



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 8. Issue.3. 2021 (July-Sept)

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

**KHUSHWANT SINGH'S TRAIN TO PAKISTAN: A CRITIQUE OF THE IMPACT AND
UGLINESS OF PARTITION**

Dr. Rameshwar Rathod

Assistant Professor, Department of English, L.B.S.College, Satara
Email:rameshwar999rathod@gmail.com



Article information

Received:14/6/2021
Accepted: 18/7/2021
Published online:21/07/2021
doi: [10.33329/ijelr.8.3.1](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.8.3.1)

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes some Indian novel to reveal the emotional politics they emphasize. The main influence of these novels are love, hatred, happiness and unhappiness resentment. The partition of India was a crucial event not solely in the history of the Indian landmass however in world history. The main reason is the collective thinking of Hindu and Muslim, but circumstance in which this happened makes it one of the most tragic events in Indian history. The partition is extremely cruel and far-reaching, causing pain and loss of life, with millions of refugees fleeing Pakistan and Indian property. A classic novel of modern India first published in 1956 *Train to Pakistan*.

Keyword: Partition of india1947, nature, relationship

Introduction

"Only violence in this story happens to be true."(Bruschi, P.99)

In Khushwant Singh's "Train to Pakistan" certainly the most-known among partition novels high politics is given very little occasion. Originally entitled *Mano Majra*. He was an Indian author novelist short story writer, lawyer, diplomat journalist and politician. The novel is in third-person omniscient narration. The novel deals with the religious persecution and the aftermath of displacement. This novel is a symbolic through the symbol of train; the author depicts the harsh reality and mass migration of the time from India to Pakistan and Pakistan to India. Hindustan was divided into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan in 1947. It had been published in 1956 and recounts the partition of India in August 1947. In an interview in 1968 Singh declared:

"I really don't think [Train to Pakistan] is a very good novel because I think it's a documentary, and I've given it a sugar-coating of characters and a story. Basically, it is a documentary of the partition of India, an extremely tragic event which hurt me very much". (Singh 1968-69: 28)

Train to Pakistan could be a historical novel. Instead of depicting the partition in terms of only the political terms, he digs deep into the social moral ethical and religious matters providing it a human dimension which lend the event in the novel a sense of reality horror and believability. He makes the readers aware of political and social context of his novel by explaining the religious persecution and violence caused by the partition. The novel is a mix of history, political and reality of the time of 1947.

There is based on the imaginary village Mano Majra on the border of India and Pakistan and the happening there after the partition. Mano Majra is well-known for its railway station. The specialty of the village is that the people of Muslim, Sikhs and the only Hindu Family residing there still live in perfect harmony. The novel highlights the major and minor characters like Juggut Singh, Hukum Chand, Iqbal, Nooran Bhai Meet Singh, Malli, Lal Ram Lal, Alam Singh, Imam Baksh, Sundri, Mansa Ram etc. The novel is based on the theme of partition like other novelists and their works, Bhisham Sahni "Tamas" later on Khushwant Singh "Train to Pakistan, Chaman Nahal "Azadi" Amruta Pritam "Pinjar" Manohar Malgokar "A Bend in the Gages" Salman Rushdie "Midnight Children" Nisid Hajari's Baldwin's what the body remembers and so on. Their expression solely in the stories novel films on the partition of India.

All novels is the short portrays the issues of independence and partition on using it as means to explore other issues which then emerge as the larger picture of the devastation and bloody birth of nation. "The summer of 1947 was not like other Indian summers. Even the weather had a different feel in India that year. It was hotter than usual and drier and dustier." (P. 01).

The monsoon was late. The people began to say that god was punishing them for their sins. Thus, making an unpleasant atmosphere the writer creates the right setting for the unpleasant and ugly communal riots, violence and massacre. "O Juggia 'he called in a falsetto voice, Juggia! He winked at his companions. 'Wear these bangles, Juggia. Wear these bangles and put henna on your palms. 'or give them to the weaver's daughter', one of the gunmen yelled." (P. 11). Juggat Singh or Jugga is a Sikh thief. He is an uneducated native Badmash who has got to report at the police station every week. He is six feet four inches tall and heavily built. He is the protagonist within the novel Train to Pakistan. He was the gang leader of the dacoits. He is a passionate lover of Nooran the Muslim weaver's daughter.

He was a villain within the eyes of his family friends and neighbours but he redeems himself through his sacrifice for the noble cause of saving the lives of hundreds of tiny village Mano Majra Muslims. Iqbal Singh is a well-educated social workers from England. The villagers respect him much and call him 'Babusahib. The name Iqbal is quite common among the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. He is a member of the people's party of India. Both the persons are of different minor and major characteristics but both are arrested for the same reason money lender Lal Ram Lal Murder which they had not committed. "He did not have to say what Iqbal he was. He could be a Muslim. Iqbal Mohammed. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand, or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh." (P.38). Till one night the murder of Lal Ram Lal the Hindu Moneylender. The act of dacoity committed by Mali and his gang but charged on the village bad boy Juggut Singh function as a premonition of the catastrophe to come. The trains ran continually between these two countries and people called the "Ghosts Train" (trains carrying corpses of people). The train carrying good and passengers which used to mark the rhythm of the Mono Majra tiny village's daily activities. During partition days the village was at first disturbed by the dacoity and murder of the money-lender Lal Ram Lal his was the only Hindu Family in the community in Mano Majra. But the police arrested Juggut Singh and Iqbal holding them. Besides this, the happy and peaceful town Mano Majra disturbed a lot by the trains, its delayed and its arrival full with corpses.

At the same time rumors spread in the border villages about the communal riots. He is harsh and cruel with the criminals like Jugga criminals mouth, on the other hand he tells him to release Mali and his gang the real criminals. He devises a plan to murder the Mano Majra Muslims and send their dead bodies to Lahor on a Train to Pakistan.

"You are a Muslim. You go to Pakistan. That is a bloody lie,' exploded Iqbal. 'What is more, you know it is a bloody lie. You just want to cover up your stupidity by trumping up a false case' the inspector spoke back sourly." (P.77).

A district magistrate Hukum Chand is a corrupt man. He talk about the prosperous Sikhs in Chundunager and tells the sub inspector to take his share from them within reason. He tries to be friendly with the sub inspector and tells him to sit down and have a cigarette and beer with him. He is very shrewd and tells the sub inspector to allow the Mano Majra Muslim to take some of their belonging with them. He knows that Pakistan magistrates

have become millionaires overnight. He is somewhat afraid of Iqbal an educated man so he treats him well. He makes the proper arrangement for him in the cell.

He understand Hukum Chand intentions and plans very well. He asks the magistrate to use his influence with the mob and by doing so he exposes the magistrate's cowardice and fear of his own safety.

"We were wrong about both Jugga and their other fellow.' The inspector went on; 'I told you about Jugga's Liaison with a muslim weaver's girl. That kept him busy most night. Malli threw bangles into Jugga's courtyard after the dacoity" (P.104).

Jugga sacrifices his life to save the Muslim refugees and his Nooran. He is an unsung hero as nobody can take notice of his brave and daring deed. The protagonist Jugga, his loyalty to his community finds precedence over religious bigotry and even his own life. **"All Muslims of the neighbouring villages have been evacuated and taken to the refugee camp near Chundunugger. Some have already gone away to Pakistan. Others have been sent to the bigger camp at Jullundur". (P.132).** The First is depicted through the eyes of Hukum Chand the deputy commissioner a man obsessed with death his vision of the carnage in the ghost train keeps recomposing behind his closed eyelids mouths faced limbs smells resurface from the red and black splashes of blood and death.

Thus , have previously discussed the symbolic significance of the train in the novel as seen before it stands for dynamism opposed to the immobility of the village it is a time and also a reminder of the life outside the narrow precincts of Mano Majra not by chance dose disorder originated from the arrival of ghost train.

"Harey Ram, Harey Ram. Fifteen hundred innocent people! What else is a Kalyug? There is darkness over the land. This is only one spot on the frontier. I suppose similar things are happening at other places. And now I believe our people are doing the same. What about the Muslims of some villages? (P.102).

The Muslims leave with the barest minimum of their meager belongings within ten minutes and therefore the Non-Muslim neighbors don't get opportunity to mention Goodbye. The whole scene is painful at several levels; significantly the poverty in which these people lived, the uncertainty, they were thrown into and the eclipse of people's humanity. Once the convoy was out of sight the dacoits and the Sikh refugees from Pakistan raided their property and ransacked it.

The author has accurately depicted the real picture of the adverse effects of partition and the suffering that people were made to experience.

"What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers. Imam Baksh broke down. Meet Singh clasped him in his arms and began to sob. Several of the people started crying quietly and blowing their noses." (P.133).

The mullah, Imam Baksh, crushed by the appalling events, trusts his Sikh friends and is ready to accept their decree on his and his people's fate; Banta Singh equally oppressed by the rancorous sentiments infecting Mano Majra, cannot understand why the Muslim villagers should be punished for crimes they never committed and feels they have the same right as his community on the land which is theirs too. The old mullah however is conscious that the rift created in village by alien forces is too deep to admit temporary solutions.

"Partition touched Mano Majrans at both level at the community level and at the individual level. At the community level it effect very badly the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The dark clouds suspicion and fear arise among the Sikhs and Muslims, who have together for centuries". (Manver, P.31)

Hukum Chand feel that one man among the victims is still alive. These description of horror clearly point out the senseless violence done to the refugees during the partition. If one imagines the scene of violence, he shudders with horror at the cruelties inherent in man's mind. In step with the Hindus, the Muslim were to blame. The actual fact is both sides killed each shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. After the evacuation of the Muslim, some militants and Sikh refugees from Pakistan take possession of their property. They even plan to massacre the Mano Majra Muslims and send their dead bodies to Pakistan as a gift.

“The Muslim was joined by the Pathan soldiers. He sent them out in batches of three to knock at every door and ask the Muslims to come out. For a few minutes Mano Majra echoed to cries of ‘All Muslims going to Pakistan come out at once. Come! All Muslims. Out at once. (P.141)

Juggut Singh, who has criminal ancestry and who himself is “Jugga Badmas” within police record, the criminal and looter, is given the role of main protagonist in the novel. He is seen a passionate man of action, concerned for the safety of his beloved Nooran, the Mullah’s Imam Baksh daughter, when he knows of the conspiracy on the slaughter of Muslims by entrapping the train going to Pakistan. Jugga prevents the accident by cutting the rope meant for killing the Muslims. He himself is killed in the attempt, but succeeds in safeguarding the lives of the Muslims which police department fails to achieve.

“There was not even a headlight on the engine. Sparks flew out of the engine funnel like fireworks. As the train came over the bridge, cormorants flew silently down the river and terns flew up with shrill cries. The train came to a halt at Mano Majra station. It was from Pakistan. (P.149).

It’s also revealed that the Mano Majrans aren’t staying at the camp indefinitely, but will be deported to Pakistan. Panic ensues as everyone wonders what is going to happen to the Muslims’ property. The commanding officer doesn’t care, and offers Muslims solely ten minutes to grab what they’ll carry and say their goodbyes. Malli is left responsible of the property, and once the convoy is out of sight his band of dacoits and therefore the Sikh refugees from Pakistan raid and loot it.

“The rope had been cut in shreds. Only a thin tough strand remained. He went at it with the knife, and then with his teeth. The engine was almost on him. There was a volley of shots. The man shivered and collapsed. The rope snapped in the center as he fell. The train went over him, and went on to Pakistan. (P.190).

The lambardar arranges a night watch to monitor the river in case of flooding. As the men stand watch, they hear a train arrive at the Mano Majra train station. Nobody gets out. Meanwhile on the river, dead livestock, thatch, and vesture return floating down. Once morning breaks, the lads will see the bodies of dead men, women, and youngster bobbing within the water. It’s clear another massacre happened upstream. The men hurriedly return to the village to report the activity at the river, but find everyone’s eyes glued to the train station. The train that arrived is another ghost train, and this point the bodies are being disposed of in a very mass grave. The train rolls over him and continues, unscathed, on the way to Pakistan. Then train went over him and went on Pakistan.

Conclusion

The novel “Train to Pakistan” paints a grim picture of Indian independence and the therefore reality of partition. The people of Mano Majra village are under a lot of tress due to the riots. Therefore, they pray to the God in despair and frustration. The police officers there use the main criminals to cause riots in the Hindu and Muslim communities. As a result Muslim are forced to migrate to Pakistan. The cops would send the Muslim from Mano Majra village to Chundunnugger camp against his and therefore the Sikh needs as he was to be deported from there to Pakistan. Once Jugga the protagonist of the novel learns that the train carrying Muslim from India is close to be attacked Jugga risks his life to save lots of his beloved Nooran and the train reaches Pakistan without any casualties. Some people are obsessed with religious and caste and attack each other’s lives and cause riots and kill innocent people. On the one hand, people sacrifice for love and the few people are forced to divide the two countries India and Pakistan.

Work Cited:

- [1]. Ahmed, S. (2004). The cultural politics of emotion. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- [2]. Butalia, U. 2000.The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India. Durham: Duke University Press.
- [3]. Crane, R. J. (2005). Inscripting a Sikh India: An alternative reading of Khuswant Singh’s Train to Pakistan. Eds. Morey, P. and Alex T. Alternative Indias: Writing, nation and communalism. New York: Rodopi

- [4]. Kaur, Ravinder (2007): Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi. Oxford university press.
- [5]. Manaver, Twinkle B. (1998) "The Theme of Partition in Khushwant Singh's Novel Train to Pakistan," Contemporary Indian Writings in English, ed. Jayadipsinha Dodiya, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors,
- [6]. Singh, Khushwant (1956) Train to Pakistan, New Delhi: Penguin book India.
- [7]. Bruschi,Isabella (2010)Partition Fiction Gendered Perspectives, New Delhi :Atlantic Pub &distribution
- [8]. Singh, K. 1968-69. Interview with Khushwant Singh. Mahfil, '05,1/2:27-42.