

# Abstract

**Abeer M Refky M Seddeek**

## **“The Role of the Poet in a Time of Violence: A New Historicist Reading of Paul Muldoon’s ‘The More a Man Has the More a Man Wants.’”**

The main aim of this paper is to examine how Paul Muldoon’s personal experience in a strife-torn Northern Ireland affects his Selection of historical subjects and his fictional representation of them adopting the New Historicism theory. It begins with a brief background on the New Historicism theory and emphasises the notion that the new historicist theorists sought to reveal truths concealed by history and to re-read re-inscribe the past as seen from a present perspective. Both history and society combine to give various meanings and multiple interpretations to literary texts, hence studying the socio-cultural backgrounds as well as the authorial intentions help re-inscribe the past, reconstruct the social, cultural and political issues, and refigure the individual identity. The paper concludes that there is no binary opposition between history and literature context and text and that both are subjective representations of reality. Thick description is illustrated as one of the tools that help suggest a multiplicity of social and political implications and it is concluded that both literary and non-literary texts are fictions formulated by imagination and created according to the authorial intentionalism. The second part of the paper proves that Muldoon’s poetry is intentionally obscure to manipulate and baffle readers. The paper asserts that Muldoon’s poetic technique and fast-paced tone help in dedicating his willful obscurity. “The More a Man Has the More a Man Wants” delineates the hunger strikes prevalent as a kind of protest in Northern Ireland in the 1980s, revealing an ugly, unpalatable truth. Muldoon inscribes history in the images of the body. The hero’s transformations coincide with the poet’s changing of the traditional sonnet into a more flexible narrative form. The irregular metrical patterns, repetitions and transformations in theme and subject emphasise the fragmented identity the poet wants to reveal. Muldoon’s interest in intertextuality as a poetic technique helps him confirm that official history can be fictionally re-structured and that the reader is responsible for interpreting the authorial intentionalism. Key words: Authorial intentionalism, fragmented identity, intertextuality, New Historicism, thick description, obscurity