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**Editor-In-Chief**

**Prof. K. N. Shelke**

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**Love Conquers All: *Train to Pakistan*****Dr. Archana Durgesh & Ms. Ekta Sawhney***BBD NITM, Lucknow, (U.P.) India***Abstract**

Train To Pakistan is a historical novel by Khushwant Singh, published in 1956. It recounts the Partition of India in August 1947. Instead of depicting the Partition in terms of only the political events surrounding it, Singh digs into a deep local focus, providing a human dimension which brings to the event a sense of reality, horror, and believability. It is a novel set in AD 1947 when the partition of India was taking place and swarms of people – both Hindus and Muslims were migrating in large numbers. The time was a tumultuous one where, as an outcome of communal riots, many people were killed, their properties looted, women raped and children tortured. Mr. Singh focused on the lower class people who became the main victim of partition. A huge mass of victims transferred from one place to another. The novel obviously shows that Mr. Singh did not approve the scene of partition. He highlighted the political errors during the partition and registered his protest against the tragedy. Through this novel Khushwant tries to depict the injustice which had done to poor people. He has a power to depict situations with down-to-earth worldliness. Singh has a knack for painting the insignificant into significant, giving adequate word visuals for gestures, facial expressions and nuances of behavior making the depiction vivid and effective. Khushwant's book captured that insanity through the imaginary village of Mano Majra. Based on personal experiences, the book was fiction based on fact.

**Keywords:** Partition, Brutality, Torture, Victims

Khushwant Singh arguably is India's most read and known author, columnist and journalist. Born on 15th August 1915 in Hadali, now in Pakistan, Mr. Singh started his career as a lawyer in Pakistan but soon he left the idea of becoming a successful lawyer. He decided to take risk in the field of writing.

Mr. Singh belonged to the trade family yet he never thought of trying his hand in business or construction. He inducted thinking in the direction of writing and started his first novel *Mano-Majra*, which later became popular as *Train to Pakistan*. At first it was not received with much

enthusiasm but after a short period bibliophiles recognized Mr. Singh's genius as a novelist. *Train to Pakistan (Mano-Majra)* won Grove Press Award in 1954. It also earned the attention of innumerable readers from India and abroad. The Grove Press Award filled him with courage to try another novel then second novel came and third, fourth and fifth. The chain is on till today. Though Mr. Singh has crossed 90 yet we can expect another novel so far as his stamina is concerned.

*Train to Pakistan* discussed the after effects of India's independence, which brought the partition of India and Pakistan. Mr. Singh

focused on the lower class people who became the main victim of partition. A huge mass of victims transferred from one place to another. This migration also caused killing, raping and looting. The entire story of the novel revolves around one particular village Mano-Majra in the far provinces of Punjab. The life of the village is simple and quite peaceful, which is regulated by the whistles of trains. But all of a sudden, the untimely arrival of a train disturbs the peace of the village. This train brings the countless corpses from Pakistan. On the other hand Malli with his fellow culprits robs and murders Lala Ram Lal. Jagga's absence from the village draws him in the circle of suspicion. Iqbal, a communist reaches Mano-Majra but on account of being a stranger he with Jagga is also arrested in Lala Ram Lal's murder case. Malli is also arrested but after some time he is released. Meanwhile Mano-Majra turns into a refugee camp. In the village some criminal minded people provoke the others to send a *Train to Pakistan* full of corpses. Jagga is released and he comes to know about the villagers so for the sake of his beloved Nooran, who is also heading to Pakistan, determine to capsize the conspiracy. He sacrifices his life and lets the train go to Pakistan untouched.

The novel obviously shows that Mr. Singh did not approve the scene of partition. He highlighted the political errors during the partition and registered his protest against the tragedy. Before Mr. Singh many writer have treated love, sex and marriage but only Mr. Khushwant Singh could talk about love and sex with much candor and boldness. Love is the noblest gift bestowed upon the human being by God. It is the feeling of love

that ties us with our relatives, friends and loved ones. But today the love is mixed with selfishness, greed and sin. That is why today the love lacks the warmth of love and greedless love. The writer has aspired to a great extent to explore the love but love cannot be discussed without sex. In *Train to Pakistan* Mr. Singh highlights the love between Juggat Singh and Nooran. On the other hand he shows the far greater love between two communities i.e. Sikh and Muslim. Here it can easily be observed that Mr. Singh believes in the famous quotation "Love is blind" The love does not know any hindrance of caste, color creed and age. Almost all his novels are brimful with the love affairs between the lover of different communities like Juggat-Nooran, love affair in *Train to Pakistan*, Hukum Chand-Haseena love affair in *Train to Pakistan*, The motto of Mr. Khushwant Singh behind delineating these love affairs is that he definitely wants to create love and amity among all the communities. Mr. Singh does not feel shame in talking about the love affair between mature and immature. Hukum Chand in *Train to Pakistan* falls in love with an immature girl like Haseena, younger than his own daughter.

Though Mr. Singh passed a long period of his life abroad yet he was a true patriot and a true Indian. Mr. Singh was born in 1915 when India was the slave of British. He saw the freedom struggle and the atrocities on Indian by the British rulers. While India got freedom Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the Indian flag on 15th August 1947, Mr. Singh was standing fifty yards away from Lal Quilla. The tears of happiness in his eyes blurred the vision. But the tragedy of

partition just after the independence again made him feel sorry and shattered. As a true patriot he did not favor the partition of India and Pakistan. Regarding this tragedy he poured his bitter views in the very first novel *Train to Pakistan*. The tragedy of partition only caused the low class people of India and Pakistan. A huge mass of people migrated from one place to another in search of peace and love.

Mr. Singh adopted the Sikhism for the background of his novels. *Mano-Majra*, which later became *Train to Pakistan*, is a story of different changes in a Sikh Village during partition. Mr. Khushwant Singh's novels are very much close to the reality. A limpid glimpse of the era in which the novel was written, can be observed, like *Train to Pakistan* contains the greatest tragedy (Partition) of India's history. *Train to Pakistan* has a fine blending of growth in space and movement in time. The novel grows out of a chronological sequence of time with a synthesis of reality and value. It expresses creatively as to how the movement of trains, which used to set tone of the village, signaling time for action, rest and sleep, became a symbol of despair, darkness and destruction. This technique of contrast is very suggestive. The novelist has recreated imaginatively the likes of Hukum Chand, the commissioner, reformist, Iqbal, criminals Juggat Singh and Mali gang, still visible in the Indian society. In moneylender Ram Lal's murder case Jugga and Iqbal are put behind the bars, while the real culprit Mali is released after arrest. Is such a drama not enacted even today? Also, the lodging together of Jugga, the criminal, and Iqbal,

the reformist, gives a peep into the police way of functioning then and even today.

In his realistic depiction of the then prevailing atmosphere of hatred and violence and distrust between the Hindus and the Muslims, Mr. Khushwant Singh narrative spares neither: Mullahs roamed the Punjab and the Frontier Province with boxes of human skulls said to be those of Muslims in Bihar. There were reports of Pakistani police helping and protecting Muslims who were attacking and killing Hindus. The atrocities inflicted on Hindus in Lahore have been described by the novelist through a police constable who reports: ...It was the Muslim police taking side which made the difference in the riots. Hindu boys of Lahore would have given the Muslims a hell if it had not been for their police. They did a lot of ZULUM... their army is like that, too, Baluch soldiers have been shooting people whenever they were sure there was no chance of running into Sikh or Gurkha troops. The novelist had maintained a balance in condemning atrocities on both sides. As a realist in his factual depiction of the violence scenes, he narrates the story of four Sikh Sardars on a killing spree in a jeep alongside the column of mile-long Muslim refugees on foot. "...without warning they opened fire with their stenguns, God alone knows how many they killed... The novelist has described three levels of Governmental strata. Commenting on this, V.A. Shahane in his book, *Khushwant Singh*, says: Three levels of Governmental strata are depicted. Hukum Chand belongs to the upper level of the Punjab district administration; the sub-inspector of police comes from the middle level; constables



belong to the lower level of this hierarchical, administrative structure. Hukum Chand is a type as well as an individual, a person as well as a bureaucrat, and, in various ways, an evolving character. Mr. Khushwant Singh has beautifully portrayed the man's multidimensional mind, especially in the case of Jugga, the criminal, in love with Nooran, the Muslim Mullah's daughter. Jugga visits the Gurudwara and asks for the Guru's blessings to prepare himself for the final sacrifice which he does make. This is also true in the case of Hukum Chand whose mind flies to Haseena, the dancing girl, heading for Pakistan with a hope that she would be safe. This ambivalence of mind has exquisitely been brought out by Singh in the novel. Shahane comments on the character of Juggat Singh and says: One finds a "rare combination of the criminal and the lover, which is a baffling aspect of the realities and complexities of life. He embodies the ambivalence of moral values. 6 In a rare narrative technique, the novelist has depicted forces of division and unity, hate and love, anger and affection and revenge and sacrifice alternating in the novel. Shahane commenting on this aspect says: *Train to Pakistan* presents rural Punjab with its religious and caste divisions, which result in alienation, alternating with forces of union, which result in amity. Hate alternates with love; anger alternates with affection; the desire for revenge alternates with the impulse to sacrifice. Mr. Singh in this novel has also artistically explored the mind of the Sikh priest Meet Singh and the reformist Iqbal, who discuss the urgent need for stopping the communities on the Indian side from taking retaliatory actions by

blowing the train heading for Pakistan with Muslim refugees from Mano Majra on the railway over bridge mid river. Meet Singh is helpless and so is the reformist Iqbal as the voice of sanity had been stilled and drowned in the communal frenzy, provoked and ignited by arrival and disposal of trainloads of the slain bodies from across the borders. Both Meet Singh and Iqbal in the given situation find themselves incapable of any positive action and both find themselves out of place.

But it is not the same case with criminal Jugga who gets reformed at the last moment and plays the role of saviour, climbs up the steel span of the bridge, tugs at the rope, stretches himself on it near the point of knot, slashes at the rope with small KIRPAN in face of a volley of shots fired at him by the communalists intent on derailing the train. But Jugga undeterred hammers on and finally cuts the rope in shreds, delinks it with the explosive and the train passes off the bridge safely to Pakistan. Shahane hails this novel as a creative endeavour of Khushwant Singh: He says: The art of Khushwant Singh is revealed in not merely probing deep into the real but in transporting the actual into symbol and image. His art of realistic portrayal cannot be described merely as an exercise in the book-keeping of existence: in fact, it is a creative endeavour of transcending the actual, asserting the value of dignity of the individual, and finally, of expressing the tragic splendour of a man's sacrifice for a woman.<sup>8</sup> Truly, Jugga makes his sacrifice for his love, Nooran, who along with others of her caste was heading for Pakistan by the train which is saved from being derailed. Thus, his

personal physical love for Nooran is transformed into the love for the entire trainload of Muslims. His love Nooran transcends his physical love for her. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that 'hate the sin, not the sinner.' In the same vein, the novelist tells his readers through the reformist Iqbal: "Criminals are not born. They are made by hunger, want and injustice."<sup>9</sup> Khushwant Singh uses the narrative technique of contrast which is his speciality in this novel. Taking a note of this striking feature applied by the novelist in *Train to Pakistan*; Shahane says: The three scenes taking almost simultaneously to the refrain of the railway engine's whistle demonstrate the three-fold mode of operation of the principle of contrast inherent in Singh's art of fiction. Dacoity is contrasted with love, and a spiritual love is differentiated from sheer physical passion. The act of dacoity is conceived in a world of growing materialism. Jugga's genuine involvement with Nooran is based on strong emotion, whereas-Hukum-Chand's association with Haseena, though delicate and ambivalent, is initially a transitory, superficial and casual relationship. Singh's narrative technique is such that in his portrayal he has not only created the real and life-like situations in the novel, but has also given a sense of largeness to life. He has a unique skill and ability to weave multi-dimensional thoughts into a perfect synthetic whole on a pattern seldom found anywhere else.

He has a power to depict situations with down-to-earth worldliness. Singh has a knack for painting the insignificant into significant, giving adequate word visuals for

gestures, facial expressions and nuances of behavior making the depiction vivid and effective as in case of the singer and the dancing party brought to the guest house to entertain Hukum Chand. The description is typically Indian and suited to the situation. Khushwant Singh has presented Mano Majra on the Indo-Pak border in the Punjab as a microcosm of the communal temper during the days of partition. Applying a rare narrative technique, Singh sets the pattern of the village fusing its atmosphere with the whistling and puffing of the rail engines, regulating the village activities with the arrival and departure of trains. When the first stories of atrocities reach, the peace of the village is disturbed, but for the unsuspecting Mano Majra inhabitants the stories relate to a different world. They ignore the stories and prefer to live in the world of their own, sharing joys and sorrows of each other and discussing the village problems in the Gurudwara. There is a vivid description in the novel of the village harmonious atmosphere and the functional integration. Shahane rightly observes: ...train is a dual symbol. It symbolizes life and action, but it also stands for death and disaster. The scene of the train from Pakistan, which brings in countless corpses to Mano Majra, is awful and heartrending. The setting and appearance of the train are in tune with its funeral atmosphere. Reflecting on the unceremonious burial of bodies from Pakistan and consigning the same to flames which rise to the sky, described by Singh as "red tongues of flame", Shahane says:

The "red tongues of flame" has dual meaning. It symbolises poisonous and

aggressive nature of the snake and shows how, in the heat of destructive lunacy men turn into poisonous reptiles.

The dramatization in the narrative technique of Khushwant Singh has found full play in his description of Jugga determined to cut the rope linked to explosives to blow off the train from Mano Majra heading for Pakistan as it crossed the railway bridge over the nearby river. As the reader goes through line by line his excitement increases as he gets a visual of the dare-devil performance of Jugga. He says: The man hacked the rope vigorously. The thick rope had been tied horizontally above the railway line on the first steel pan of the bridge. It was about 20 feet above the track. The rope was stiff as the shaft of steel. The vigilant leader of the gang communalists who wanted to derail the train of Muslim refugees raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired. He hit his mark and one of the man's legs came off the rope and dangled in the air. The other was still twined round the rope. He slashed away in frantic haste. The engine was only a few yards off, throwing embers high up in the sky. Somebody fired another shot. The man's body slid off the rope, but he clung to it with his hands and chin. He pulled himself up, caught the rope under his left armpit and again started hacking with his right hand. The rope had been cut in shreds. Only a thin tough strand remained. He went at it with his knife, and then with his teeth. The man shivered and collapsed. The rope snapped in the centre as he fell. The train went over him, and went on to Pakistan. Critics K.K. Sharma and B.K. Johri in their book, *The Partition in Indian-English Novels*, commenting on *Train to Pakistan* echo the

view of V.A. Shahane about realism in the novel. They say: Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* pictures the brutal, realistic story of political hatred and of mass passions during the tragic days that preceded and followed the partition of India... Trains were halted and the unfortunate passengers were ruthlessly butchered. Men, women and children were indiscriminate victims of mad communal frenzy: they were molested and killed by armed bands of men. The novel depicts the fateful journey of one such train vividly and powerfully. The narrative in the novel opens with a suggestive reference to the summer season of 1947 which the novelist describes as "longer, drier and dustier." These expressions foretell the future happenings. The word 'longer' suggests continued oppressive heat and increased miseries of the uprooted people on either side of the Indo-Pak border. The word 'drier' suggests that the fountain of friendship, fellow-feeling and compassion would dry up, and the word 'dustier' suggests feverish movements of the uprooted people in search of new hearth and home kicking up blinding dust. In the opening part of the novel, Singh gives a picture of unity of human and natural world and forecasts punishment for sins in the form of a cruel summer season. Thus, he has weaved into the narration of the novel a popular concept of sin and punishment. Singh has lent significance to his narration on the theme of partition as the novel expresses concerns of the people and their anxieties at the dehumanization and degradation of human values. In his narrative technique Singh has applied both the reportorial and documentary modes of

writing adopting a lucid and fluent style. In the novel, Singh blames both the communities for the holocaust in his immaculate portrayal of the real situation. He says: The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped.

In his narrative technique Singh has narrated the story in cause and effect, in action and responses, in tensions and conflicts. He has converted a historical fact of partition into a gripping plot giving it a comic-tragic effect. He has recreated the past into meaningful symbols of contemporary situation and future possibilities. *Train to Pakistan* follows a repetitive pattern marked by phases of sanity and insanity, discrimination and patronage, corrupt practices and the value thinking and righteousness and responsibility. There is lying, bribery, hypocrisy, drunkenness, womanizing, unfair police and bureaucratic functioning.

In his narration of the story Singh has not lost sight of popular beliefs of the people about bad weather, disturbances in the weather cycle, symbolic use of birds and lizards to make a point which has suggestively been explained. Singh in the novel has minimized elaboration, but dramatized the nuances behind the facts. The dialogues are simple, natural and yet lively and functional. He has made use of vernacular words, such as NAR ADMI for the man, which appear unavoidable for explaining a point. The monologues, especially of Hukum Chand, are marked with irony. A feel of it may be had in Hukum Chand's monologue full of bitter irony: "Yes, Mr. Prime Minister (Nehru), you had your tryst (with destiny)...." Singh

however, appears dilatory when he deals with Monsoon in full three pages. This has been done with a view to explaining to foreign readers what Monsoon means for India and Indians. Singh is a writer of human ethos, life and passions and his theme, style and treatment of the plot establishes his identity as a writer of Sikh life in the undivided rural Punjab. There is Indianness in his writings. Writing on the Indianness of Indian Fiction in English, Sheo Bhushan Shukla, a well-known critic, observes that to establish a distinct identity, and abundance of explanatory ethnographic, social and environmental details, intended primarily for the consumption of foreign readers have been given by the Indo-English writers while writing "about particular parts of the country: Mulk Raj Anand and Khushwant Singh write about the Punjab." Singh's narrative technique is of a plot, story and an action and communication through comic-tragic-ironical modes. He is a master of subtle ironic designs in which he records life and its passions and peeps into the forces for and against the interests of the people, society and the nation.

The sharp contrast brought into focus by depiction of a representative village, Mano Majra, having a mixed population in the period before and after partition is shockingly real. Violence which erupted in the wake of partition is a part of contemporary Indian history marked with the bloodiest upheavals. Women, young and old, were abducted, raped, mutilated and the victims were ordinary men and women. Singh in his novel brings out poignant scenes in which hands were raised by the people against their one-time friendly and

helping neighbors on both sides of the Indo-Pak border. And above all the atrocities were committed on the people under duress in flight for their new destinations. Critics Sheo Bhushan Shukla and Rini Shukla say: Khushwant Singh's forte, however, is storytelling and not characterisation. He is master of a forceful narrative technique. His mode is dramatic and his presentation is graphic and lively. There is no suspicion of any artificiality anywhere in the plot and the whole organism emerges spontaneously and by itself. The climax in the novel is breathtaking and convincing. The novelist avoids the use of the marvelous and the improbable, but is compelling enough to make us read the novel from cover to cover. A subtle feature of his art is the use of spontaneous symbols and motifs which add to the vitality of his plots. They further comment: Using the technique of distancing, he creates in powerful words the impact of cataclysmal happenings on Indo-Pak border on the consciousness of the people for whom independence means little. The novel points to as to how non-violence was discarded overnight and the voice of sanity was throttled. For the marauders, the orgies of violence were fulfilling some basic urgency. The basic urge of violence overtook the sense of balance and on a major test the creed of non-violence crumbled and gave way to violence which was encouraged and let loose on both sides with impunity. Singh has interpreted man and his worldly ways, portrayed psychologically the thought process, as in

the case of reformist Iqbal, bureaucrat Hukum Chand, Sikh priest Meet Singh, Muslim Mullah, the village Lambardar and others. The novel however, suffers from inadequate emotional expressions of Nooran, who is pregnant and in deep love with Jugga, while being forced out of Mano Majra to join her community heading for Pakistan without having even a glimpse of her lover who is in jail facing a murder charge. The fulfillment and frustration of Juggat Singh has, however, been portrayed realistically and his preparation for sacrifice to save Nooran from the gallows of death is in conformity with the Sikh tradition.

Mr. Singh in his narrative technique includes popular beliefs to create the desired effect on the readers like: "It is all written there "Jugga's mother says cursing her lot and slapping her forehead. Khushwant Singh mixes Hindi words in his narration to reinforce the impact of his narrative. He has made typical usages bordering on bad English, such as: What honorable noun does your honour bear<sup>24</sup>? Where does your wealth reside? It is absolutely sixteen annas' worth in the rupee. ...how the pig's penis spoke to Chacha? You snored like a railway engine. Give him his bangles. Urdu-Hindi words such as Salaam, Kalyug, Kos, Nar Admi, Annas, Karmat etc. have been used, but not out of place. However they add a rare flavor to the narrative. On the strength of the above, it may be said that in his narration of the story, Singh has followed humanistic and realistic tradition in the Indo-English literature.

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