" ("Ten Rupees" 10). The very first line of the story introduces the social space of this volumetric space: a building with many people living together yet disconnected from one another. Manto's words, "Everyone lived right on top of one another, and yet no one took any interest in anyone else," at once creates a sense of alienation from the neighborhood among the chawl dwellers which does not hold Sarita back in the volumetric space she belongs to ("Ten Rupees" 12). While her mother is "looking for her in the chawl" as Kishori, her pimp, has been waiting for her, Sarita is "at the corner of the alley playing with the girls" ("Ten Rupees" 10). The oxymoronic nature of the places mentioned in the line – the chawl (a congested, enclosed place) and the alley (an outside place) – sets the tone of the contrasting nature of personalities that Sarita's portrayal will show in cancelling her position as the Other later in the story. The alley, having liminal features, supports this transition in her character. Also, her disregard of the confined volumetric space in the chawl and preference of playing outside instead negate the domesticity in her character as is conventionally expected in women, and establish an outgoing aspect of her character which will be instrumental in the Subject-Other dichotomy in her interactions with Kifayat, Anwar, and Shahab in the car ride. With just two tasks to do at home – filling up the water bucket in the morning and filling up the lamp with oil in the evening – she has a relaxed routine to follow every day which is why she gets all her day to play outside with other girls. It is important to see the symbolism Manto has used here in the chores Sarita performs – providing water, a life-saving element, and providing light, a source of energy. This adds some more depth in Manto's portrayal of Sarita to set her capability of claiming the reciprocity that Beauvoir says is usually denied in the Other.

Sarita's Otherness is layered with her innocence. Manto writes, "She hated spending time with women and having to talk to them" ("Ten Rupees" 12). Along with that, her "playing meaningless games with younger girls" prompts the reader to identify her as an adolescent girl who may not have been mature enough to understand the phallogentric dominance in

her social space. This perception is strengthened more by Manto when he mentions how Sarita feels about her life as a prostitute:

she considered this good entertainment. She never bothered much about these nights, perhaps because she thought that some guy like Kishori must go to other girls' houses, too. Perhaps she imagined that all girls had to go out with rich guys to Worli to sit on cold benches, or to the wet sand of Juhu beach. Whatever happened to her must happen to everyone, right? ("Ten Rupees" 16)

This shows that Sarita is not fully aware of what prostitution means. However, no matter how normal this whole experience may look for Sarita from this description, the use of the word "perhaps" more than once by Manto leaves room for an alternative interpretation. From the perspective of the men in the story, she is a prostitute, a female body which is objectified in a capitalist city like Bombay. The male gaze in the lines confirms this notion, "... when she rushed about the streets, if her dirty dress should fly up, passing men would look at her young calves that gleamed like smooth teak" ("Ten Rupees" 15). The only identity of Sarita that matters in the Subject-Other relation is that of a prostitute. Kifayat, when he first sees her, exclaims, "... hey, this girl's really young!" ("Ten Rupees" 18). In the view of the men in the stories, she is a female body to be objectified in exchange of money. So, Sarita's being young does not ignite any guilty concern in Kifayat and his friends for exploiting a minor; their only concern is whether she will cooperate with them or not. Sarita, by her customers here, is not hired as a young girl but as a prostitute. Beauvoir's point of taking prostitution as an act that "sums up all the forms of feminine slavery" marks the place for prostitutes as the Other (Beauvoir 569). The oxymoronic effect of the places can be referred to again as Kishori tells the "rich men with cars" to park the car "in the nearby market," away from the "dirty neighbourhood" filled with "the stench of rotting paan and burnt-out bidis" (Manto, "Ten Rupees" 10). The binary between the capitalists in the car and the working class of the chawl at once puts Sarita, both as a prostitute and as a woman, at a much lower position, thus already attributing her with some form of Otherness in the class context.

The car ride is the central part of the story. As Leslie A. Flemming points out, "Manto maintained in his best stories the sharp focus on the single illuminating experience in the life of a single alienated character" ("Formal Characteristics" 95). It is the volumetric space of the car that holds the entire Subject-Other relation between Sarita and her customers. Hence, the car ride is "the single illuminating experience" in the story. Sarita's outgoing nature mingled with the disconnecting social space of the chawl has already established her as an alienated character. However, neither this sense of alienation nor the prostitution evokes any existential crisis in her; rather she is shown as a character who is "blissfully free of worries" (Manto, "Ten Rupees" 15). Sarita is fascinated with car rides. When her mother tells her of the men waiting for her in the car, she becomes very happy though she has been dragged by her mother from her game. Her happiness is expressed in these lines: "She didn't care about the man but she really liked car rides. When she was in a car speeding through the empty streets, the wind whipping over her face, she felt as though

she had been transformed into a rampaging whirlwind” (“Ten Rupees” 14). The “wind whipping over her face” and the “rampaging whirlwind” bring in a sense of energy in her character which is juxtaposed by her suffocation in the hotel rooms with her customers. In the expository part of the story before the car ride, Manto has shown her rejection of the confined volumetric space which has been discussed earlier in the paper. Similarly, the volumetric hotel rooms, with all the senses of confinement in them, make her feel claustrophobic, “She hated those suffocating rooms with their two iron beds on which she could never get a good sleep” (“Ten Rupees” 17). In her suffocation in the volumetric space also lies her suffocation in the social space generated in those rooms in which she is treated as an object of some man’s desire. Though she takes the experience as “good entertainment” as cited earlier, this excludes the hotel rooms and focuses more on the open spaces like “cold benches” in Worli and “wet sand of Juhu beach.” So, the social space in the confined volumetric space is in sharp contrast with that of the open space. Sarita decks herself up with her blue georgette sari, Japanese powder and rouge, and her lipstick in a hasty manner which shows that she is not at all into making herself attractive for the men waiting in the car. When she is getting dressed, it “gave her goose bumps, and the thought of the upcoming car ride excited her. She didn’t stop to think about what the man would be like or where they would go, but as she quickly changed, she hoped that the car ride wouldn’t be so short...” (“Ten Rupees” 17). Prioritizing the car ride over the men pre-establishes a denial of the men as the Subject. At the same time, like the “cold benches” in Worli and the “wet sand of Juhu beach,” her having “goose bumps” already invite a sensory depiction of the “single illuminating experience” (i.e., the car ride) before the experience actually takes place.

At the beginning of the car ride, the sense of suffocation comes back to Sarita as she sat “scrunched between the two men” and “squeezed her thighs together and rested her hands on her lap” in the back seat of the car (Manto, “Ten Rupees” 18). This clumsy body posture cannot help her transport to “a rampaging whirlwind.” She starts to feel claustrophobic as the volumetric space in the car, which is making its way in the intense Bombay traffic in the streets at five in the evening, gives her the illusion of a confined social space like that of the hotel rooms. The car remains in the story as a phallogocentric element being owned and driven by man in the phallogocentric social space of the streets which are frequented by more such elements as trams, buses (i.e., more machines). Priyamvada Gopal shows that the association of man with machine is common in Manto’s stories as he, according to her, explores “the reformation of male bodies and psyches” in Urdu fiction (Gopal 91). Such association between man and machine (something that is run by energy produced by the engine) instantly puts man as the Subject being in charge of controlling that functional machine and heightens Manto’s depiction of the phallogocentric space in the car as is seen in this story. Also, the place where the car has been waiting for Sarita – “outside in the bazaar” beside “a factory wall stretching into the distance on which a small sign read, ‘NO URINATING’” – characterizes, with all its phallogocentric elements, the essential phallogocentric space in the neighborhood in which the car with “three young men from Hyderabad” is parked (Manto, *Bombay* 18). The marketplace being a place of commerce

and monetary transaction stands as a capitalist platform that provides a compatible social space for Kishori, a representative of the sexual commerce, to bring Sarita, the product to be sold, near the car in which the buyers are waiting.

Though the car can be taken as a phallogentric element following Gopal's idea, Sarita soon takes control of the phallogentric volumetric space in it as it starts generating a compatible social space for Sarita when it enters the suburb. Manto describes, "The cool wind rushing over the speeding car soothed her, and she felt fresh and full of energy again. In fact, she could barely contain herself: she began to tap her feet, sway her arms, and drum her fingers as she glanced back and forth at the trees that streamed past the road" (Manto, "Ten Rupees" 19). The initial clumsy body language is shed off by her and this signals the reciprocity in the Subject-Other dichotomy inside the car. As Shahab tickles her, she starts laughing, "wriggling close to Anwar," her laughter trails "from the car's windows to far into the distance," and Kifayat speeds up the car "trying to keep pace with the laughter in the back seat" ("Ten Rupees" 20). The awkward silence inside the car is filled in by the laughter and a playfulness. The process of Sarita's transition from the Other to the Subject takes a long stride as she switches from the back to the front of the car:

Sarita wanted to get out and sit on the car's hood next to its iron fixture shaped like a flying bird. She leaned forward, Shahab poked her, and Sarita threw her arms around Kifayat's neck in order to keep her balance. Without thinking, Kifayat kissed her hand, and Sarita's entire body tingled. She jumped over the seat to sit next to Kifayat where she began to play with his necktie. ("Ten Rupees" 20)

The spot given to her initially is between two men in the back seat of the car. The sitting position, determined by the men, defines her position as an immobile, passive Other in that volumetric space. She switches from the back seat to the front seat and declares her capability of taking the lead of the social space in the car, and the desire to sit beside the flying bird made of iron on the hood of the car also metaphorizes this. Sarita not only exhibits a bold conversant body language in switching her place but also initiates a conversation with Kifayat who is in charge of handling the machine. She asks, "What's your name?" ("Ten Rupees" 20). This is the first linguistic expression of Sarita in that social space since the car ride began. The question she has asked Kifayat poses an authoritative demand from the Subject by the Other, and this interrogative tone, supported by her overt body language, exerts power from her position as the Other, thus claiming for reciprocity in the Subject-Other politics. So, "What's your name?" might as well be read as "Who are you?" calling into question the men's identity as the Subject.

It is important to note that the Subject, Kifayat and the other men, do not feel threatened by such power exerted by the Other; rather they quite enjoy this as Shahab says earlier, "By God, she's really spunky!" (Manto, "Ten Rupees" 20). As Norman Fairclough shows in his book *Language and Power* (1989), "The way in which orders of discourse are structured, and the ideologies which they embody, are determined by relationships of power in particular social institutions, and in the society as a whole" (31). If prostitution be taken as a social institution, the relationship of power in it depends on the exchange of money. Sarita's

power over the men derived from her bodily and verbal playfulness is immediately paid for by Kifayat with a note of ten rupees as a token of appreciation for the service she has been providing in the car ride. Just like the association of man with machine, the association of man with money, in this context, strengthens his Subject position. However, though she quickly tucks it in her bra at that moment, the ten-rupee note is of little interest to Sarita. Without an accurate knowledge of what prostitution means, she is also oblivious of the point of her being paid for her labor. This results in her returning the money at the end of the car ride.

Sarita's only desire in this car ride is to transform into "a rampaging whirlwind" and everything else "to fall into the whirlwind" (Manto, "Ten Rupees" 20). In the front seat, she starts singing songs from romantic Hindi movies of her time and asks Anwar, "Why are you so quiet? Why don't you say something? Why don't you sing something?" (21). This series of questions, and later her instructions to both Shahab and Anwar to sing along, set her as the head of the "small orchestra," as Manto describes it, that she carves out a space of her own out of the hitherto phallogocentric social space in the car ("Ten Rupees" 21). Her verbal expressions – "Let's sing together," "Sing along, okay?" and later "Let's go for a drive" – are authoritative here in all their imperative and interrogative tones ("Ten Rupees" 21, 24). Sometime later, when Kifayat wants to know her name, she answers, "My name? ... Sarita" ("Ten Rupees" 22). Even the affirmative answer includes the authoritative tone of interrogation. So, when she returns to the back seat (her former spot in the car), it is only to activate the theatrical show as she still keeps her demeanor intact as an active user of that social space. With all the singing, clapping, honking, the wind's whishing sound, and the engine's rumbling, the social space in that volumetric space of the car finally establishes that reciprocity among all four of them, irrespective of their genders and identities as prostitute and customers. This harmony is described by Manto in these lines where the word "happy" is repetitive, "Sarita was happy—Shahab was happy—Kifayat was happy—and seeing them all happy made Anwar happy too, ..." ("Ten Rupees" 21). The social space here also gets a kinetic energy analogous with the kinetic energy of the engine of the car. While singing, Sarita wears Anwar's hat and jumps again into the front seat "to look at herself in the rearview mirror" ("Ten Rupees" 22). Then, slapping him on the thigh, she asks Kifayat, "If I put on your pants, and wore your shirt and tie, would I look like a well-dressed business man?" ("Ten Rupees" 22). Here, the point of transvestism in Sarita's question strengthens her position as the Subject. The reciprocal interactions among the four of them continue throughout the time they spend on the beach right after the car ride. When the men, Sarita's customers, run down the shore with her, drink beer sitting on the wet sand with her, and keeps on laughing together, they no longer remain as the capitalist, rich customers who were rather worried whether a young prostitute of Sarita's age would cooperate with them or not. As it turns out, Sarita's youth, her innocence are transmitted to them. Manto expresses Sarita's transition from the chawl's social space to the open, gender-neutral social space the beach offers to her. She feels "transported" in the natural elements there as she wants "to fade into the horizon, dissolve into the water, and soar so high into the sky that the palm trees stood beneath her" ("Ten Rupees" 23). They

get back to the car, Shahab and Anwar doze off to sleep, and the car comes back to the "NO URINATING" sign from where they have picked Sarita earlier. Ironically enough, the car comes back to the market area, the place for monetary transaction, without making any monetary profit out of the female body as they initially desired. The story ends with Sarita's return of the note of ten rupees. In Manto's words,

Sarita stopped and turned around. She returned to the car, removed the ten-rupee note from her bra and dropped it onto the seat next to him [Kifayat]. Startled, he looked at the note. "What's this, Sarita?"

"This money – why should I take it?" she said before she turned and took off running. ("Ten Rupees" 25)

The crumpled note lies on the front seat as a final element of the phallogentric space of her society that she has both returned and rejected. The question, "why should I take it?", gives the social space in the car a final recognition as an independent space of her own in which the customer's male ego is slapped and man's identity as a customer of the female body in the social institution of prostitution is questioned once again.

By the time Manto was writing in Bombay (1937-1941 and 1942-1948), the Indian literary world saw how the Progressive Writers' Movement in 1933 created an Urdu literary subculture within it. The publication of *Angarey* (a collection of short stories) not only stirred readers with unconventional subject matters but also paved the way to founding the All India Progressive Writers' Association by Sajjad Zahir and Ahmed Ali in 1936 (Flemming, "Literary Context" 25). Following this, the Urdu Progressive Writers' Association was founded and an Urdu journal, *Naya Adab* (New Literature), was launched (25). The first issue of *Naya Adab* (April 1939) included its manifesto in its editorial: "In our opinion, progressive literature is that literature which looks at the realities of life, reflects them, investigates them and leads the way towards a new and better life ..." (cited in Fleming, "Literary Context" 25). Though this new literary trend based on Realism vowed to "lead the way towards a new and better life," the founders of it staunchly criticized Manto and his contemporary, life-long friend Ismat Chughtai (both were members of the association), and rejected their stories as progressive enough on grounds of obscenity. Upendranath Ashk, another contemporary of Manto and his literary rival, opines in an essay that "there were many other significant social problems that were no less critical than the marketing and violation of women's bodies" (Ashk 38). From these, a debate on whether prostitutes and female bodies were progressive subject matters or not went on in the Urdu subculture of fiction. This debate is self-contradictory to the manifesto of the Urdu Progressive Writers' Association as it rejects the prostitutes and their stories to be realities of that time. In Manto's view, it is important to write about them as they hold a significant part of the reality of a society. Manto, in an essay, "Virtuous Women in Cinema," defends them by saying,

Prostitutes are really the products of society. ... Prostitutes are not born, they are made. ... If a thing is in demand, it will always enter the market. Men demand the

body of women. This is why every city has its redlight area. If the demand were to end today, these areas would vanish on their own. (155-156).

This is further extended in a lecture at Jogeshwari College, Bombay in 1944, in which Manto said, “Those who want to bring down progressive literature, obscene literature, or whatever you want to call it, what they should really do is change the conditions that motivate such writing” (“Lecture” 263). Though when Manto was writing stories about prostitutes, Muslim women of India created a gynocentric literary tradition by founding and writing in Urdu magazines for women – *Tabzib un-Niswan* (1898), *Khatun* (1904), and *Ismat* (1908). These magazines broke down “women’s mental isolation rather than glorifying their separate sphere” (Minault 86-87). Irrespective of their contribution in building the nation’s gynocentric tendencies in both fiction and non-fiction in Urdu, the magazines had no place for to give voice to prostitutes and their miseries. The prostitutes, in reality, remained in the periphery as the Other in the society. So, Manto’s representation of them in his stories as significant characters helps the reader to look into the darker realities of the society.

To sum up the discussion, it can be said that Manto’s story “Ten Rupees” presents an apparently insignificant minor girl, Sarita, in a sexually political position of the Subject. Both as a dweller in a chawl in Bombay and as a prostitute, she is conventionally taken as the Other in the phallogocentric social space of the city. The way she gets out of this gender biased space is shown in the episode of the car ride with three of her customers. She, in her interactions with them, creates a social space of her own that is gynocentric enough to assert herself as the Subject. The whole notion of space here gets a new definition from the Subject-Other perspective. It is true that she does come back to the very social space from where she often flies away; however, within the limited sphere of short story, Manto does portray her as a liberating source of energy and creates a discourse of power politics in prostitutes. Thus, through Sarita, he not only shows a mirror up to the reality of his society but also contributes to the subaltern feminist studies in Indian literature.

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