

Cinematic and Literary Representation of Historical Context: An Analysis of Train to Pakistan

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Abstract

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) manifests a Partition novel that creates a vivid image of the human costs of dividing India in 1947. Singh depicts the brutality, existential issues, and intercommunal conflicts in the made-up community of Mano Majra through its in-depth story. This paper explores *Train to Pakistan* in its literary representation as well as the cinematic adaptation done by Pamela Rooks (1998). Partition literature, here emerging in response to the 1947 division of British India, offer a fertile ground for the unfolding of themes of trauma, communal violence, displacement and fractured identities. By bridging literary theory with film studies, this paper highlights how *Train to Pakistan* functions as both a historical document and a narrative of resistance.

Keywords: Partition, literature, film, historical, communal etc.

Introduction:

A *Train to Pakistan* takes place in 1947, the year in which the subcontinent was partitioned into two independent nations: Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. The reference to "the summer of 1947" immediately sets the historical context for the story. 1947 was a pivotal year in Indian history because it marked the partition of India into two independent nations, India and Pakistan, as they gained independence from British colonial rule. This historical context is essential to comprehending the conflicts and events that will take place in the novel.

The history of society and politics is preserved in literature, art, and movies. Numerous literary works have been inspired by the horrifying genocide that took place during India's partition. Some of these partition-related concerns, although not all of them, are discussed in literature. However, the massacres and displacements of this historic period are not only depicted in literature; they are also shown in films.

Adaptation and filmmaking:

Adaptation has been a fundamental aspect of the filmmaking process since nearly the very beginning. Filmmakers began adapting the literary works in 1907. According to Judith Buchanan adaptation is pictorializing of literature. It is the process of simplifying literary works. It is an image of words displayed on a screen. The only movies that are considered adaptations are those that are based on plays, novels, or other works. Literary adaptations are one-way translations from text to screen, particularly "classic" texts. The book is not exactly the same as literary versions.

Literature and film are both unique but equally remarkable forms of artistic expression. In the 20th century and beyond, cinema has replaced literature as the most popular form of expression, which was prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries. Over the years, there has been a shift in how Indian films are portrayed. The concept of a screen Adaptations goes back to a time when people had few entertainment options and leisure pursuits. The amount of time

required for Adapting is very important because the literature is mostly connected to the A writer or director is interested in culture, maintaining the same tone, and engaging the audience. Must adjust the society's reflection as a secondary important responsibility; it gets more If the genre is historical, it is complicated.

Text and Representation:

Train to Pakistan is a novel written by Khushwant Singh published in 1956, first it was published under the title of 'Mano Majra' named after a tiny village on the Indo-Pak border affected by the partition is the very first novel in English on the most sensitive and explosive theme of partition. Later on it is named as Train to Pakistan to make it more significant and impressive. It portrays the gruesome tragedy of the partition of Indian subcontinent.

It's has a well – constructed plot, divided into four chapters i.e. (I) Dacoity, (ii) Kalyug, (iii) Mano Majra, and (iv) Karma.

The novelist has set the action of the novel in a tiny village, Mano Majra, on the banks of the Sutlej, though it is half a mile away from it. The village being on the border is a vital point for refugee movements-The Muslims were to go to Pakistan and the Hindus and the Sikhs were to come from Pakistan. Mano Majra had a small railway station when there were provisions for passenger and goods trains. People of Mano Majra were unaware from the communal problems and massacre conflict. Sikhs and Muslims, equal in number, live like brothers at Mano Majra.

Mali and his gang, the dacoits, disturb the harmony of the Mano Majra people's life, and an unexpected train from Pakistan destroys their regular routines. Mali, a dacoit, with his gang murders a money lender Lala Ramlal, who refuses to give his

treasury. After committing the crime and before leaving the village, these dacoits throw a few bangles in the house of Jugga, Jagat Singh. He is a local dacoit, bound by law to report to the police everyday and not to leave the village without permission. But at the time of Lala Ramlal's murder, As Jugga was in the field with Nooran, the Muslim weaver's daughter, outskirts of Mano Majra. When Nooran and Jugga return to the village, they find people disturbed due to dacoity and murder.

Iqbal, an educated man is a socialist, comes to Mano Majra by a train and settles at the Gurudwara. He has been sent by the People's Party of India, there for the political enlightenment of the people.

The novelist has discussed the role played by police in public life. Iqbal has been in police surveillance, since he came to Mano Majra, Iqbal knows that the Indian police "instead of safeguarding the citizen, maltreats him and lives on corruption and bribery." Recently, Hukum Chand, was transferred as a divisional commissioner, staying in the officer's rest house. He has sexual affair with a teen aged prostitute Haseena.

The police come to Mano Majra the next day to collect the details of the happening. Both Jugga and Iqbal are held by police on the charge of murdering Lala Ramlal. Hukum Chand orders serve action to get the truth out from both of them. On the other hand, a little disturbed Mano Majra gets the major attack very soon. The peaceful atmosphere of the village soon sees its end.

The novelist has introduced two characters Meet Singh and the Lambardar to show inborn qualities of love and fellow-feelings in the inhabitants of Mano Majrans. Meet Singh is the priest in the Sikh temple and the Lambardar collects

government revenue from the farmers. Meet Singh receives Iqbal with courtesy when the latter arrived at the Gurudwara. He settled him in a room in the best way he can, and offers to arrange food for him. The Lambardar also shows good sense and intelligence in persuading the villagers to let the Muslims go to the refugee camp as a stop-gap arrangement, with an honest promise that Sikhs will look after their property sincerely in their absence and return it to them when they will come back. When the Lambardar comes to know that the Muslims are being taken to Pakistan instead of the refugee camp, he refuses to touch the property of others- "Property is a bad thing, it poisons people's minds. No we will not touch anything. We will only look after their houses."

The Sikh officer and the Sikh boys who come to the Gurudwara incite the people to take revenge, kill two Muslims for each Sikh killed, while Meet Singh and the Lambardar non-de-script though they are go out all the way to dissuade people from being revengeful. They lost the battle as some of the Mano Majrans are carried away by the declamatory speeches of the two boys. They make plans to kill the Muslims going to Pakistan by train. But Jugga's love stands in the way. Jugga is determined to save his beloved at all cost. He climbs up to the rope tied across the span surreptitiously, cut down the rope and let the passenger train pass without harm to any of the passengers. Love wins but Jugga dies for it.

Film representation:

'Train to Pakistan' is a Hindi film released in 1998 and directed by Pamela Rooks. It takes place at the Sutlej River crossing point of the railway line in Mano Majra, a peaceful town on the Indian-Pakistani border. The film revolves around the love story. The connection between Juggut

Singh (Nirmal Pandey), a small-time criminal, and Nooran (Smriti Mishra), a local Muslim girl. It should be noted that the book's original title was *Mano Majra*. 1956. In the village, Sikhs and Muslims live side by side. Sikhs control the majority of the land, and Muslims work there. The entire country was a hotbed of discrimination and radicalism during the summer of 1947, when India was being split. In India, Muslims migrated to the recently established Sikhs and Hindus from Pakistan fled to India and settled in refugee camps. One day, a train carrying the bodies of all the travelers who were killed as they attempted to leave Pakistan arrives from Pakistan. At that moment, this peaceful community undergoes a permanent transformation. The entire film is based on the original novel. In the movie, Mohan Agashe portrayed Hukum Chand, Nirmal Pandey as Jaggat Singh and Jagaa, Rajit Kapoor as Iqbal, Smriti Mishra as Nooran, Divya Dutta as the Muslim prostitute girl, and Mangal Dhillon as the Sub Inspector.

Since Singh's book had a compelling and powerful theme, it was difficult to adapt it for the big screen. And Rooks was not an exception. Neither has Rooks excluded much from the novel, nor has she included anything from any other sources. However, she has added a few differences to the original work's characters. In the film adaption, Rooks presents Hukum Chand, the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, recalling *Mano Majra's* background. Unlike Khushwant Singh, Rooks has tried to balance the ghost train and bodies in the river by showing Sikh Militants looting the Muslims of *Mano Majra*.

Pamela Rooks has made every effort to display it on the screen. It is true to the original text in capturing the tragedy and

trauma of the Partition era. Because of its excessive accuracy, it helps the reader with a less broad perspective comprehend and enjoy the book more. It faithfully holds onto the qualities.

Conclusion:

As a result, literature and film can be compared to the various branches of the same tree. Even though these two forms of art have certain similarities and distinctions, they both aim at taking their audiences or readers to a different domain. Literature and film creators are on the same

journey. They are both passionate about bringing us into other worlds, both real and imagined, and expressing thoughts and emotions. Numerous films are based on books, while numerous works of fiction are adapted from movies. Each affects the other in some way. It is therefore accurate to state that Bollywood and literature were meant to be together. Train to Pakistan is readers and audience catching films and novel. So, literature plays a very important role in every aspect which gives meanings and words to expressions and feelings.

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