Chapter: 2

The Trauma of Partition in *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh and The Foreign Aggression and Its Impact on Indian Politics in *Shadow From Ladakh* by Bhabani Bhattacharya.

**The Trauma of Partition in *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh**

Khushwant Singh was born on Feb. 2, 1915 in West Punjab. He got his schoolings in Delhi, Lahore and London. He was appointed information officer of the government of India at Toronto and Canada and Press attaché and public officer for the High Commission of India in the United Kingdom and the embassy in Ireland in 1948-50. In 1950 *The Mark of Vishnu* was published. He attended UNESCO Sixth General Conference in Paris in 1951 as the member of the Indian delegation. During 1952-53 he edited periodicals of the government of India. In 1956 *Train To Pakistan* was published and received award of the Grove India Fiction prize. *The Voice of God and Other Stories* was published in 1957 and then followed his second novel *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale* in 1959. In two volumes *A History of the Sikhs* was published in 1963 and received Rockefeller Foundation grant for extensive travel and research on Sikh history and religion. He got teaching and research assignment of Princeton in 1966. He was made visiting professor at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania and later joined as the chief editor of ‘*The Illustrated weekly of India*’. As a journalist he has written on a variety of themes on the world of fact, men and affairs. His narrative ability distinguishes his writing from that of the other leading journalists of India.

As a novelist Khushwant Singh is famous for *Train To Pakistan* and *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale*. *Train To Pakistan* made him internationally known, though he had made a literary reputation with publication of his short stories *The Mark of Vishnu and other stories*. Khushwant Singh is what his
British education made him, a cultured humanist. He gladly confessed that he is the product of both East and the West. The Punjab countryside, Urban Delhi, and the liberal, the sophisticated city of London are the three dominant factors that influenced Khushwant Singh. Thus exposed to the ideas and attitudes of the West, Singh is essentially an orientalist in outlook who has Indian self and individuality of personality. His journey is not without travails and tribulations, it is a ceaseless quest for identity which is reflected through the medium of his literary career and art.

Thus, Khushwant Singh is one of India’s distinguished men of letters with an international reputation. A brief account of his achievement as a novelist, short-story writer, historian, essayist, journalist and editor is sufficient to establish him in Indian Writing in English as a versatile genius. Till date he has produced few novels, a considerable number of short stories, an authentic history of Sikhs, biographies of Sikh leaders and many articles which reveal his thought and feeling of a great writer. His presentation of the real and the comic makes him stand as a pillar and peer among modern Indian writers on subjects of concern to contemporary man.

His creative urge as a novelist, short-story writer, historian and essayist has been the gradual achievements of self expression and a continuous search for self seeking. Though his mind and personality as a whole have been moulded by western education and culture, he is at heart a Sikh and a pure Indian. He values Indian art and culture and is deeply rooted in the soil of India. His writing has grown out of the grass roots of the social milieu as his experience of rural India is the base of his creative endeavour. Singh has portrayed India both as an outsider and an insider. On his novelistic art Anthony Burgess comments:

The most notable writer from the Punjab is undoubtedly the Sikh Khushwant Singh; whose I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale is a fine
chronicle of life in a Sikh community in the period 1942-43. We have here a formidable novelist who writes too little. ¹

Khushwant Singh once described himself as a writer of history and fiction. He submitted that while historian called his history books mere fiction, critics felt that his fiction appeared to be heavy going history. On the fundamental quality of Singh, V. A. Shahane writes:

although Singh’s consciousness appears to range from fiction to journalism certain basic qualities govern his creative talent and characterize the development of his art. His critical as well as creative, writing fall into a pattern which emerges from and is imperceptibly linked with, the primary characteristics of his creative mind. ²

Train To Pakistan is a magnificent novel where Khushwant Singh tells the tragic tale of the partition of India and Pakistan and the events that followed which will be remembered as one of the blackest chapters of human history. Just on the eve of independence India was partitioned causing a great upheaval in the whole continent. Independence brought in its wake one of the bloodiest carnages in the history of India. The upshot of this was that twelve million people had to flee leaving their home; nearly half a million were killed. It is also on record that over a hundred thousand women, young and old, were abducted, raped, mutilated. Thus, thousands fled from both sides of the border seeking refuge and security. The natives were uprooted and it was certainly a ghastly experience for them to give up their belongings and rush to a land which was not theirs.

The harrowing and spine chilling events of 1947 had shaken the faith of the people in the innate human beings. It had driven them into a state of wonder over what man has made of man. To Khushwant Singh, this was a period of great disillusionment and crisis of values, a distressing and disintegrating period of his life. The belief he had cherished all his life were shattered. Giving went to his inner struggle and agony, he says:
The beliefs that I had cherished all my life were shattered. I had believed in the innate goodness of the common man. But the division of India had been accompanied by the most savage massacres known in the history of the country... I had believed that we Indians were peace-loving and non-violent, that we were more concerned with matters of the spirit, while the rest of the world was involved in the pursuit of material things. After the experience of the autumn of 1947, I could no longer subscribe to this view. I became... an angry middle-aged man, who wanted to shout his disenchantment with the world... I decided to try my hand at writing. ³

The sinister and venomous impact of partition and the indignation it spawned in him has been realistically expressed in a scathing irony in *Train To Pakistan*. Originally entitled *Mano Majra*, the novel portrays with a bold and unrelenting realism, the brutal story of political hatred and violence during the turbulent and fateful days that proceeded and followed the partition of British India when the spirit of communal frenzy and a passionate zeal for self-expression were fanning and fumbling within the mass. Every citizen was caught up in the holocaust. No one could remain aloof; no one could be trusted to be impartial. The administration, the police, even the armed forces, was caught up in the blaze of hatred. Mob ruled the streets, burning, looting, killing, dishonouring women and mutilating children; even animals sacred to the other community became the legitimate targets of reprisals. As Malgonker quotes;

> The entire land was being spattered by the blood of its citizens, blistered and disfigured with the fires of religious hatred; its roads were glutted with enough dead bodies to satisfy the ghouls of a major war. ⁴

It is true to note that partition touched the whole country and Singh’s attempt in the novel is to see the events from the point of view of the people of Mano Majra, a small village which is considered to be the backdrop of this
novel. All the actions depicted in the novel, the dramas enacted by the characters take place in this tiny and typical Punjab village. Before narrating his story the author gives a brief but adequate account of the heart rending national tragedy. What impresses us most in this description is the author’s balanced and unprejudiced account of this tragedy. He writes:

Muslim said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured, both raped.  

In the first part of the novel, the writer has repeatedly pointed out that even after the savage blood bath throughout the Punjab, in the wake of independence; Mano Majra remained surprisingly free from communal stress and tension. It was in fact like a small oasis in the vast desert of communal violence and unprecedented carnage. The slow process of corruption of the village by communal virus, in fact, forms the crux of the novel. The writer painstakingly points out all the factors leading to this process of corruption and how the peaceful life in Mano Majra suddenly came to a jolt. Here Singh effectively depicts the pangs of partition of the Indian subcontinent which was certainly a dark chapter in its history. Khushwant Singh made the very appealing comment regarding the pangs of partition during one of his interviews after the screening of the film version of *Train to Pakistan* directed by Pamela Rooks at International Film Festival in New Delhi. (11-20 January, 1998). It seems to be very pertinent even today i.e. fifty years after the unfortunate tragedy of partition took place. Khushwant Singh commented that partition must be remembered and it is relevant today. It did in fact happen and can happen again. That’s why people who clamour for an independent Kashmir, Khalistan or Nagaland are reminded to realize the possibilities of recurring what happened in 1947. Thus he advised people never let partition happen again.
The partition serves both as a background and a foreground to the novel’s vision. The action of the novel centers around a tiny village called Mano Majra on the Indo–Pakistan border during the partition. As P. C. Car writes: “Singh weaves a narrative around life in this village, making the village a microcosm representing a larger world”. ⁶

Though dominated by the Sikhs, Mano Majra has as its inhabitants the Hindus and Muslims too. The chief protagonist of the novel is the village itself. The four sections of the novel – Dacoity, Kalyug, Mano Majra and Karma – are variations on a single theme, but each section foregrounds the action of the next and moves the story forward to a deeper vision. The novel begins with a focus on Mano Majra but slowly moves to suggest that Mano Majra transcends its geographical identity and becomes a metaphor. Its well defined physical and psychological properties become murkier as the narrative progresses towards its end.

The progression in the novelistic vision gets more and more complex as we move from section to section. In the first section, "Dacoity" a major metaphor is worked out. The murder of Ram Lal by a gang of dacoits from a neighbouring village sets the tone of the narrative by suggesting on additional dimension to the event. Dacoity has caused dismemberment and has made some innocent persons scapegoats for the action. Figuratively, it stands for the political dismemberment of the country by the British government who blamed the local leaders for causing the partition. Thus an ordinary event is transformed into a powerful symbol. All the events that follow seem to have resulted from the dacoity; Sing here introduces most of the important characters in this section. The next day of the murder, the train unloads at Mano Majra station a group of armed policemen and a young Marxist radical named Iqbal. Hukum Chand, the Deputy Commissioner of the district also arrive in the village around the same time. The police arrests Iqbal and Jugga suspecting them for the murder. Thus, the sleepy village awakes to life and
slowly joins the turbulence outside. The sudden activity in the village brings history in motion and the isolation of the village gradually disappears.

In the next section, appropriately called "Kalyug" suggests that the novel has a cosmic vision. In the Hindu concept of epic time, Kalyug comes at the end of the cycle when the old order is destroyed and foundations for a new one are laid. The train that carries corpses from Pakistan to be cremated at Mano Majra suggests a symptom that the old world has died. The incident of mass cremation completely disturbs the rhythm of the village’s life. There is a pall of gloom on the village. Everybody in the village takes the train as a premonition of evil times. Imam Baksh, the Mullah, who had maintained regularity in his prayer every evening, does not pray that morning. As the author writes; "His sonorous cry did not rise to the heavens to proclaim the story of God". 7

This disruption in the rhythm of Mano Majra’s life suggests that the end has come.

The third section, "Mano Majra", takes the action to its further intensity. It is built around the image of the village in transformation. There is a perceptible change in not only the appearance of the village, but also in its awareness of the human condition. The section opens with a note on the changed climate:

… a heavy brooding silence descended on the village. People barricaded their doors and many stayed up all night talking in whispers. Everyone felt his neighbour’s hand against him, and thought of finding friends and allies. 8

As Mano Majra loses its healthy seclusion and gets embroiled in the national cataclysm, the action of the novel moves into the surreal. The Head Constable divides the village into two halves between the Sikhs and the Muslims and even succeeds in convincing the Sikhs that Muslims deserve
punishment for their atrocities on their Gurus. As the mass exodus begins, the village turns into a ghastly scene. The houses of the Muslims are robbed, and ironically, Malli, who had robbed Ram Lal, is entrusted by the police to look after the property of the evacuees.

The last section is "Karma" that gives the novel a metaphysical dimension. Singh seems to suggest that in such an atmosphere of brutality human action is meaningless. Even a heroic act done in such a time does not carry any consequences whatsoever. In a strange reversal of roles, the anti – hero Jugga turns into a hero and the dacoit Malli becomes a custodian of the Muslim’s property. The novel closes with such an ironic reversal order. Jugga’s act of sacrifice saves the lives of thousands of people, but their fate remains uncertain. Through Iqbal the author reflects philosophically on the nature of human action and on the price of freedom:

If you look at things as they are, he told himself, there does not seem to be a code either of man or of God on which one can pattern one’s conduct. Wrong triumphs over right as much as right over wrong triumphs. Sometimes its triumphs are greater. What happens ultimately you do not know? In such circumstances what can you do but cultivate an utter indifference to all values? Nothing matters. Nothing whatever…

Khushwant Singh seems to think that only appropriate response to the partition would be indifference, which is another way of accepting the idea of Karma as total surrender to a deterministic world.

It is true to admit that the harrowing incidents of 1947 had shaken the faith of all the sensitive and thinking people of India in the intrinsic nobility of man, taught by its sages and saints including Mahatma Gandhi during various stages of its cultural evolution of thousands of years. They brought great disillusionment and crisis of values in the life of Khushwant Singh also. It is therefore not surprising that *Train To Pakistan* is both a grim and pathetic tale
of individuals and communities caught in the swirl of partition. Therefore, the author effectively depicts the pangs of partition of the Indian subcontinent which was certainly a dark chapter in its history.

The novel begins with a reference to the summer of 1947 which was noted for its scorching heat and rainlessness and marked for hot and dusty atmosphere:

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. And the summer was longer. No one could remember when the monsoon had been so late. For weeks, the sparse clouds cast only shadows. There was no rain. People began to say that God was punishing them for their sins.

The summer before, communal riots, precipitated by reports of the proposed division of the country into a Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan, had broken out in Calcutta and several thousand had been killed. The Hindus and the Muslims were blaming one – another for killing: From Calcutta the riots had spread north and east and west. In Noakhali in East Bengal Muslims massacred Hindus and in Bihar Hindus massacred Muslims. Mullahs were reported to have roamed the Punjab and the Frontier Province with boxes of human skulls said to be those of Muslims killed in Bihar. The Hindus and Sikhs who had lived for centuries on the Northwest Frontier were made to abandon their homes and flee towards the Sikh and Hindu communities in the East.

By the summer of 1947, when the creation of the new state of Pakistan was formally announced, ten million people – Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs – were in flight. By the time the monsoon broke, almost a million of them were dead, and all of northern India was in arms, in terror, or in hiding.
The action of the novel spans a few weeks of the fateful days of August and September in 1947 in Mano Majra, a border village, with a river fringing it and a railway bridge spanning the river Sutlej. Though the frontier between India and Pakistan turns a scene of rioting and bloodshed, everything is quite and normal in Mano Majra where Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims still live peacefully together as they have been living since times immemorial. Partition does not yet mean much to them. Many of them do not even know that the British have left and India is partitioned and is being governed by the popular Congress ministry. One of the characters in the novel, the Sub–Inspector of police, points out to the Deputy Commissioner:

I am sure no one in Mano Majra even knows that the British have left and the country is divided into Pakistan and Hindustan. Some of them know about Gandhi but I doubt if anyone has ever heard of Jinnah.  

Life in this village is regulated by the passing of trains across the Sutlej Bridge nearby. The village awakes when the mail train rushes through the bridge before daybreak. The whole village then echoes with Mullah’s cries of ‘Allaho-Akbar’ from the mosque and the Sikh priest’s prayers from the Gurudwara. By the time 10:30 morning passenger train from Delhi comes in, life in Mano Majra settles down to its dull, daily routine and when the mid-day express passes people stop to rest and men and children come home for dinner and the siesta hour. As the evening passenger from Lahore steams in, everyone gets to work again and by the time the night goods train comes in, Mano Majra gets to sleep with the echoes of the prayer of the mullah and the Sikh priest. The only thing that made an impact on the people of Mano Majra was the arrival and departure of trains. "Train" thus becomes a crucial symbol in the life of Mano Majra. But soon things began to change. Partition began to take its toll in this tiny village also. As mentioned by Manaver;

Partition touched Mano Majran’s at both levels... The dark clouds of suspicion and fear arise among the Sikhs and Muslims, who have
lived together for centuries. Yet feelings of brotherliness have not disappeared, and they meet for consultation in a scene that is both intensely human and touching. 13.

The routine life of Mano Majra was disturbed one evening in August 1947 when a local money lender Ramlal is murdered by dreaded dacoits. Juggat Singh, a tall, handsome, and robustly – built farmer, known as a bad character is suspected and arrested. He was in love with Nooran which in a sense cut across religious barrier. Along with him is also arrested Iqbal, England – educated and Communist – inspired young man who has been sent by the People’s Party of India to preach Hindu – Muslim unity and stop bloodshed in the villages of Punjab. He, being a stranger in the village is suspected to be a Muslim Leaguer and is remanded to police custody.

Meanwhile the condition in Mano Majra deteriorates further and its time schedule starts going wrong because of the sudden irregularity of trains. People whisper about a train which comes from Pakistan at an unseal hour, carrying dead bodies of Sikhs and Hindus. Simultaneously are heard rumours about Muslims being slaughtered in Patiala, Ambala and Amritsar mosques being demolished and the holy Koran being torn by infidels. Soon the village becomes a battlefield of conflicting loyalties. Though Mano Majrans still pledge to protect their Muslim brothers, yet afraid of the angry and aggrieved refugees from Pakistan, they shift them to the refugee camp. As the flooded Sutlej brings the dead bodies of more Hindus and Sikhs, tension rises in the village. Even the tension is observed in arrival of the train also. As mentioned:

the engine driver stated blowing the whistle and continued blowing till he had passed Mano Majra station. It was an expression of relief that they were out of Pakistan and into India. 14.

A reference has already been made of the ghost train. The author has given a ghostly, nay, blood curdling description of the massacre.
There were women and children huddled in a corner, their eyes dilated with horror, their mouths still open as if their shrieks had just then become voiceless.  

The communal fire is fanned by the young Sikh boys who come from outside and incite Mano Majrans to take revenge upon Muslims. They succeeded in getting the support of bad character like Mali who hopes to reap a profitable harvest by the annihilation of Muslims. They conspire to fire at the train taking refugees to Pakistan to massacre them, the Sikhs and Muslims, who were living like brothers, turned ferocious wolves overnight. A Sikh youth tells:

Tomorrow a train load of Muslims is to cross the bridge to Pakistan. If we are men, this train should carry as many people dead to the other side as you have received.

Khushwant Singh has depicted the bestial cruelties with objective analysis of the consciousness of people during partition. How the emotions of people are roused by the rumours spread by both the communities about the barbaric deeds of each other, is described by the author though the mounting tension between Sikh and Muslims who had hitherto lived in amity in Mano Majra. As the village gets divided into two halves, Muslims and Sikhs gather in separate group and talk of inhuman savagery of each other. Muslims brood over the rumours of atrocities compiled by Sikh:

They had heard of gentlewomen having their veils taken off, being stripped and marched down crowded streets to be raped in the market place. They had heard of mosque being desecrated by the slaughter of pigs on the premises, and of copies of the holy Koran being torn by infidels.

Sikhs on the other hand feel. "Never trust a Musalman"
Sikh refugees had told of women jumping into wells and burning themselves rather than fall into the hands of Muslims. Those who did not commit suicide were paraded naked in the streets, raped in public, and then murdered.  

The blood-curdling account of the bestial cruelties let loose by the partition is conveyed through the recollection of incidents by the Deputy Commissioner, Hukum Chand. The author relates these incidents with stark realism. Prem Singh, a colleague of Hukum Chand, made his wife’s jewellery from Lahore and was killed by dozen heads with fez caps and Pathan turbans. Sundari, the daughter of Hukum Chand’s orderly, had been married four days. She had not yet slept with her husband. She had hardly seen even his face through her veil. As she day-dreamt of her first night with her husband, her bus suddenly blew up. Then hundreds of people surrounded them. Everyone was ordered off the bus. Sikhs were just hacked to death. The clean-shaven were stripped. The mob held the husband of Sundari and cut off his penis and gave it to her. The mob made love to her and she was molested brutally. Sunder Singh’s care was different. Muslim did not kill his family; he killed them himself. Stranded for four days during scorching heat of summer on a wayside station in a small railway compartment stuffed with five hundred men and women he could not bear the agony of his children whom he could not provide even urine to drink. So he pulled out his revolver and shot them all.

Mob attacks were a common phenomenon in those days and when they attacked they never waited to find out whether the persons concerned were Hindus or Muslims. For example, the day four Sikh Sardars in a jeep drove alongside a mile-long column of Muslim refugees walking on the road. Without warning they opened fire with their stand guns. A lot of women were abducted and sold cheap. Police stations were concentration camps and third degree methods were adopted to extricate ‘truth’ from those who were caught. Hands and feet pinned under legs of charpoys with half a dozen policeman
sitting on them. Testicles twisted and squeezed till one become senseless with pain. Powdered red chilies thrust up the rectum by rough hands, and the sensation of having the tail on fire for several days. As Harish Raizada points out:

Khushwant Singh’s treatment of brutal atrocities committed on either side of the border is characterized by artistic objectivity and detachment. He exaggerates nothing, he leaves nothing. 19

Apart from these, there are certain situations like the arrival of the ghost train that makes the reader flabbergasted. The arrival of the train in broad day light created a commotion in Mano Majra. When the villagers were asked to get all the wood there was in their house and all the kerosene oil they could spare. The villagers soon ‘smelt’ something wrong. There was a deathly silence in the village. A train load of Sikhs massacred by Muslims had been cremated in Mano Majra. Hindus and Sikhs were fleeing from their homes in Pakistan and having to find shelter in Mano Majra. The villagers ultimately decided to be angry with the Muslims. Soon the Muslims began to come out of their homes. Driving their cattle and their bullock carts loaded with charpoys, rolls of bedding, brass utensils etc. There was no time even to say good-bye. Truck engines were started.

Contrasted against these scenes of heinous crimes is the moving picture of the people who feel utterly broken as they are compelled to leave the land of their and their forefathers’ birth. When Imam Baksh is asked to leave Mano Majra for Pakistan lest he be tortured by Sikh refugees, he is moved and tears trickle down his eyes. He broke down. Meet Singh clasped him in his arms and began to sob. Several of the people started crying quietly. When after much deliberation, all come to the conclusion that in the interest of Muslims themselves, it will be better for them to leave the village. Describing the condition of the village and its people on the eve of the departure of Muslims from there, the author writes:
Not many people slept in Mano Majra that night, they went from house to house-talking, crying, and swearing love and friendship, assuring each other that this would soon be over. Life, they said would be as it always had been.  

Khushwant Singh has accurately depicted the real picture of the adverse effect of partition and the suffering that people were made to experience through a train journey of Iqbal as written in the novel:

Every time he had dozed off, the train had come to halt at some wayside station and the door was forced open and more peasants poured in with their wives, bedding and tin trunks. Some child sleeping in its mother’s lap would start howling till its mouth. The shouting and clamour would continue until long after the train had left the station. The something was repeated again and again-till the compartment meant for fifty had almost two hundred people in it, sitting on the floor, on seats, on each other or standing in the corners. There were dozens outside perched-precariously on footboards, holding on to the door handles. There were several people on the roof; the heat and smell were oppressive.

In this atmosphere of all around madness and hypertension among communities, the novelist has given a turn to the story of brutality through the universal element i.e. love. Unable to stem the tide of violence and finding themselves helpless, police authorities release Juggat and Iqbal of whose innocence they are by now fully convinced. The authorities feel that Jugga is being a friend of Mano Majran Muslims and Iqbal being a non-communal political worker, may exert some influence on the misguided people and save Muslims from being slaughtered. Iqbal, the idealist and nationalist, considers discretion to be the better part of valour and keeps himself away from the fire. As Pathan writes, “In this all round madness, the plain earthly love of a Sikh peasant for his Muslim sweet-heart asserts itself.”
Realizing that the attack on the refugee train must mean death to his sweet – love Nooran, the tough Juggatsing, "budmash number ten" of the village, prevents the attack at the cost of his own life. He climbs over the bridge and diverts the attention of the conspirators by cutting the rope meant for killing Muslims. The train of Muslim refugees passes over to Pakistan without any damage but Jugga dies, being shot by his co-religionists. The heroic sacrifice of Jugga who is treated as a ruffian by the civilized society poses a challenge to it and unmask its hypocrisy and duplicity. Khushwant Singh’s irony manifests itself here with ruthless bitterness shattering the pretence of much extolled and highly glorified values of human life.

Jugga, though condemned by society as a criminal and irreligious person, succeeds in achieving what the Deputy Commissioner reputed as human and the police authorities with all their might and power, Iqbal Singh with all his rational ideologies and convictions, Meet Singh with all his religious teeth in love and brotherhood and the lambardar with all his sincere fellow feelings fail to accomplish. This inhuman situation is counter balanced by the tender love of Juggat and Nooran. The novelist succeeds in showing the supremacy of love and finer human qualities over communalism and brutality. Regarding this humanistic turn to the novel, Harish Raizada observes:

Khushwant Singh believes that often the most Nobel acts of generosity and self-sacrifice are performed by persons who are looked down upon by the people as immoral deviants. 23

Apart from the depiction of the trauma of partition, the crisis of values suffered by people during this period of unprecedented human tragedy is conveyed by the author through his satirical portrait of three characters typical of their three different situations epitomizing the civilized human life. These are Hukum Chand the high officer in the Government administration, Meet Singh the Sikh priest, and Iqbal Singh, the rationalistic and idealistic non-
communal political worker. Jugga’s moral stature stands out in strong relief against the hypocrisy, cowardice and shame of these characters.

Hukum Chand, the Magistrate and Deputy Commissioner of the district is a worldly wise man of easy morals. He always kept his Sahibs pleased and they gave him promotion. He is true to his friends and always gets things done for them. He is one of a hundred. Nothing counterfeits about him. He is, however, lascivious and carries on a liaison with a Muslim dancing girl Haseena. His fatalism has made him face the buffets of destiny with equanimity. He firmly believed that the only absolute truth was death. The rest love, pride, ambition, value of all kinds – was to be taken with a pinch of salt. He is however, terribly shocked when he sees the heaps of dead bodies of men, women and children huddled in a train from Pakistan. A cold numbness overtakes him and all his emotions are dead. As mentioned by the novelist;

But a trainload of dead was too much for even Hukum Chand’s fatalism. He could not square a massacre with a philosophical belief in the inevitability of death. It bewildered and frightened him by its violence and its magnitude.\textsuperscript{24}

It is interesting to hear from Hukum Chand more about how he looked at partition and its impact. He was for getting the Muslims to go out peacefully if possible. He was of the view that bloodshed would not benefit anyone. His official responsibilities, however, compel him to save the lives of people under his charge. He believed that an individual’s conscious effort should be directed to immediate ends like saving life when endangered, preserving the social structure and honoring its conventions. Hukum Chand’s interest in saving Muslim lives is however not motivated by humanitarian consideration. He is only concerned about the maintenance of law and order lest his official position is compromised. Later when he feels utterly broken by the increasing incidents of arson and looting, he lapses into inactivity and wants just to maintain a pretence of having acted responsibly. Cowasjee aptly remarks:
Through the portrayal of Hukum Chand, Khushwant Singh shows how the much maligned Indian bureaucracy was itself caught between the hatred of a people and the bungling of politicians.  

Meet Singh is a peasant who has taken to religion as an escape from work. He is not learned in the scriptures nor has he any faculty for conversation. But he is a man of peace and goodwill and sincerely believes that everyone is welcome to his religion. When Sikh boys try to incite Mano Majrans against Muslims, he even argues with them to stop the instinct of such revenge. But when it comes to taking steps to avert the imminent danger to Muslims, he recoils in timidity. He says:

My duty is to tell people what is right and what is not. If they insist and do evil, I ask God to forgive them. I can only pray; the rest is for the police and the magistrate.

For Meet Singh indulgence in immoral practices could be overlooked if it was motivated by the desire to help and protect a friend. He was rather horrified by the ugly act that Jugga was a professional robber or dacoit but he was shocked by his alleged action of murdering a fellow villager. For him, fellowship was more important than blind adherence to an abstract moral code.

Iqbal Singh is the England–educated young man of communist leanings. No other character in the novel is subjected to such an ironic and brutal exposure as he. He is very forthright, rational and logical in his criticism of social evils in the country. He has all the theories but lacks the courage to put them into action in times of crisis. He is a social worker. He has been sent by his People’s Party of India to forgo unity between Sikh and Muslim and check them from violence but the moment he learns of a murder in Mano Majra he gets frightened. As the communal tension mounts in the village he wishes that the party had sent someone else to Mano Majra. He finds himself
in a predicament and is not in a position to do anything to save the situation. He thinks:

Could he stop killing? Obviously not. Every one Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Leaguer, Congressite Akali or Communist was deep in it. It was famous to suggest that the bourgeois revolution could be turned into a Proletarian one. 27

Iqbal Singh believes that criminals are not born. They are made by hunger, want and injustice. His food habits his way of life and his mode of thinking and feeling are at great variance with those of the Mano Majras. He is anti–British and reacts violently to the British colonial and imperial power in India and elsewhere. He is misunderstood and arrested to be a Muslim and leaguer by the police. He values personal freedom and dignity. But when he learns that he has been arrested as a suspect in a criminal case and not for political unrest, he is greatly perturbed.

Contrasted against these Moral decrepit respected by the civilized society, Jugga a robust and tall Sikh who is feared and condemned as a bad character is represented with ethical code and conduct of life. He is in reality a typical Punjabi peasant in his strength and weakness, in his courage, fearlessness, loyalty, unsophistication, roughness and bluntness. He is self-sacrificing and humane. He shows his mettle on several occasions. He also courts imprisonment to protect the honour of the girl he loves. It is, however, his heroic self-sacrifice to save the lives of the innocent Muslims of his village that makes him put to shame all those timeservers who notwithstanding their resources, power, learning and prestige falter and vacillate to take a decision. There is a rare grandeur and singular nobility of character about his heroic resolution to save Mano Majra Muslims from death–trap. Juggat Singh plays a dual role of the creator and the destroyer. He destroys only to create again and they symbolize the triumph of good over evil within him and also the concept of renewal. As Vasant Sahane marks:
His soul, like that of the phoenix, rises from its ashes only to proclaim that at least this ‘Train to Pakistan’ is a symbol of hope and light amidst the cruel world of darkness and despair.  

The novelist has also applied certain symbols to express the sinister and venomous impact of partition. The first symbol is Mano Majra which is representative of the spirit of India herself - India, the land of ahimsa. Here the picture of unity in diversity is nicely portrayed as the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims had been living since time immemorial together peacefully. Though the frontier between India and Pakistan turns into a gory scene of riots and massacre, everything is calm and quiet in Mano Majra. Partition does not ruffle the normal tenor of life in Mano Majra. Mano Majrans are unaware of the political situation of the country. Mano Majra is in fact a symbol of staticity, of immobility and passivity. The harmonious atmosphere and the idyllic tranquility of this village is a veritable oasis of peace. The villagers remain unruffled by the fanatic acts of murder, plunder, arson, abduction and rape.

Deo, the local deity becomes the symbol of communal harmony like the goddess Kenchamma in Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*. The Kanthapurian raise to the call of Gandhiji and involve themselves in the impendent movement but the Mano Majrans remain passive spectators to the whole scene of pre-independent struggle. They have heard the name of Gandhiji but remain unmoved by the call of Mahatma to out firanghi from our soil.

As contras to the tranquil and static environs of Mano Majra, the train serves as an important symbol of mobility. It stands for all that is dynamic. Though at the outset of the story, it acts as an almanac and a regular for the people of hamlet, later on it acquires a sinister and formidably horrific dimension when its swift and placid tenor of life receives a shocking jolt in the wake of the bloody partition.
The irregularity of trains symbolizes the disturbance in the smooth flow of life in Mano Majra. It presages chaos and disorder, riot and violence. The odd arrival of a train from Pakistan in the morning with heaps of mangled and mutilated corpses lets loose a reign of terror. Bestiality manifests in violence, revenge, mass rape of women in public, arson, infanticide and carnage. All this leads to the massacre of Mano Majra Muslims leaving for Pakistan by a train, i.e. The Train to Pakistan. The Train to Pakistan again reveals the humanity in Jugga, his sense of integrity in love and self-dedication. The train to Pakistan thus becomes a unique symbol in the novel. Further the train is symbolic of the rhythmic pattern of the novel. It is at the heart of Mano Majra, a village which has always been known for its railway station. The villager’s activities are patterned by the to and fro movement of the train it fills the villagers with the very pulse of life as V. A. Shahane observes:

The use of the word “train” is significant in other ways too. The train signifies groups or multitudes of people who are on the move... the train implies the movement of vast communities, torn from their links of nativity, from their places of birth and upbringing and areas of traditional growth in search of a new Jerusalem. It indicates the harrowing process of this change, the awful and ghastly experiences of human beings involved in a historical, objective and almost dehumanized process. The train suggests the fate of the individuals, the destinies of two newly formed dominions...secondly, the train is also a symbol of the machine age...modern mechanistic, materialistic age has caused severe destruction of humanistic values.

The arrival of a ghost train at Mano Majra stuns the villagers. They are awe-struck at the sight of the train being loaded with dead bodies giving out the acrid smell of searing flesh. It unveils the horrible and ghostly drama of communal violence – the sinking and erosion of human values. The sigh of the geckos pouncing on the moth and catching it fluttering in the jams is symbolic of the genocide (since there is mass killing of Hindu and Muslims), a
common feature of the partition. Even the magistrate’s fear of spending the night all alone in his room is symbolic of terror and apprehension leading to insecurity and indecision.

Violence in the human world is symbolized by violence in the natural world. The flashing crash of lightning and thunder symbolizes murder and looting of people after partition. The swelling Sutlej presents a terrifying sight. Flood in the river suggests and foreshadows the flood of violence. The river’s appearance in the night like a sheet of paper, symbolizes the black beastly acts of violence. The new American engine also symbolizes the diabolic deeds of horror and degeneration of long cherished socio-moral values. The cries of the jackals symbolizes predatory craving. The red tongue of flame symbolizes the poisonous and aggressive nature of the snake and shows how men in the heat of their destructive lunacy turn into venomous reptiles and spout poison.

Moreover all the other parts of the novel have symbolic significance. The first ‘Dacoity’ part symbolizes that humanity itself has been looted of its human attributes. It symbolizes that the humanity has been deprived of its values. The second part ‘Kalyug’ symbolizes the inner blackness of human heart and the darkness all around the whole of India and Pakistan. According to Hindu mythology, Kalyug is the fourth and last phase in the four cycles of existence. It is the age of darkness at the time of partition in both India and Pakistan there was darkness everywhere. Millions of people were uprooted from their homes and hearts. They feel restless, rootless and helpless. ‘Karma’ is the last part of the novel which is also very much significant. It denotes the totality of a person’s action in one of the successive cycles of his existence. It determines man’s fate in his next phase of life. It may also be used to denote the unpredictable ways of fate or wheel of fortune. It also indicates the Indian way of life in relation to man’s experience with the unknown cosmic design stored for him. Arthur Lall apptly comments:
Its intrinsic qualities as a novel grip the reader. Throughout, the action sweeps one along. The characters are vivid and highly credible, and Khushwant Singh keeps them going magnificently on two levels; in their quotidian matrix compounded of their passions of love and revenge, their tremendous sense of belonging to a village community, and there insolence and heroism; and then again on the wide stage set by the tornado that breaks on their lives in the shape of the cataclysmic events of the partition of India in 1947.

After going through the detailed analysis of the novel *Train To Pakistan* it can be said that the partition of the Indian sub-continent was the single most traumatic experience in our recent history. The violence it unleashed by the hooligan actions of a few fanatics, the vengeance that the ordinary Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs wreaked on each other worsened our social sense, distorted our political judgments and deranged our understanding of moral righteousness. The real sorrow of the partition however, as portrayed by Khushwant Singh in *Train To Pakistan* was that it brought to an abrupt and a long and communally shared history and cultural heritage. It is also true to say that for millions of peoples, the independence of the country brought terrible but avoidable suffering and humiliation, a loss of human dignity and a frustrating sense of being uproot. This is not what they had aspired for in the name of freedom- the partition was a dirty trick Khushwant Singh brings to the centre stage the fact of the partition of the question of the subsequent violence on both sides of the border in a very effective, vivid and graphic manner.

**The Foreign Aggression and Its Impact on Indian Politics in Shadow From Ladakh by Bhabani Bhattacharya.**

Bhabani Bhattacharya, the earliest of the social realists of post-Independence Indian English fiction, is a well-known Indo-Anglian novelist. His books have been translated in more than two dozen foreign languages.
The coveted Sahitya Academy award to him in 1967 for his fifth novel, *Shadow From Ladakh* is a fitting recognition of his standing and achievement in Indian English Fiction. He started his career as a freelance writer. With a doctorate degree from London University on historical research he worked for several years as press attaché to the Indian Embassy in Washington. He travelled widely and was associated with a research, centre at the University of Hawaii.

Bhattacharya is a novelist strongly influenced by the ideas of Tagore and Gandhi, while both his fictional theory and practice show his affinity with Mulk Raj Anand. He is a believer in the social character and significance of art and literature and believes:

Art must teach, but unobtrusively by its vivid interpretation of life. Art must preach, but only by virtue of its being a vehicle of truth. If that is propaganda, there is no need to eschew the word.\(^{31}\)

Bhattacharya’s view of art, however freeing to aesthetically inclined writer in the West, is not at all uncharacteristic in modern Indian literature with its intense social-political consciousness. He is a novelist of ideas, not of art. He writes for instruction, not for entertainment. Aesthetically, Bhattacharya was insensitive and he rarely wrote in idiomatic English, a language made great by literacy masters. He once remarked:

a novel must have social purpose. It must place before the reader something from society’s point of view. Art is not necessarily for art’s sake. Purposeless art and literature which is must in virtue do not appear to me to be a sound judgement.\(^{32}\)

All Bhattacharya’s novels present a true picture of India and its teeming millions. His outlook is highly constructive and they record the hopes and aspirations of people heroically involved in the struggle between the old and the new and inspired by the vision of a just social order. He portrays full-
blooded men and women, creatures of their society, victims of its unjust persecutions and yet possessing inevitable strength to carry the banner of the ideals of a new India. He faithfully and soberly depicts the horrors characteristic of alien rule and the old made of life; he portrays the grandeur of the peasants and the downtrodden and their role in remarking the motherland, the dream of the Indian nationalist. As the saying under quoted by Meenakhi is quite appropriate to Bhabani Bhattacharya as:

Contemporary public issues, whether social or political, began to interest the writers, and the national movement for independence offered them rich and ready material.  

Bhattacharya’s works consist of translations from Tagore, entitled The Golden Boat, Indian Cavalcade Towards Universal Man, Steel Hawk, Gandhi the Writer; The Image as It Grew. Apart from these, his novels are So Many Hungers! Music For Mohini Shadow From Ladakh and A Dream in Hawaii Prema Nandkumar aptly says about the literary journey of Bhabani Bhattacharya as:

The one novelist who has attempted new pastures in each novel and has tried to come to grips with the reality of independent India is Bhabani Bhattacharya.  

Bhattacharya’s fifth novel Shadow From Ladakh enabled him to get recognition even in his own native country. Bhattacharya, the native son of the soil of India, who earlier received several attentions of the Indian readers and won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1967 for this novel Shadow from Ladakh. It has been suggested that the title is based on the popular proverb 'coming events cast their shadow before'. The Shadow From Ladakh is an unexpected and ill-boding omen, threatening the security of our nation. Against this background, the theme of the novel is woven. It registers the conflict of ideologies during the critical period of the Chinese aggression of India and Bhattacharya with the fine acumen presents a vivid, moving and touching
depiction of the events against the background of the love story of Bhashkar Roy and Sumita.

While India has been on the path of progress, the tragic period came in 1962, when China stabbed her in the back. Ladakh is one of the points of her attack. The shadows of moist dragon loom large from that snowy region to the remotest village of India. The friendship suddenly snaps. Communist Mao breaks away from Marx. He wants to walk in the footsteps of his imperialist ancestors. India is shaken. The values of peace and peaceful co-existence she had assiduously tried to strengthen and which Mao himself had applauded, face sudden threat. How should meet the menace? By Gandhian approach? But then it was too human an approach for Mao? By industrialization? Yes. But the best way would be to find out a meeting point between the Gandhian social ethic and tremendous forces of science and technology. That is the message of Shadow From Ladakh.

Bhattacharya who experienced a sense of involvement in Gandhian principle of simple living and high thinking and who attached the deepest significance to the Gandhian ways of life, made this novel his first commitment to the ideal of Gandhian life. The Gandhian life as interspersed in Shadow From Ladakh is not merely in the theme of the story but in the veins and nerves of the characters felt in the blood and felt along the heart. The core of the novel deals with the conflict of values and ultimate triumph of the Gandhian principle. Bhattacharya has depicted two modes of existence, two ways of life-the industrial complex and the rural serenity. Bhattacharya's mind is imbued with the Gandhian way of life as it is aptly remarked by Elizabeth Draw;

The novel is bound to concern itself directly with the emotional and moral standards men live by and all the problems of conduct which beset us every day. 35
In *Shadow From Ladakh* Bhattacharya takes up a war theme in the beginning and then keeping it in background he switches over to the social and economic conflict. The novel starts with quiet atmosphere of Shantiniketan. Satyajit is a teacher in Shantiniketan and is Cambridge educated. He is selected by Gandhiji to guide and mould the destiny of the model town of rural India founded by Vinoba Bhave. Satyajit Sen, though a foreign educated young man, is a staunch follower of Gandhi. He meets his wife Suruchi for the first time in Shantiniketan. They have a daughter named Sumita. Who is carefully brought up by Satyajit according to his own ideas of what is called ‘Satyajitism’.

Satyajit makes Gandhigram an ideal and model village, which is economically self-sufficient. Satyajit wants to set an example before the people of India that rural social life can be made ideal and virtuous and rural economy can be more self-sufficient. Thus, Gandhigram, in short is a microcosm of India. India is a mirror of many villages and what is happening in one village does happen in any other village and Gandhigram is no exception. It tries to resist the onslaught of a machine-oriented life as mentioned in the novel:

> the apparently insignificant village was building up a model for the whole of India. The new community of people was creating a social order in which all were truly equal. All land belonging to the cooperative. Food from the fields distributed according to needs. Other needs met by small industries based locally, economic self-sufficiency was the set aim.  

Thus, when Gandhigram stands for rural social life and rural economy, the neighboring town, Steelton, Lohapur, stands for modernity and industrialization and technological development of the country. The two stood poles apart and were never likely to meet physically or ideologically. Thus the
clash between the traditional and modern values becomes evident in the form of the discord between Gandhigram and Steeltown.

The Chinese aggression of 1962 raises suddenly the need for more weapons, money, food and other things. Bhashkar Roy U.S.A. trained young chief engineer of Steeltown, believes that more production of steel is the only way to protect the infant democracy of India, and the industrial growth is the only source to make the country economically self-dependent; with great enthusiasm he prepares a plan for the development of the steel plant and gets it approved by the government. The expansion of the plant that he wants to establish is on the side of Gandhigram and for that he is prepared to annex Gandhigram. Bhashkar thinks Gandhigram a road-block in the path of progress and for him the assault on Gandhigram was ideological, not economic. He is of the view that Gandhigram has no relevance in modern times. It is his earnest wish to let life easier, freer and happier, instead of being choked with taboos. He is convinced that after enjoying the modern facilities which are available to the city people, the village folk will certainly favor Steeltown type of life. They will start adopting new ways of life. And thus gradually Gandhigram will be merged into the pattern of Steeltown. At place Bhashkar and Satyajit have a long disillusion - regarding the Chinese aggression and what India should do to prevent it. Bhashkar's modern outlook is shown, "our troops must have modern arms. Much of the equipment they now have is old, obsolete. And steel is the core of all armament." 37.

Bhasker further argues:

Steel means economic progress. Machine tools, tractors, big industrial plans, locomotives, steel to fight poverty and hunger. But steel has gained a second meaning. It stands for our country's freedom. That is an inescapable fact, not to be changed by wishful thinking. Development plus defence is a compulsion of our current history. 38
The aim of Satyajit and Bhaskar are the same. Both are working in the interest of the nation. But the means of achieving the goal are different. Satyajit plans out to take a peace march to Ladakh and touch the basic nobility of the Chinese people. He wants to bring transformation of the hearts of the Chinese with the weapon of love and Satyagraha. He, therefore, goes to Delhi to convey his plan of a peace march of five persons to Ladakh to the government and get their approval. While his negotiations are going on, the war news has already started being released on the radio. Delhi station is overcrowded with the soldiers, the workers of the canteen for the soldiers and the war activities. Bireswaar, a member of parliament and Satyajit’s best friend shows him the absurdity of the idea of a peace march. But Satyajit being a blind follower of Gandhi does not believe in this. He meets the minister and the minister also disapproves of the plan saying:

Satyajit your march would be plain suicide. The Chinese would not understand what it was all about. You can’t even blame them for that. If only you know something about their ruthlessness.  

Satyajit is bluntly told:

the situation is fluid. I cannot make a promise. I hate to think of innocent lives being sacrificed. All for an ideal that has no chance. No chance at all in a situation where human life has no value whatever.  

Satyopajit gives a call to the nation to join his peace mission and make it successful. But he does not receive any response regarding his appeal. His idea of taking a peace march fails that way. By this time, he calls Sumita to Delhi. Sumita joins Nandini, in the work of running a canteen for the soldiers. Satyajit meanwhile comes to know about the plan of Steeltown to abolish Gandhigram. He is surprised to know that the government has also approved the plan; and his whole attention is diverted in the direction of saving Gandhigram from the iron grip of Lohapur, Steeltown. Now, he is free to return to Gandhigram to oppose the evil designs of Steeltown. Satyajit is not the
mere echo of Gandhi, but he is a true social philosopher. His soul-force is a
good match for any political or legal force. His spiritual strength is so high that
he can easily meet and oppose any force used against him. Bhashkar knows:

Satyajit is the very soul of Gandhigram. He is Gandhigram. Without
his guidance the structure of ideas he’s been building will topple like a
thing of sand. 41

Bhashkar prepares to strike at the village with fanatical zeal. He knows
it all right that he has not got any technical ground to destroy Gandhigram but
he wants to destroy the conservative way of life for which Gandhigram stands.
He thinks:

To annex not a village, but an entire way of life. There could not be
two Indians, back to back gazing at opposite horizons ready to match
off and get further and further apart. 42

Bhashkar is an intelligent and imaginative. He foresees the future of
India and growing needs of India. He can visualize the India to be:

The means of life for two hundred new born babies. The babies would
not eat steel. But steel was the spine of the economy. Steel was food
and clothing and dwelling. Steel was culture and art and ritual. And
steel was soon to be the honour of the people, the shield of their
freedom. 43

Meanwhile Bhattacharya gives a romantic turn to the story and creates
a very symbolic situation as Bhashkar falls in love with Sumita that creates a
hope that she will become the compromising link of the conflict. On the other
hand the progress of the Chinese army in the Indian Territory and the urgency
of time, forces Bhashkar to take a drastic step against Gandhigram. He is
forced to use violence to swallow Gandhigram and start production as early
as possible. When the final crisis comes and Satyajit declares his fast unto
death then Bhashkar understands Satyajit, the values for which he stands,
unknowingly he is passing through the orientation. Thus it is Bhashkar who solves the crisis. He leads the procession to Gandhigram to declare that he withdraws his plan of expansion of Steeltown on the side of Gandhigram. They two will co-exist. As Chandrasekharan states, “The co-existence, however. Is not merely a matter of live-and-let live; it is a result of compromise and readjustment of values on either side.” 44

The *Shadow From Ladakh* voices not only the hopes of Gandhi but also the life-long quest of India’s Nobel Prize poet Rabindranath Tagore: "Integration of the simple and the sophisticated the ancient and the modern, city and village; east and west". 45

Of course, the whole novel is not about the Chinese aggression but it does portray the dilemma most Indian faced then and discussed at several places; should it abandon the peaceful co-existence and arm itself to teeth? Should it abandon the path of Gandhi and his non-violence to be able to show an eye for an invader’s eye and tooth for a traitor’s tooth? The Chinese invasion was virtually the death-knell of Gandhian values. During the traumatic experience the nation had, people in their suppressed tone blamed Gandhiji for incapacitating the nation to fight by advocating non-violence as they blamed Nehru for not visualizing the Chinese designs in spite of many warnings to the country after their annexation of Tibet.

It is here that Bhattacharya’s synthesis of the two comes in the picture. For him Mahatma Gandhi’s advocacy of non-violence and cottage industries was both a political and economic weapon to transform the country into Ramrajya where each village would be self-sufficient and would not have to look to the city for guidance and help. Nehru wanted to place the country on the world map of technical, scientific and industrial advancement. The question became urgent after our humiliating defeat in confrontation with the Chinese and merited a literary representation.
Gandhigram and Steeltown in the novel are not simply two localities but concrete symbols of Gandhian and Nehruite ways of life—one believing in simple living and cottage industries where as the other in Western ways of life and industrialization. The only way to have a smooth sailing for Gandhigram and Steeltown is to have a synthesis between the two. In other words as Sharma says, "He (Bhattacharya) pleads for the synthesis of soul and flesh, revealing the supremacy of the former over the latter".46

Ultimately Bhashkar and Satyajit understand one another and the clash between Gandhigram and Steeltown embodying two thoughts and ways of life disappears and a true adjustment takes place between the two. The workers of Steeltown and Gandhigram visit each other's homes. Through Mrs. Sarojini Mehra the novelist tells us that adjustment is essential for and inevitable in life. "Life is all compromise. One yields a bit here and gets it back elsewhere."47

Thus, Bhattacharya shows, in his novel, the old ways of life in villages and praises for it. He presents the good that co-exists in old values as well as new values; orthodoxy and reforms can co-exist. Similarly in free India, Gandhian ideology and concept of rural economy can and must co-exist with modern industrialization on a large scale. After passing through the diverse effects of Chinese aggression, the novelist presents a compromise between Gandhi and Nehru and points out that both are necessary for India.

It is true to say that an important national crisis, the Chinese invasion on the Northern frontier in 1962, forms the setting of Bhattacharya’s Shadow Form Ladakh. The novel deals with the question of the country’s defense policy after independence and its dilemma in choosing a national industrial policy as between the cottage and small scale-industries and the major and large scale industries. During the period of struggle for freedom, the entire nation followed Gandhiji with unswerving faith in him. Nehru, despite his-ideological differences, also unquestioningly accepted Gandhiji's leadership.
China’s unprovoked attack on India, however, brought these conflicting ideologies to the fore-front and the people started debating whether India should meet force with force or following Gandhi’s ideals of truth and non-violence, meet force with soul force. Regarding this Shadow Form Ladakh as Blairshimer remarks, “It is felt that its patriotic ardour contributed to the singling out of this particular book”  

In the novel Shadow From Ladakh, Satyajit and Bhashkar are., thus, symbolic presentation of Gandhiji and Nehru. Gandhigram is patterned after Gandhiji’s Sevagram and the Steeltown is an echo of Nehru’s ‘New Temples’. Thus, they represent two distinct socio-political ideologies. Satyajit remarks:

The challenge is not just between Gandhigram and Steeltown. It is between two contrary thoughts, two contrary ways of life. The spinning wheel set against the steel mill!  

Gandhigram symbolizes the spiritual India and Steeltown, the aggressive China. With Chinese invasion, India has lost some of its territory to the enemy. But what is really lost is the very concept of non-violence. If on one level Gandhigram and Steeltown symbolize the past and the present respectively, on another level, by turn of events, they change their positions. Steeltown stands for the country’s present needs and Gandhigram, for its envisioned future. When all the material requirements to make the country strong, peaceful and prosperous are adequately met, comes naturally an urge to turn the focus on spiritualism to give a meaning and contentment to the lives of the people. Thus at some stage or the other, the nation needs both Gandhigram and Steeltown, they are like the body and the soul. The country cannot afford to discard either except as its peril.

The author of the novel suggests not merely coexistence of these two ideologies but also their integration and synthesis. Reconciliatory approach of Bhashkar is reflected in his setting up Meadow house, a meeting place of
Gandhigram and Steeltown. Bhashkar adopts the path of reconciliation instead of confrontation. His decision to expand the Steeltown in another direction without encroaching on the Gandhigram is indicative of his cherished desire to leave the clashing ideologies juxtaposed to smoothen their possible integration in due course. This is precisely what the country needs today as quoted by Sharma:

... in the contemporary context none of the ideals of Gandhi and Nehru can along be the national ideal; only a balanced combination of the two ideals would be an answer to the problems facing the nation today.  

In this way compromise is a key to synthesis for a happy life in this novel. Thus the two ideologies are to co-exist and Bhashkar’s marriage to Sumita is the marriage of Steeltown to Gandhigram while Bhashkar has changed his ideal and attitude to the village, Satyajit also has changed a lot. G.P. Sharma rightly describes this synthesis, “A happy combination of Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore together".  

Apart from this, the novelist also puts forward the belief that our blind and irrational adherence to our glorious past, decayed Tradition and culture is mainly responsible for retardation of progress and healthy social change. The novelist very clearly suggests that we may have respect for our traditional values and cultures but only to an extent. Our blind adherence to them would be dangerous and imperil our national liberty and prosperity. As it is said by Bhashkar:

We have been sitting tight over the ages. Let us start moving along.
Let us mobilize all the resources we possess. And let's not be distracted by wrong ideology…  

The confrontation in *Shadow From Ladakh* between Gandhigram and Steeltown i.e. between cottage industry and heavy industry, between East
and West; between ancient and modern culture and between two divergent ideologies and ways of living, is eased and harmony is restored when Bhashkar falls in love with Satyajit’s daughter Sumita. In the words of Lila Ray:

The new industrialization comes to an understanding with ancient ethical tradition in the love of Bhashkar and Sumita. In them India, stands united and strong in the face of her external enemies.  

Sumita’s marriage with Bhashkar is symbolic of the integration of two different cultures and ways of living. Sumita is irresistibly drawn towards Bhashkar when she loves and ultimately marries. Thus she forms the bridge of cultural synthesis between Gandhigram and Steeltown, between village and city. The amalgamation of heavy industry and cottage industry is essential for the peace and prosperity of the nation Bhabani Bhattacharya always pleads for a wise compromise between two conflicting ideologies:

Let there be a meeting ground of the two extremes; let each shed some of its content and yet remain true to itself.  

In this novel, the novelist refers to Tagore’s philosophy of integration of different culture vales. The solution which the novelist offers to the problem of east–west confrontation has been influenced by Tagore’s philosophy of cultural integration. In the novel, Suruchi herself is instrumental in putting this theory of cultural integration into practice. She encourages Sumita’s love with Bhashkar for she knows that they can be no better blending of East and West, ancient and modern then the wedlock of Sumita and Bhashkar. Sumita, the symbol of ancient India, needs brilliant engineers and technocrats like the C.E. of Steeltown to fight poverty and famine and protect national liberty. Bhashkar who has obtained the knowledge of modern technology in America needs Sumita to make a controlled and judicious use of his scientific knowledge. Since knowledge without wisdom is dangerous and wisdom without knowledge is lame, the co-existence of knowledge and wisdom is
inevitable to build a happy, peaceful and progressive nation. Bhashkar Roy, the representative of modernity prefers Sumita to Rupa, who belongs to his own modern world so that the purpose of cultural synthesis may not be frustrated. He likes Sumita and her Gandhigram for the attainment of spiritual pleasure that his materialistic life badly requires.

Science without spirituality is destructive. A right balance between science and spirituality can set the country on the dynamic path of progress and prosperity. Science in itself has no controlling power. That controlling power to use science for the maximum good of maximum number springs from the very spirit of man which Bhashkar hopes to gain from Gandhi's spinning wheel. Neither his Steeltown nor Satyajit's Gandhigram alone can ensure permanent peace and happiness. Both are complementary to each other. So let them be juxtaposed. Each must contribute to the creation of prosperous India. Satyajit the champion of cottage industry realizes the need for Steeltown which in the beginning, appeared to him as a source of Western contamination. He feels that a healthy balance between spiritual and materialistic values of life, science and religion, ancient and modern, village and city will make us happy and prosperous.

It seems that Bhabani Bhattacharya has imbibed the principle of dynamic equilibrium from \textit{Bhagvad Gita}. It is only dynamic equilibrium between ascetic and aesthetic values of life, two different cultures, spiritualism and materialism that can make the life worth living and the society ideal. The novelist was also influenced by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in his approach to his philosophy of cultural integration. The views of Tagore from the core of Bhattacharya's own attitude and have become a glaring aspect in his \textit{Shadow From Ladakh} also. Moreover it is also suggested that an Indian is ordinarily so much influenced by his heritage that the Indianness within him cannot be obliterated even by prolonged and close contact with the West. The
same feature can be seen by Rupa into Bhashkar who was fully westernized and he was sucked at once into five thousand years of Indianism.

The conduct of China in stabbing India in the back and deliberately trying to thwart her progress along the path of democracy naturally claims considerable attention in the novel. The importance of the first border incident near Ladakh is at first minimized by India. But subsequent events gradually reveal the real intentions of China. Poisoned by the teachings of Mao, the Chinese embark on a career of aggression with the aim of dominating all Asia. Perfidy, hatred and hypocrisy are the qualities they display in the course of their campaign against India whose democratic way of life is taken by them to be a serious challenge to their new-found ideology. Bhattacharya’s description of the aggression is factual and the sentiments he expresses in the novel are the sentiments of all patriotic Indians.

One remarkable feature of Shadow From Ladakh is that while dealing realistically with the treacherous Chinese aggression, it also artistically pleaded that India should show love and friendship for Chinese people. The novel repeatedly and consistently makes a distinction between the people and their government. It refers to the long history of friendly association of the people of the two countries. It points out how the greatest of our thinkers and leaders have shown their affection and respect for the people of China and their old culture. Tagore set an example by instituting a chair for the Chinese language and culture at Shantiniketan and inviting a Chinese professor to adorn it. Nehru disillusioned as he was by the treacherous conduct of the communist government, made it clear in his broadcast to the nation that India had no ill-will towards the Chinese people. Even the Dalai Lama, victim of Chinese aggression and brutality, declared in an interview that he had no quarrel with the people and added that there are no better people.
The novelist is not, however, content to record these views and statements in the novel; he makes literary use of the sentiment by embodying it in one of the most moving episodes of four Chinese children, daughters of a Chinese shoe-maker who is arrested along with other enemy citizens, given asylum in Bhashkar’s house. There is apparent contradiction in Bhashkar, a bachelor, who believes in the policy of fighting steel with steel, acting as the father to these alien children, all the latent tenderness in Bhashkar is aroused and he tells himself if China is to find salvation, it has come through the younger generation. There is a suggestive incident in the novel which is intended to show that inspire of the hostility between India and China, the hearts of at least of the younger generation remain untouched by hatred. When the time comes for them to leave India, they are grief-stricken at the thought of having to be away from Bhashkar. What Nu-hsin tells, reveals the synthesis of hostility and friendship:

All that love and joy and… I don’t know the words… all that feeling has gone into our bond and blood. 55

In *Shadow From Ladakh*, the novelist makes artistic use of parallelism and contrast in order to focus attention on what he wants to communicate. Satyajit is contrasted with Bhashkar and to a less extent with Bireswar. Satyajit is a prisoner of his own scruples and moral principles and never able to live a full-blooded life. Bhashkar and Bireswar are differently made. Bhashkar particularly regards such affairs at mere ‘moments in life’. Bireswar is a critic of Satyajit’s asceticism and reproaches him for having destroyed the happiness of Suruchi. At one stage Satyajit feels that Bireswar would have been a more suitable husband for Suruchi and even toys with the idea of encouraging her to join him. It is on Bireswar’s advice that Satyajit decides towards the end of the novel to give up all his unnatural asceticism and to live a normal life if he survives the fast.
There is a similar contrast between Sumita on one side and Rupa and Jhanak on the other. Sumita is a better example of Satyajitism than Satyajit himself. Her life has become one of dedications. The dedication has acted as a restraining force and has hampered her natural development. She has become an ascetic woman. In contrast with her Rupa refuses to accept any kind of restraint and lives an uninhibited life. It is not that she does not recognize the finer ingredient of love, but she refuses to make much ado about an occasional human lapse. Jhanak represents in the novelist’s words a woman’s primal urge to be nothing but a woman. Suruchi defends her and refuses to join the chorus of censure directed against her in Gandhigram. She rejoices when in the end Jhanak is free to love and to marry the man of her choice. There is no doubt that the novelist’s concept of sexual morality is not the traditional Indian concept; he gives a clear hint that our ascetic code will have to be revised in the new era of industrialization.

The novelist makes Gandhigram a microcosm of India. In the novel he shows that the Gandhian economics and ethics are true everywhere and at any times. He also hopes that even China can find salvation through the younger generation. The village sets new set of values-equality, fraternity and non-violence in thought and action. At the same time the Steeltown stands for three notions; steel standing for machines of mass production, steel representing the weapons for the country’s defence and not to take vice as sin by avoiding all inhibitions. The reconciliation between Gandhigram and Steeltown with which the story ends is the most appropriate conclusion to a novel which advocates the way of integration and synthesis. In the process each meets the other half-way and each surrenders and makes a sacrifice to make the synthesis possible. The Steeltown that stands is a Steeltown that has bowed to Gandhigram and sent out its workers and its chief engineers to cry victory-victory to Satyajit. Similarly the Gandhigram that emerges is a fortress whose walls have fallen. The way of life represented by each has been so radically transformed that neither is what it was before. It is true to
say that the end of the novel is a fun-fare of trumpets announcing the birth of a new era. As Krishna comments:

Bhattacharya’s Shadow From Ladakh may be viewed as a fictional chiaroscuro of the changing national tradition. It effectively illustrates the deterministic patterns of life in modern India under the impact of multifaceted change.  

Looking at it as a whole, it can be said that Shadow From Ladakh is a beautiful combination of nationalism, social changes and economic revolution. So far Bhattacharya is dealing with the events happening in our country but in this novel he has taken up the vast panorama of India-China conflict of 1962. He had taken up the wide screen of social changes in modern India and the growing need of technology, against the background of the Chinese invasion of 1962. Bhattacharya has a free range to handle social, political and economical need, of changing values in India according to his own free will, and Bhattacharya very artistically exploits the economical social and political situation of our country. Thus Shadow From Ladakh takes a pragmatic view of the evolving Indian-society right from the stage of attainment of independence to the stage of the Chinese aggression. It also questions the validity of the very ideals of Gandhiji in the changed context of post-independence scenario.
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