



TRAIN TO PAKISTAN : A REALISTIC NOVEL

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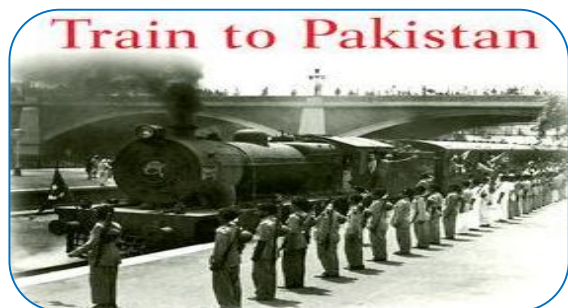
ABSTRACT :

The subcontinent was deflected into a hateful region in August 1947 when the British announced the division of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. Violence, evilness and real evil erupted into powerful mass that soared out of control and consumed everyone that came in path. The Partition of India was the stage of dividing the subcontinent along separatist lines, which took place in 1947 as India obtained its independence from the British Empire. The northern part predominantly Muslim, became Pakistan and the Southern predominantly Hindu became the republic of India, the partition however destroyed both India and Pakistan as the process claimed many lives in riots, rapes, murders and looting. The two countries began their independence with ruined economies and lands without an established, experienced system of government, not only this, but also about 15 million people were displaced from their homes. The partition of India was an important event not only in the history of the Indian subcontinent but in the world history. Its chief reason was the communal thinking of both Hindus and Muslims; but the circumstances under which it occurred made it one of the saddest events of the history of India. The partition was remarkably brutal and large in scale and unleashed misery and loss of lives and property as millions of refugees fled either to Pakistan or to India.

KEYWORDS : *out of control and consumed everyone , murders and looting.*

INTRODUCTION

Khushwant Singh was born on Feb. 2, 1915 in West Punjab. He got his schoolings in Delhi, Lahore and London. Khushwant Singh's name is bound to go down in Indian literary history as one of the finest historians and novelists, a forthright political commentator and an out-standing observer and social critic. He is known as one of India's distinguished men of letters with an international reputation, besides being a significant post-colonial writer in English language. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1974 but returned the decoration in 1984 in protest against the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the Army. In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award in India. His novel



Train to Pakistan won him international acclaim and became the best-selling author of over 80 English publications.

Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is a masterpiece, dealing with the riots before and after the partition of India. The book deals with several issues like-Partition, riots, love, hate and human relationships. But aim of the present paper is to analyze it as a realistic novel.

It is a type of novel characterized as the fictional attempt to give the effect of realism by representing complex characters with mixed motives who are rooted in social class, operate in a highly developed social structure, interact with many other characters, and undergo plausible and everyday modes of experience. (Abraham, M.H. (2019), "A Glossary of Literary Terms (11th Ed.)."

The story is set in Mano Majra, a tiny village very close to the freshly drawn border between India and Pakistan. Life seems to stand still in this peaceful, little Oasis in the midst of the outbreaks of violence shaking the Sub-continent. Muslims, Sikhs and the only Hindu family residing there, still live in perfect harmony. They represent a very normal situation of communal harmony obtaining in thousands of other villages and towns on what was going to be the Indo-Pak border. They have been there for centuries as a composite population of Sikhs and Muslims equal in number living like Brothers and Sisters.

Train to Pakistan is among the greatest realistic novels of Post World War II Indian fiction in English. It is Khushwant Singh's best procurement, which he is unlikely to excel. This realistic masterpiece comprises, among other things, a well-thought-out structure, an artistically thought plot, an absorbing saga and imaginatively realised characters. It has many remarkable features such as an attentively symbolic framework, meaningful atmosphere and a powerful, simple naturalistic mode of expression or style.

The chief quality of *Train to Pakistan* is its entire realism, its absolute devotion to the truth of life, its intense show of one of the most moving, even tragic, events of living Indian history of the partition. It is also spotted by its special naturalistic morals. The individual in Khushwant Singh made-up world is silhouetted against this vast, panoramic background, the great human catastrophe of the partition of India and the terrible and cruel events which followed it. Khushwant Singh's art is lighted in not only probing deep into the real but in relocating the actual into symbol and image. His art of realistic explanation cannot be merely described as an exercise in the journal of existence; in effect, it is a creative effort of go beyond the actual, claiming the value and dignity of the individual, and finally, of expressing the tragic splendour of a man's sacrifice for his woman.

Train to Pakistan was genuinely entitled *Mano Majra* (1956). The name of a location which is the centre of action in the sequence of events leading to the final devastation. The change in the title takes the result of deep opinion, not a matter of mere chance or accidental choice. The change is from the stable to the moveable: Mano Majra, the name of a village is a fixed point in space, whereas the train is a symbol of movement. The use of the word "train" has other dependent associations also. The train informs groups or multitudes of people who are caption for various right ways. On the eve of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, millions of people from either side of the dividing lines were in search for shelter and safety. Millions of non-Muslims from Pakistan waited for a passage to India, a land of expectation and peace, whereas millions of Muslims from India were in search for the road to Pakistan, the land of Islamic faith and promise. Thus, the train informs the movement of massive communities torn from their roots and areas of traditional growth to a new "Jerusalem". It reveals the deplorable processes of this change, the terrible and dreadful experience of human beings involved in a historical, impersonal and bestialized process. The train indicates the fate of the individuals, the fortunes of the two newly built-up nations, in effect upon a political decision and the suffering, pain and deception, which issue from it. Second, the train is also a symbol of the machine age, an era dominated by science and technology. (Shahane, V.A. *Khushwant Singh*, p. 29)

The realisation is supreme that the modern mechanistic, materialistic age has caused deuce destruction of humanistic values. The age of machines has activated constantly increasing degrees of animalization. Man, divorced from nature and God, believes baseless and disunited. This rootlessness of man and his disunion from the bonds of the earth which nursed him, are symbolised by the train in *Train to Pakistan*. The association of Mano Majra, a village on the Indian side in Punjab, with the train (which connected it with Lahore, the capital of the undivided Punjab before partition) is back behind one's confrontation between the innocent and ignorant farmer, and the impersonal machine age.

More important, the train counsels the recurrent rhythmic pattern in the novel. In his analysis of the idea of rhythm in fiction, E.K. Brown has commented on the significance of rotative patterns and has given several examples, particularly from the novel of E.M. Forster. In a similar reference the train in Khushwant

Singh's novel is at the heart of the sequence of events and processes of motivation : “*Mano Majra has always been known for its railway station.*” (Singh, Khushwant. *Train to Pakistan*, p.3) Whereas express trains do not stop at Mano Majra, two passenger trains running between Lahore and Delhi stop there; shunting goods wagons spend a considerable time, and the whistling and puffing of engines fill the atmosphere of the village— “*All this has made Mano Majra very conscious of trains.*” (Singh, Khushwant. *Train to Pakistan*, p. 4). Thus the train, the symbol both of society involved in movement and of an uprooted community, is closely connected with Mano Majra.

The scene of *Train to Pakistan* is set aside in India on the eve of the partition in 1947. About ten million people- Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India are in flight and in the large-scale sectarian disturbances and killings nearly a million are dead. Only Mano Majra, a small village is, at this time, mostly free from communal craze and fratricidal conflict. Sikhs and Muslims have lived in Mano Majra for centuries, and their relationships are friendly. On an August night, Malli, a dacoit and his gang enter Mano Majra and demand Ram Lal's treasures. Ram Lal, a moneylender, denies, and is murdered. The gang leaves the village dropping a few bangles in the house of Juggat Singh, who is also known as Jugga. Jugga, who has done a service several jail terms on several charges is at that time out in the fields. He was expected not to leave his house after sunset, but the call of Nooran, his beloved, the Muslim weaver's daughter, is too compelling for him to adhere by the restrictive rules of the police. Jugga and Nooran return to the village only to find the people seriously upset by the dacoity and the murder of Ram Lal. Almost at the same time, Hukum Chand, the divisional commissioner who has reached earlier at the officer's rest home, is engaged in a sordid affair with Haseena, a teenaged prostitute. He tries to take liberties with her, hears the gunshots and voice of Mano Majrans, swears loudly and then leaves the girl. The next day, the policemen reached at Mano Majra railway station to conduct an inquiry into the murder of Ram Lal. By the same train reaches Iqbal Singh, a western-educated youth, who has been posted by the people's party to work among the common folk. This westernised young man goes over to the village Gurudwara and is received by the hospitable Meet Singh, the Sikh priest. He is praised by Meet Singh and the village Lambardar. He is however, arrested by the police through misconception. Iqbal and Juggat Singh are both kept by the police on charges of co-partnership in Ram Lal's murder, though no proceedings are initiated against them. Malli and his gang, the real murderers, are also arrested, but they are later released. The police inspector suspects Iqbal to be a Muslim and in order to perceive himself, has him plunder to make sure that he had been circumcised in accordance with Muslim practice.

Events move fast, and the fate of personal in Mano Majra is absolutely impressed by the catastrophic events of partition. The arrival of the ghost train loaded with corpses at Mano Majra from Pakistan “*created a commotion*”. (Singh, Khushwant. *Train to Pakistan*, p. 82). The dark clouds of suspicion and fear arise among the Sikhs and Muslims who have remained together for centuries. Yet perception of brotherliness has not rejected and they meet for advice in a scene that is both immensely human and touching. Madness has attacked Mano Majra too, in spite of the pitiful character of Mano Majrans. Muslims are empty out to a refugee camp at Chandannagar, later to be passed over to Pakistan. Nooran, who is with Jugga's child, visits his mother but is helpless to go to refugee camp. Hindu fanatics vow revenge upon Muslims for what Muslims have done to Hindus in Pakistan. Hukum Chand finds out that Haseena too would be on the train which is calculated to carry Muslim refugees from the Chandannagar camp to Pakistan. Jugga and Iqbal are both liberated at this crucial stage. Juggat Singh goes to Mano Majra only to find that Nooran has been accepted to the refugee camp and that she would be travelling on the *Train to Pakistan*. He also knows of a plot of the Hindu fanatics to blow up the train with dynamite as it passed the railroad bridge at Mano Majra. Jugga gets up the steel spans of the bridge and begins to slash at the rope connecting the fulmination material with a sharp instrument, a Kirpan. The leader of the Hindu saboteurs fires at him, but Jugga clings to the rope with his hands and cuts it to pieces. The engine of the incoming train “*was almost on him*”. Thus the train “*went over him, and went to Pakistan*” (Singh, Khushwant. *Train to Pakistan*, p. 190).

Thus, Jugga sacrifices his life to save the train. The *Train to Pakistan* shows, how the themes of love and religion cause mankind to do thinkable things that include heart breaking actions . The people of the

village were thrown into a system where the value of human life is based on caste systems , religious and political beliefs. The bond between Sikh Jugga and Muslims shows that people can choose to be different, love exists in every religion, and love has no language but the language of love only. All of them could have prevented the tragedy, but it would have cost them their lives. Some avoid, some think over and only one does the right thing without thinking anything.

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