The Novel as Realistic Epic: 'Train to Pakistan'

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TRAIN TO PAKISTAN (1956) is one of the finest realistic novels of post World War II Indian fiction in English. It is Khushwant Singh’s supreme achievement, which he is unlikely to excel. This realistic masterpiece contains, among other things, a well-thought-out structure, an artistically conceived plot, an absorbing narrative, and imaginatively realised characters. It has many notable features such as an unobtrusively symbolic framework, meaningful atmosphere and a powerful, unvarnished naturalistic mode of expression or style.

The predominant quality of Train to Pakistan is its stark realism, its absolute fidelity to the truth of life, its trenchant exposition of one of the most moving, even tragic, events of contemporary Indian history, the partition. It is also marked by its special naturalistic mores. The individual in Khushwant Singh’s fictional world is silhouetted against this vast, panoramic background, the great human catastrophe of the partition of India and the ghastly and inhuman events which followed it. Khushwant Singh’s art is revealed in not merely probing deep into the real but in transposing the actual into symbol and image. His art of realistic portrayal cannot be merely described as an exercise in the bookkeeping of existence; in effect, it is a creative endeavour of transcending the actual, asserting the value and dignity of the individual, and finally, of expressing the tragic splendour of a man’s sacrifice for his woman.
Train to Pakistan was originally entitled Mano Majra (1956). Mano Majra is the name of a place which is the centre of action in the sequence of events leading to the final catastrophe. The change in the title seems the result of deep thought, not a matter of mere chance or casual choice. The change is from the static to the dynamic: Mano Majra, the name of a village, is a fixed point in space, whereas the train is a symbol of movement. The use of the word “train” has other contextual associations also. The train signifies groups or multitudes of people who are heading for various destinations. On the eve of partition of the Indian subcontinent, millions of people from either side of the dividing boundary were on the way, seeking refuge and security. Millions of non-Muslims from Pakistan longed for a passage to India, a land of hope and peace, whereas millions of Muslims from India sought the road to Pakistan, the land of Islamic faith and promise. Thus, the train implies the movement of vast communities torn from their roots and areas of traditional growth to a new “Jerusalem”. It indicates the harrowing processes of this change, the awful and ghastly experience of human beings involved in a historical, impersonal and dehumanised process. The train suggests the fate of the individuals, the destinies of the two newly formed nations, consequent upon a political decision and the miseries, suffering and privations, which issue from it. Second, the train is also a symbol of the machine age, an era dominated by science and technology. The realisation is paramount that the modern mechanistic, materialistic age has caused severe destruction of humanistic values. The age of machines has led to constantly increasing degrees of dehumanisation. Man, divorced from nature and God, feels rootless and alienated. This rootlessness of man - - his severance from the bonds of the earth which reared him - - is symbolised by the train in Train to Pakistan. The
association of Mano Majra, a village on the Indian side in the Punjab, with the train (which connected it with Lahore, the capital of the undivided Punjab before partition) is indirectly a confrontation between the innocent, ignorant farmer and the impersonal machine age.

More important, the train suggests the recurrent rhythmic pattern in the novel. In his analysis of the idea of rhythm in fiction, E.K. Brown has commented on the significance of recurrent patterns and has given several examples, particularly from the novels of E.M. Forster. In a similar context the train in Khushwant Singh's novel is at the heart of the sequence of events and processes of motivation: "Mano Majra has always been known for its railway station."(TTP, 3) Whereas express trains do not halt at Mano Majra, two passenger trains running between Lahore and Delhi stop there; shunting goods wagons spend a considerable time, and the whistling and puffing of engines fill the atmosphere of the village: "All this has made Mano Majra very conscious trains". Thus the train, the symbol both of society involved in movement and of an uprooted community, is closely linked with Mano Majra.

In effect, all the activities of villagers in Mano Majra are closely associated with the arrival and departure of railway trains. Before daybreak the morning mail train from Lahore to Delhi blows its whistles loudly to awaken Mano Majra. Then the Muslim mullah and the Sikh priest call their followers to prayer. The next train, the ten-thirty passenger train from Delhi, finds all Mano Majrans at work - - men in the fields and women in the kitchen. The mid day express passes by when Mano Majrans are at rest
and having a siesta. The evening passenger train again finds Mano Majra active and at work. Then, men return home from their farms, and women are busy with their routine chores. The freight train gives them the signal for sleep and rest. Then “life at Mano Majra is stilled, save for the dogs barking at the trains that pass in the night.” (5)

Thus the train is a dual symbol: it symbolises 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 heart rendering. The setting and appearance of the train are in tune with its funereal atmosphere. A normal train has a bright headlight, whereas this extraordinary train from Pakistan had no headlight. It was a symbol of darkness and death: “There are no lights on the train”; “The engine did not whistle”; “It is like a ghost.” (142) One recalls the strange atmosphere of the train to the Marabar Caves in E.M.Forster’s A Passage to India. Yet the quality of disaster in A Passage to India is very different from the quality of the destruction of humanistic values in Train to Pakistan. Man becomes the butcher of his fellow men; genocide has become a gruesome characteristic of certain phases of twentieth-century civilisation. The massacres of Arabs in Palestine, of Jews in Nazi Germany, and of Indians and Pakistanis in the subcontinent are an ironic commentary on man’s proclaimed endeavour to cultivate brotherhood, equality and justice.

One morning, a train from Pakistan halted at Mano Majra railway station. At the first glance, it had the look of the trains in the days of peace. No one sat on the roof. No one clung between bogies. No one was balanced on the footboards. But somehow it was
different. There was something uneasy about it. It had a ghostly quality. As soon as it pulled up to the platform, the guard emerged from the tail end of the train and went to the stationmaster's office. Then the two went to the soldier's tents and spoke to the officer in charge. The soldiers were called out and the villagers loitering about were ordered back to Mano Majra. One man was sent off on a motorcycle to Chandannagar. An hour later, the sub inspector with about fifty armed policemen turned up at the station. Immediately after them, Mr. Hukum Chand drove up in his American car.

...The arrival of the ghost train in broad daylight created a commotion in Mano Majra. People stood on their roofs to see what was happening at the station...

(78)

The villagers and the *Lambardar*, the pretty village employee, were all puzzled by the odd appearance of the train and its sinister, ominous nature. They were later asked to carry firewood and kerosene to the spot and the mystery deepened. At a later stage

...the northern horizon, which had turned a bluish grey, showed orange again. The orange turned into copper and then into a luminous russet. Red tongues of flame leaped into the black sky. A soft breeze began to blow toward the village. It brought the smell of burning kerosene, then of wood. And then - - a faint acrid smell of searing flesh...
The village was stilled in a deathly silence. No one asked anyone else what the odour was. They all knew. They had known it all the time. The answer was implicit in the fact that the train had come from Pakistan.

...That evening, for the first time in the memory of Mano Majra, Imam Baksh's sonorous cry did not rise to the heavens to proclaim the glory of God. (84)...

The “red tongues of flame” symbolise the poisonous and aggressive nature of the snake and show how, in the heat of destructive lunacy, men turn into poisonous reptiles. The distant fires brought “a faint acrid smell of searing flesh,” which caused a sense of horror and disgust among the villagers. Imam Baksh, the Muslim priest and Meet Singh, the Sikh priest, were godfearing, good-natured men who wished to uphold humanistic ideals. They realised that the train carried the dead and that it was the outcome of a ghastly, demonic act; consequently, neither the Muslim preacher nor the Sikh priest could utter their sacred word of God in that hour. It was a world without the word of God, bare and naked in its ugliness and horror.

Khushwant Singh's artistic creation of the atmosphere in Train to Pakistan has very interesting parallels in E.M. Forster's masterly portrayal of the atmosphere in A Passage to India (1924). Forster describes at length the mysterious and “extraordinary” Marabar Caves and paves the way of transmitting to the reader the baffling experience of Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested. As Aziz, along with Mrs. Moore and Adela, boards the train for Marabar Caves, the reader looks forward to a happy picnic scene. But the
atmosphere, sad and sombre, soon dissolves the jollity into uncanny despair, and the situation is overshadowed by an invading tide of disaster.

As they spoke the sky to the left turned angry orange. Colour throbbed, and mounted behind a pattern of trees, grew in intensity, was yet brighter, incredibly brighter, strained from without against the globe of the air. They awaited the miracle. But at the supreme moment, when night should have died and day lived, nothing occurred. It was as if virtue had failed in the celestial fount. (Forster, A Passage to India, 137)

The hues in the east decayed, the hills seemed dimmer though in fact better lit, and a profound disappointment entered with the morning breeze. Why then the chamber was prepared, did the bridegroom not enter with trumpets and shams, as humanity expects? The sun rose without the splendour. He was presently observed trailing yellowish behind the trees, or against insipid sky, and touching the bodies already at work in the fields.

The sky turns into “angry orange”, and virtue fails at its celestial source. The sun rises without glory, and man is confronted with nothingness, a world without values, a destructive echo of Marabar. Similarly, a world devoid of values is the tragic outcome of the large-scale genocide represented by the train from Pakistan. This is precisely the raison d’être for the absence of the holy word, of Sikhism and Islam, of Meet Singh and
Imam Baksh on that fateful day when they, to their horror, knew the truth about the train.

Another train loaded with the dead arrived from Pakistan at Mano Majra, which was associated with darkness. And then, from across the railway line where a thousand bodies were committed to the earth, "a jackal sent up a long plaintive howl. A pack joined him. The men shuddered..." (TTP, 143) It is not without significance that a heavy bulldozer was used to bury the dead. The dehumanisation of life is demonstrated in this cold, massive, mechanical burial.

Singh's art of portraying and transmitting atmospheric effects is amply shown in scenes of the trains from Pakistan. Near the train long lines of bats flew across endlessly. Crows began to caw in their sleep. "The koel's shrill cry bursts through a clump of trees..." (143) The use of words "ghost" and "ghostly" forms part of the accentuation of experience and expression. Adjectives in Khushwant Singh are filled with subtle meaning, and single nouns, like little "drops", contain oceans of meaning. Thus, the significance of the title, Train to Pakistan, is woven into the narrative substance of the novel. It also indicates the process of the connection between meaning and symbol.

Train to Pakistan has a well-conceived structure and well-regulated architectural pattern. The structure of the novel in a conventional pattern may imply the process and form of development of action and character. The idea of structure includes, and covers, areas of the play, the sequence of events, the narrative and episodic arrangements. But
this is not all. Form and structure are elusive and elastic concepts which continue to assume new dimensions.

Train to Pakistan has an almost conventional structure since it grows out of a chronological sequence of time. Yet the structure is not purely traditional because it is superseded by an intangible current of values and also an evolving form. It is not circumscribed by the areas of action and character, but transcends them and enters the area of value judgement. The architectonics of Train to Pakistan evolves out of the combination of the traditional structural pattern with the value judgements. Creative literature, as I.A.Richards has perceptively commented, is a large storehouse of recorded values. Train to Pakistan is a realistic novel and is also a unit of “vast storehouse of creatively expressed values.” Thus the synthesis of reality and value is one of the remarkable qualities of Train to Pakistan.

In relation to the conventional aspects of its structure, Edwin Muir might have described Train to Pakistan as a novel of action and character, and, in part, as a dramatic novel. The dramatic novel, writes Edwin Muir, is “limited in Time and free in Space.”(The Structure of the Novel, 88) Train to Pakistan alternates between the dramatic novel and the novel of character, between growth in space and movement in time and, therefore simultaneously develops both the dimensions.

Yet is difficult to formulate precisely the quality of the genre of Train to Pakistan. The novel as a work of art has an evolving structure, though one may not accept fully
Brunetiere’s theory of the evolution of genres because it poses a confusing parallelism between evolution and progress. The novel as a genre evolved out of romance through a continual cultivation of realistic modes, use of irony and exploration of the comic. The evolution of the novel as a “form” from romance, which is essentially a literature of the enchanted world of adventure, to realism, which aims at depicting the world with all its materialistic and naturalistic concomitants is the process of the historical growth of the English novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This evolution has coincided with a change in man’s concept of reality in fiction. Mark Schorer believes that “as the novel becomes more thoroughly comic or more thoroughly tragic, it passes beyond irony and beyond realism into a new era of fictive expression open to more cosmic and more reflective visions of the world.” (The Novel as a Genre, 26) Realistic fiction today is no longer confined to the nineteenth-century form of Emile Zola or Flaubert or Dickens and Thackeray, but has transcended its frontiers by moving toward what E.M.Forster calls “Prophetic fiction” (Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 126) as seen in the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. This may well be interpreted as a new development in the evolution of the novel as a genre. As new concepts and ideas of reality emerge, new methods of their exploration create changes in the form of the novel.

Train to Pakistan is surely part of the march of the novel towards realism, but it also goes beyond it in area of values, the field so subtly and superbly explored by great novelists such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. It embodies the exploration of new concepts of reality. Train to Pakistan, in spite of its predominantly realistic mores, tends towards prophetic fiction. Paradoxically, it is prophetic because it is so innately realistic. The
exploration of the human world and its related values in Train to Pakistan is more profound and more moving than perhaps the most erudite and expert commentary on aspects of twentieth-century civilisation.

The scene of Train to Pakistan is laid in India on the eve of the partition in 1947. About ten million people - - Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India - - are in flight and in the large-scale communal disturbances and killings nearly a million are dead. Only Mano Majra, a small village, is, at this time, mostly free from communal frenzy and fratricidal strife. Sikhs and Muslims have lived in Mano Majra for centuries, and their relationships are friendly. On an August night, Malli, a dacoit and his gang enter Mano Majra and demand Ram Lal's treasures. Ram Lal, a moneylender, refuses, and is murdered. The gang leaves the village dropping a few bangles in the house of Juggat Singh, who is also known as Jugga. Jugga, who has served several jail terms on several charges, is at that time out in the fields. He was required not to leave his house after sunset, but the call of Nooran, his beloved, the Muslim weaver's daughter, is too compelling for him to abide by the restrictive rules of the police. Jugga and Nooran return to the village only to find the people gravely disturbed by the dacoity and the murder of Ram Lal. Almost at the same time, Hukum Chand, the divisional commissioner, who has arrived earlier at the Officer's Rest Home, is engaged in a sordid affair with Haseena, a teenaged prostitute. He tries to take liberties with her, hears the gunshots and voice of Mano Majrans, swears loudly and then leaves the girl. The next day, the policemen arrive at Mano Majra railway station to conduct an inquiry into the murder of Ram Lal. By the same train arrives Iqbal Singh, a western-educated youth,
who has been deputed by the People’s party to work among the common folk. This Westernised young man goes over to the village Gurudwara and is welcomed by the hospitable Meet Singh, the Sikh priest. He is admired by Meet Singh and the village Lambardar. He is however, arrested by the police through misunderstanding. Iqbal and Juggat Singh are both held by the police on charges of complicity in Ram Lal’s murder, though no proceedings are started against them. Malli and his gang, the real murderers, are also arrested, but they are later released. The police inspector suspects Iqbal to be a Muslim and, in order to convince himself, has him stripped to make sure that he had been circumcised in accordance with Muslim practice.

Events move fast, and the fate of individuals in Mano Majra is decisively affected by the catastrophic events of partition. The arrival of the ghost train filled with corpses at Mano Majra from Pakistan “created a commotion”. 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 immensely human and touching. Madness has invaded Mano Majra too, in spite of the benevolent character of Mano Majrans. Muslims are evacuated to a refugee camp at Chandannagar, later to be transported to Pakistan. Nooran, who is with Jugga’s child, visits his mother but is compelled to go to the refugee camp. Hindu fanatics vow revenge upon Muslims for what Muslims have done to Hindus in Pakistan. Hukum Chand learns that Haseena too would be on the train which is scheduled to carry Muslim refugees from the Chandannagar camp to Pakistan. Jugga and Iqbal are both released at this crucial stage. Juggat Singh goes to Mano Majra only to find that
Nooran has been taken to the refugee camp and that she would be travelling on the train to Pakistan. He also learns of a plot of the Hindu fanatics to blow up the train with dynamite as it passed the railroad bridge at Mano Majra. Jugga climbs the steel spans of the bridge and begins to slash at the rope connecting the explosive material with a sharp instrument, a *Kirpan*. The leader of the Hindu saboteurs fires at him, but Jugga clings to the rope with his hands and cuts it to pieces. The engine of the incoming train “was almost on him”. Thus the train “went over him, and went to Pakistan.”

The division of the plot and the narrative sequence of *Train to Pakistan* illuminate its architectural design. The novel is divided into four parts: (a) “Dacoity”, (b) “Kalyug”, (c) “Mano Majra” and (d) “Karma”. The titles of these parts are characteristically Indian, since the novel presents a kaleidoscopic picture of a turbulent phase of India’s history and the sordid aspect of its life with visionary power.

The first part, “Dacoity”, is an Anglicised form of a Hindi word meaning robbery. This section constitutes the true-to-life description of an actual robbery committed in Mano Majra village, but its ramifications and remote echoes go far beyond the inhuman and cruel actions of the robber Malli and his gang. What the reader ultimately realises is that humanity itself has been robbed of its human attributes, that the world has been dispossessed of its values, and that the universe has been stripped of its significance. The dacoity in Mano Majra is a material expression of man’s inner, spiritual deprivation.
The second part, "Kalyug", bears a title which according to the Hindu view of Time, means the fourth and last phase in the four cycles of existence. The spirit of Kali or strife has entered into the vast masses of men in both India and Pakistan at the time of the partition, and Train to Pakistan emerges out of an inwardly felt experience of the novelist. Kal -Yug is a Hindu religious and theological concept, but sociologically speaking it is also a widely current, popular superstitious belief. Kali, the spirit of strife, presides over the destinies of men in "Kali-yug", everything becomes topsy-turvy; voices of affirmation are drowned in the abyss of negation. The world in Train to Pakistan is portrayed in relation to this cosmic design.

Mano Majra is the microcosm of the world and, therefore, as the name of the third part, suggests the reign of Kali. The title establishes an equivalence between the human portent and the cosmic design of the novel.

The fourth part of the novel is entitled "Karma", which is a highly significant term. The word "Karma" (Kar'ma), which in Sanskrit means an act or deed, has two implications in the narrative context of the novel. In the Buddhist and Hindu view Karma implies the totality of a person's actions in one of the successive cycles of his existence, thought of as determining his fate in the next phase of his life. It may also be used to mean the unpredictable turns of fate or wheels of destiny. The title includes both of these implications. This partly deterministic implication of the subtitle is in tune with the realistic design of the novel. It also indicates the Hindu or Indian view of life,
seeking a rapport with, and establishing a correlation between, man’s worldly experience and the cosmic design.

_Train to Pakistan_ opens with a significant reference to, and description of, the summer of 1947, which “was not like other Indian summers” because the weather “had a different feel in India that year”. The summer in 1947 was “longer...drier and dustier”. Singh’s presentation of the setting of natural phenomena characterised by the unusually excessive heat is symbolic of man’s heated state, of his agonised heart, and of his sufferings and his fate. The dry, dusty, parched earth becomes the symbol of suffering humanity, involuntarily involved in the ordeal of the partition of India into two nations. The experience emitted heat, hatred and anger. It seemed that the inner springs of human fellowship, affection and love were drying up and that man was beginning in vain to ask for water. But “there was no rain... People began to say that God was punishing them for their sins.”(TTP, 1)

This natural phenomenon of the severe summer of 1947, combined with the popular notion of sin, is a significant element in the novel’s narrative and dramatic design. It also illuminates the symbolic structure of _Train to Pakistan_. The aridity of the 1947 summer signifies the process of the world of man turning into a human wasteland, which is the essential subject matter of _Train to Pakistan_. The seasonal setting of the novel recalls the significant background of winter, summer, and the rains in _A Passage to India_, which has a threefold structure. Forster too endeavours to establish a close relationship between the human world and the natural world. Unlike Forster, Singh
introduces an element of Indian or Hindu superstition into this vegetable, botanical and natural world. The allusion to the popular superstition — that “God was punishing them for their sins” — establishes a subtle connection between the specific natural phenomena and the two concepts of Kalyug and Karma.

The parts are linked in a meaningful pattern. The allusion to the widely held superstition of God punishing the sinful is in accord with the concept of Karma, and the immoral state of man is a natural corollary of his inescapable involvement with Kalyug, the era of internecine strife and the negation of beliefs. Thus, the summer setting provides the scenic, narrative, and symbolic link between the first and subsequent divisions of the book.

The basic human and social tension in Train to Pakistan arises out of the interaction of two forces. Forces of division operate in the communities of Mano Majra — a microcosm of rural India. 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. Out of the interaction of these mutually conflicting forces arises the fundamental tension of the novel.

Reality in Khushwant Singh is multifaceted, and its realisation of various levels is in accord with the basic tension arising out of contradictory forces. The multiple aspects of reality create this primary tension in Train to Pakistan.
Division and disharmony are the ruling principles of the world of Mano Majra. The social and religious stratifications and divisions of Mano Majra community are highlighted against a larger world which is also divided. Sikhs and Muslims, almost equal in number, we are told, form the rural community of the village. Sikhs are mostly landowners, and the Muslims the tenants or tillers of the land; sometimes Sikhs and Muslims work together in the fields. There is only one Hindu house in Mano Majra, Ram Lal’s who is the principal moneylender of the village. The Muslim priest calls the faithful to prayer at the mosque; his sonorous notes, “Allah-ho-Akbar”, echo in the quiet and peaceful atmosphere of Mano Majra. The Sikh priest utters his prayer at the Gurudwara (a Sikh temple) in monotonous singsong to the sounds of splashing water.

Several families of sweepers in Mano Majra have an ambivalent religious adherence. They seem to be Muslim and yet they are found within the fold of Christian missionaries. The ambivalence is further accentuated by the inscrutable devotion of Mano Majrans for the deo, the local deity, “a three-foot slab of sandstone” which is worshipped by all villagers alike. Religious diversities are thus overcome by the centre of supernatural and divine power, and forces of division alternate with religious forces of union. This continual change in the efficacious operation of forces - - good and evil, affection and alienation, friendship and hostility, union and division - - is a significant aspect of the movement of thought and feeling in the novel. Mano Majra is, then, what John Bunyan would have aptly called “the World”.
The act of dacoity described in the first part of the novel highlights the this-worldliness of Mano Majra, its deep involvement with materialistic reality. This earthy world in Train to Pakistan offers a close parallel to the world of Daniel Defoe’s Moll Flanders. “What is important in Moll’s world of things is the counting, measuring, pricing, weighing and evaluating of the things in terms of the wealth they represent”, writes Dorothy Van Ghent, “and the social status they imply for the possessor.” (The English Novel: Form and Function, 35) Some characters respond only to material facts because to them only objects seem to contain reality, and they are therefore actuated by a dominant sense of possession. The world of dakus, or robbers, in Train to Pakistan is marked by a stark, blatant, unvarnished materialistic trend, and by an immoral longing for possession through dispossession of the legitimate rights of others. The materialistic view and the measuring in Train to Pakistan are very similar to the counting and the measuring in Moll Flanders.

The action of the dacoits is a significant beginning of the novel, as it is only a prelude to similar actions on other levels. On one heavy night in August, Malli, the chief gangster, led his party of robbers to Mano Majra, through the riverbed of the Sutlej. They broke open the door of Lala Ram Lal’s house, encountered two women and a boy of seven, and, holding “the muzzle of the gun to the child’s face”, elicited the information of Lala’s whereabouts. The robbers recklessly cast aside the women, who implored them: “Do not kill, brother. In the name of the Guru – don’t.” (TTP, 8) The gunmen caught hold of the frightened old man, demanded the keys of the safe from
him, and hit him in the face. Ram Lal spat blood. Exasperated, one of the robbers stabbed him in the abdomen, and Ram Lal collapsed instantaneously.

After committing the gruesome murder, the dacoits left the village. On their way, they fired shots into the air and dropped bangles, marks of impotence and womanliness, in the house of Juggat Singh, who at that time was not at home.

The mode of introducing Juggat Singh aims at bringing out the essential duality in the nature of the character. Juggat Singh, a confirmed criminal, and served several jail terms on various charges; at the time of dacoity, he had been released on the guarantee of good behaviour. He was notoriously known as "Jugga, the badmash" (Jugga, the scoundrel), but at moments he shows a degree of deep self-awareness. He embodies that rare combination of the criminal and the lover, which is a baffling aspect of the realities and complexities of life, the ambivalence of moral values. He is an individual in his own right, yet he does represent the awful sociological phenomenon of modern Indian dakus, who infest mountain hideouts, especially the Chambal valley, and are the despair of highly skilled Indian civil and military police. Basically, Juggat Singh, whose nature is split between earthly brutality and passionate love, represents a significant aspect of Khushwant Singh's view of man; he is a being inexorably and hopelessly divided good and evil, noble and ignoble, sacred and profane.

The more intriguing aspect of Juggat Singh is revealed in the lovemaking scene with Nooran, the Muslim priest's attractive daughter. As he lay on the sand in the
riverbed, he saw a meteor shoot across the Milky Way, trailing a silver path down the blue black sky. The moonbeams entered Nooran's soul, and she played hide and seek with Jugga. It may be a comet which is considered a bad omen. It is thus symbolically linked with the outcome of the Jugga-Nooran relationship. She bit him sharply, slapped him on the face, exchanged words of agonising and unfulfilled love, called him "badmash" (scoundrel) and he in return, expressed his longing to be locked up with her in a common cell. He overpowered her psychologically as well as physically by slow stages and his "caresses became lustful". The freight train engine whistling at that hour functions as an adroitly worked-out rhythm in relation to the Jugga-Nooran alliance. The call of the body was too strong for both of them, and Nooran found that "the stars above her went into a mad whirl and then came back to their places like a merry-go-round slowly coming to a stop."(14) Strangely, this act of fulfilment was followed by cries in Mano Majra. The robbers were making good their escape, and Nooran asked Jugga if he knew them. Jugga at once spotted Malli and his mates and vowed reprisals. On his return to the village he found Ram Lal dead. The scene of love and fulfilment is thus overshadowed by the event of an atrocious murder. This seems to be a particular demonstration of "star-crossed love".

The scene of the dacoity and the scene of love are portrayed on a principle of contrast between the two widely different, almost mutually opposite, worlds. Dacoity clearly implies the materialistic world in which deprivation and destruction are the dominant motives; love symbolises the spiritual world where the holiness of the heart's desire reigns supreme. The world of matter alternates with the world of the spirit, and
the coexistence of good and evil makes Mano Majra the microcosm of multifarious and many-sided reality. *Train to Pakistan* thus comes to symbolise the world itself.

Almost at the same time when Malli and his gang were committing the dacoity in Mano Majra, Hukum Chand, magistrate and deputy commissioner of the district was involved in an “affair” with Haseena, a Muslim teen-aged girl at the Officers’ rest house on the northern side of the railroad bridge. The shunting of the goods train was in progress when Malli and his gang were involved in housebreaking and murder, when Jugga and Nooran were locked in each other’s arms, and when Hukum Chand and Haseena were engaged in an attempt at physical contact. It appears as thought the train had assumed the role of a human character - - taking note of, and keeping watch on, all the three events taking place simultaneously. The train thus constitutes the principal rhythm in the novel. Rhythm in fiction has been defined by E.M. Forster as a process of “repetition plus variation”. (Aspects of the Novel, 124) The repetitive movements, whistles, and sounds of the train act as a refrain to the progression, in stages of action and character in the novel.

The three scenes taking place almost simultaneously to the refrain of the railway engine’s whistle demonstrate the threefold mode of operation of the principle of contrast inherent in Singh’s art of fiction. Dacoity is contrasted with love, and spiritual love is differentiated from sheer physical passion. The act of dacoity is conceived in a world of growing materialism in which men are dominated by the desire to possess things and the wishes to dispossess others in the process. In the Jugga-Nooran love scene personal
relations and emotional involvement overcome the objective world, though the 
rumbling of the freight train is a sad interruption and reminder of that humdrum world.
The principle of contrast is further exemplified in the two effectively rendered scenes of 
Jugga-Nooran involvement and Hukum Chand-Haseena affair. Juggat’s genuine 
involvement with Nooran is based on strong emotion, whereas Hukum Chand’s 
association with Haseena, though initially delicate and ambivalent, is initially a 
transitory, superficial and casual relationship. In course of time, he becomes 
sentimentally involved with her; yet this relationship is basically very different from that 
of Juggat Singh and Nooran. Thus, a variation in personal and human relationships is 
delicately and subtly portrayed.

Hukum Chand is a major figure on the dramatic stage of Train to Pakistan. He at 
first appears as a typical Indian representative of bureaucracy in British-governed-India. 
He is the counterpart of Buta Singh, the seasoned civil servant in I Shall Not Hear the 
Nightingale. Three levels of governmental strata are depicted: Hukum Chand belongs to 
the upper level of 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.

Khushwant Singh in attempting to capture the physical reality of the human 
world comprehends and depicts with insights the small, apparently insignificant, 
gestures, facial expressions, nuances of behaviour of his characters and makes them
come alive in his portrayal. The descriptions of Hukum Chand’s actions and attitudes are notable. Hukum Chand “heaved his corpulent frame” out of the “large American car” and “ambled up to the sub-inspector and gave him a friendly slap on the back”. Both of them were closeted in the drawing room and discussed in animated tones the complex situations and the challenges facing them. The drawing room atmosphere is in marked contrast to the ghastliness of the incidents which dominate their minds and discussions. Hukum Chand narrates in true bureaucratic style how he heard reports of convoys of Sikhs and Hindus passing through Amritsar and how Sikhs retaliated by attacking a trainload of Muslim refugees bound for Pakistan. It carried a thousand corpses and also the words of bitter irony: “Gift to Pakistan”. (TTP, 19) In assessing the awful situation of bloodshed and mass murder, Hukum Chand maintained his characteristic balance and poise, but the Sikh sub-inspector is carried away by the force of prevailing popular prejudices against government action or inaction:

... Sometimes, sir, one cannot restrain oneself. What do the Gandhi caps in Delhi know about Punjab? What is happening on the other side of Pakistan does not matter to them. They have not lost their homes and belongings; they haven’t had their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters raped and murdered in the streets. (21)

The sub-inspector allows himself to be sentimentally involved in the situation marked by communal passion and hostilities, whereas Hukum Chand, the more seasoned, experienced and balanced bureaucrat, does not lose his perspective.
“We must maintain law and order,” He answered after a pause, “If possible, get the Muslims to go out peacefully. Nobody really benefits by bloodshed. Bad characters will get all the loot and the government will blame us for the killing. No, Inspector Sahib, whatever our views -- and God alone knows what I would have done to these Pakistanis if I were not a government servant -- we must not let there be any killing or destruction of property.” (21)

This is surely an extremely sensible attitude on the part of an Indian bureaucrat, particularly in view of the great compelling provocations of the nerve-wracking period of the partition of India. It anticipates, and sets the tone of, future events created world of Train to Pakistan, since Hukum Chand’s ideas, attitudes, and actions set into motion forces which lead to the almost inevitable climax of the novel. From a socio-political point of view, the distrust, rivalry, and mutually implied contempt between old, seasoned bureaucrats and newly crowned power-conscious politicians, which are some of the significant aspects of growing democratic institutions in India, are very well brought out in the portrayal of Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector. The internal tensions of democracy provide Khushwant Singh with fruitful areas for the portrayal of character and situation. The police force in the Punjab suffered from several failings and weaknesses: inefficiency, corruption, unscrupulousness, and greed. Singh rightly concentrates on, and exploits, the weaknesses of such motivations. Khushwant Singh’s presentation of the bureaucratic postures in India makes one recall Charles Dickens’ bitter satirising of the bureaucratic blunderbuss, though there is no comparison between
these two authors. Dickens shows the artist’s capacity for a satirical rapier thrust, a profound irony and an abundant sense of virile humour. Though Singh does not have the Dickensian touch, or the characteristic Dickens’ sense of the largeness of life, he has other impressive qualities, particularly the ability to present a situation with down-to-earth worldliness and to reveal the tragic in the actualities of life.

The tragic sense is shown through small gestures and through apparently trivial suggestions. Hukum Chand’s seemingly casual remark - - “I hope we do not get trains with corpses coming through Mano Majra” - - has a touch of dramatic irony since it constitutes a forewarning of future events.

The talk and scenes of bloodshed are contrasted with those of love. The sub-inspector and Hukum Chand, of course have to discuss the disturbed communal situation but they also talk about Jugga, that “very big fellow, the tallest man in the area, six foot four, broad, like a stud bull...” and the big fellow’s love affair with Nooran who is “dark”, but whose “eyes are darker”. The sub-inspector sardonically adds: “what the police of the Punjab has failed to do, the magic of the eyes of a girl of sixteen has done.”

Indian bureaucracy in the Punjab is not as unimaginative as its harsher critics would like to make out, and Singh mixes up the colours and traits in order to present lifelike situations. It seems that the long conversations between Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector are tiresome and that they clearly betray prosaic, commonplace,
reportage, bringing out the journalistic aspect of Khushwant Singh’s art. Singh the journalist is sometimes oddly combined with Singh the realist in *Train to Pakistan*.

Hukum Chand’s confrontation with Haseena has an exotic touch and presents a strong contrast to the earlier prosaic, commonplace scene. It exposes several aspects of Hukum Chand as man and magistrate. Hukum Chand as magistrate expects to be entertained in a manner reminiscent of Punjabi feudal traditions. Liquor, music and girls form part of this entertainment ritual. Making extensive use of cosmetics, Indian and Western, he prepares himself for an enjoyable evening, but he is rather baffled by the sight of two geckos getting ready for fight on the ceiling of the resthouse.

The induction of the gecko motif in the scene between Hukum Chand and Haseena is a brilliant stroke of the novelist’s art of atmospheric and symbolic portrayal. The geckos crawled, made odd sounds, and abruptly paused before they collided — a strange sight.

Before Hukum Chand could move away they fell with a loud plop just beside his pillow. A cold clammy feeling came over him. He jumped out of the bed and stared at the geckos. The geckos stare back at him, still holding onto each other by the tents as if they were kissing. The bearer’s footsteps broke the hypnotic stare with which the magistrate and the geckos had been regarding each other. The geckos ran down the bed and up the wall back to the ceiling. Hukum Chand felt as if he had touched the lizards
and they had made his hands dirty. He rubbed his hands on the hem of his shirt. It was not the sort of dirt which could be wiped off or washed clean. (24)

The sudden, unexpected fall of the lizards from a wall or ceiling to the floor is considered a bad omen by Indians. They fell near Hukum Chand’s pillow and cast almost an inscrutable shadow over his desire for sexual enjoyment. The geckos held on to each other by the throat “as if they were kissing”, an extraordinary posture which seems an inversion and parody of Hukum Chand’s amorous expectations. The magistrate looked at the lizards, and they, in turn, seemed to be staring at him, as if an inscrutable and indecipherable word had passed between them. As Hukum Chand dressed and groomed himself like a bridegroom, he found “the geckos were there, staring at him with their bright, black, pin-point eyes.” The use of animals, especially birds and lizards, to explain and expand the circle of meaning and significance of character and situation in the novel is a signal feature of Khushwant Singh’s art.

Hukum Chand’s primary motivation was hedonistic: he wished to escape from the dull, humdrum world of office work into a world of sheer physical sensation and pleasure. He was pleased to see the party of musicians, dancers and singers bowing obsequiously before him. The old hag salaamed (bowed) him several times in courtly fashion, and the young girl, Haseena, merely stared at him with her large eyes lined with antimony and lampblack.
Khushwant Singh is a skilled painter of gestures and small give-and-take, and his descriptions are vivid and effective. His narration of small but significant details of human behaviour and postures is accurate and appropriately presented: “When they (musicians) finished the introductory piece, she blew her nose and cleared her throat again. She put her left hand on her ear and stretched the other toward the magistrate, addressing him in a shrill falsetto.”(26) This description of the singer and her gestures is accurate and aptly communicates the effects of sights and sounds of the peculiarities and oddities of the Indian situation with down-to-earth pictorial fidelity.

Hukum Chand flung a five-rupee currency note on the carpet as a gesture of appreciation. Since he did not have the nerve to take a good look at the girl, he began to drown his conscience in whisky. As the girl began to sing a very popular movie song Hukum Chand remembered his daughter humming it. A delicate feeling and a disturbing thought pierced his projected entertainment and drove him to resort to larger gulps of liquor. Yet he could not suppress his sense of scrupulousness.

...He stared at the girl who sat sheltered from the light. She was only a child and not pretty, just young and unexploited. Her breasts barely filled her bodice. They could not have known the touch of a male hand. The thought that she was perhaps younger than his own daughter flashed across his mind. He drowned it quickly with another whisky. Life was like that. You took it as it come, shorn of silly conventions and values deserved only lip worship...(28)
Hukum Chand the rake tried to dispel his doubts in drink, dismissed the musicians, put out the paraffin lamp, took the girl in his lap, and "undid the strap of the girl's bodice". Quite unexpectedly, the girl heard shots being fired in the air. Frightened, she stood up. Hukum Chand dragged her onto the carpet and began "fumbling with her dress", but again two shots rang out and men's voices were in the air. Hukum Chand swore loudly and left the girl. The geckos were right after all.

Bureaucracy and its acts of omission and commission are a major operating force in Train to Pakistan. The scene of action and confrontation between the two forces - - of bureaucracy and its challenges - - is Mano Majra, the principal protagonist in this drama of agonising death and pulsating life. The town is more important than the role of any single character in the novel in effect. It is the major character in the book. This concept fits with the thought of Khushwant Singh as primarily a sociological novelist and realist.

Bureaucracy began its work of investigating Ram Lal's murder in Mano Majra. Twelve police constables and a sub-inspector arrived at the station for an on-the-spot inquiry. A young man, carrying an overnight bag got off the same train. His name was Iqbal. "He stepped gingerly off the train pressing his hair and looking all around. He was a small slight man, somewhat effeminate in appearance. The sight of the policeman emboldened him. He hoisted the hold-all onto his left shoulder and moved jauntily towards the exit". (32-33)
Iqbal was a *Babu*, a city dweller, who had received the stamp of Western culture and education, which was reflected in his urban, sophisticated accent and fastidious style. He dwelled on his stay abroad and on his experiences of European societies in his talks with Meet Singh at the Sikh *Gurudwara* (the Sikh temple), where he stayed. Iqbal carried with him an air mattress, a dressing gown, a tin of sardines, and a bottle of whisky. This paraphernalia amply indicates his Western background and way of life. His mind had been influenced by ideas of proletarian revolution. The implications of Iqbal’s name are enveloped in ambivalence: “He could be a Muslim, Iqbal Mohammed. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand, or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh.”(35)

The religious ambivalence implied in his name is only an aspect of the basic rootlessness of Iqbal’s personality. Meet Singh was struck by the oddity of Iqbal’s name, though he assumed he must be a Sikh. Iqbal, the upper-middle-class Socialist and a relentless critic of unimaginative bureaucracy, was bewildered by the news of Ram Lal’s murder. Meet Singh was surprised by Iqbal’s cautious and unexpected reaction: “Why, Babu Sahib, you have come to stop killing and you are upset by one murder!” Meet Singh’s short comment throws light on Iqbal’s role in relation to Jugga, the problems of Mano Majra and the Indian situation. Iqbal is a rebel sentimentally attracted to Socialist thinking, but he is primarily concerned with personal leadership. Marx was sceptical, even critical, of the role of the middle class in a revolution. Nevertheless, quite a few middle class men and women have risen in revolt against their societies and trodden the paths of quick changes. But their approach has often been primarily intellectual, academic, impractical and sometimes even divorced from the crying realities of a
compelling social or political situation. It is the incapacity for action which is the hallmark of the young, immature, sensation seeking, fashionable politician. Iqbal Singh represents, as much as Sher Singh does in I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale, this interesting aspect of the politically ambitious, rising middle-class stratum of Indian society and its scale of values. Iqbal, the superficial rationalist, is confronted with the odd realities of the Indian situation, which baffle him and expose his anaemic socialism. The central quality of Iqbal is that he does not belong anywhere and, what is worse, he pathetically desires to contribute to the mass upsurge of India’s rural communities. He is indeed a trishanku, a being without fixity, dangling in vacuum, incapable of belonging anywhere.

The situation preceding Iqbal’s arrival at Mano Majra reveals his character. He had boarded the train for Mano Majra which was overcrowded by a large number of Muslims who were migrating to Pakistan. The description of the overcrowding gives the train an individualistic quality and the distinguishing mark: “There were dozens outside perched precariously on footboards, holding onto the door handles. There were several people on the roof. The heat and smell were oppressive. Tempers were frayed…”(38-39)

In this extremely uncongenial and pathetic situation Iqbal “had tried to read in dim light”. Muslim refugees had asked him many personal questions, obviously thinking that he was a Muslim. Circumstances had conspired to keep his name, and also his faith, ambivalent and vague. He made no effort to clarify his real position and quietly acquiesced in the situation primarily because he was by nature a trishanku.
It was partly due to this lack of belonging that Iqbal could not understand Meet Singh’s passionate denunciation of Juggat Singh not did he realise the peculiarities of the Sikh priest’s scale of values” “Robbing a fellow village is like stealing from one’s own mother. Iqbal Singhji, this a Kalyug - -the dark age”. Iqbal could not understand how friendship and loyalty to one’s fellow villagers were more significant virtues, which would make man a *nar-admi* (he-man), than the truth or righteousness which are pure moral values. He found the Punjabi’s code of conduct even more baffling because it stressed the sanctity of ends over the purity of means. Indulgence in immoral practices could be overlooked if it was motivated by the altruistic desire to help and protect a friend. Meet Singh was not overly horrified by the ugly fact that Juggat Singh was a professional robber or dacoit, but he was shocked by his alleged action of murdering a fellow villager. Fellowship was more important than blind allegiance to an abstract moral code:

What bothered Meet Singh, a priest, was not that Jugga had committed murder but that his hands were soiled with the blood of a fellow villager. If Jugga had done the same thing in the neighbouring village, Meet Singh would have gladly have appeared in his defence and sworn on the holy *Granth* that Jugga had been praying in the gurudwara at the time of the murder (41).

Iqbal was not deceived by Meet Singh’s pragmatic approach and empirical reasoning. On the other hand, he argued that “criminals are not born. They are made by
hunger, want and injustice”. Meet Singh was not impressed by Iqbal’s Socialist doctrine or by his stress on the environmental factor in moulding human character. To Meet Singh, Hukum Chand was a *nar-admi* because he helped his friends unreservedly, even going so far to contravene legal and moral codes.

Iqbal attempted to project his Western ideas and Socialist notions on the Mano Majra situation only to realise that “he did not belong”. His food habits, his way of life, and his mode of thinking and feeling were at great variance with those of the Mano Majrans. He was appalled by the insistent, though cordial, hospitality of the *Lambdar*, who bringing him a large tumbler of hot, creamy milk, dipped his fingers into it. Even the first short walk that Iqbal took outside the temple was revealing; he was confronted by the sight of the Officers’ rest house and of the railroad tracks, elements of the physical world which were soon to overtake him and subdue his rebellious notions and plans.

Iqbal was sternly anti-British because he reacted violently to the British colonial and imperial power in India and elsewhere. He was therefore appalled by the crude, matter-of-fact attitudes of Banta Singh, the *Lambdar*, Meet Singh, and Imam Baksh to the role of the British power in India. These villagers expressed the view that the British power was better than its Indian successor government because it at least had afforded security and stability. To Iqbal’s string anti-imperialistic mind, this was sheer blasphemy. He declared that the British, though “nice” as human beings, were politically the world’s biggest “four-twenties” (cheats). Iqbal’s anti-imperialistic stance
did not mean much with the rustics since they could not be easily distracted by abstract ideological notions. This gulf between him and the Mano Majrans caused in Iqbal a greater degree of alienation. Events moved fast, and the next day Iqbal was arrested.

Iqbal's arrest, effected through incompetence, excellently exposes the facile working of the police force in the Punjab. The head constable committed a grave mistake: his immediate superior, the sub-inspector, tried to cover it up by falsely alleging that Iqbal was a Muslim, a Leaguer and therefore a suspect; Hukum Chand, the higher authority, quietly acquiesced, though as subsequent events indicate very clearly, he was aware of the falsity of the charges.

Singh's mode of narrating the event of Iqbal's arrest is absolutely traditional: he is the omniscient narrator who seems to have been almost present in the Gurudwara, the Sikh temple, where Iqbal was arrested. The scene of Iqbal's being taken into custody is described in a natural-dramatic-ironic style; elements of the story or sequence of events are combined with those of the plot, the intellectual content and treatment of the novel.

The irony implicit in the scene is well depicted by Iqbal's pompous pretensions to patriotism and also in the police constable's action in holding a yellow piece of printed paper before Iqbal. The policeman asked his name first, then filled out the blanks, and then prepared the warrant for arrest. Iqbal, though a Socialist, had valued personal freedom and dignity, and his cherished values were sharply outraged by a piece of yellow paper. Hukum Chand had obviously signed blank warrants of arrest for the use
of his policemen. The situation, in a small way, is reminiscent of the notorious practices of the unscrupulous French aristocracy in the time prior to the French Revolution, which Dickens dramatised in the moving events of Alexander Mannetter’s arrest at the behest of M.Evermonde in *A Tale of Two Cities*. *Train to Pakistan*, though a tale of the birth of two nations in the Indian subcontinent, is very different in texture and structure, point of view and value judgements from Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*; yet the signing of blank warrants offers a restricted parallel in as much as it presents in concrete terms the utter arbitrariness and unscrupulousness of the administration of law and justice.

The irony is directed not merely at the external world but also at the inner world - - Iqbal’s self. He dreamed of jail as though it were a better place than the world” a peaceful abode unlike the outer world torn with strife and violence. Jail life for him seemed to be an object of romance and joy because he believed it to be a step toward success of a dream world of pose and popularity. His concern with self showed his anxiety and eagerness for assuming the role of a leader. “he lacked the qualifications. He had not fasted. He had never been in jail. He had made none of the necessary ‘Sacrifices’. So, naturally, nobody would listen to him. He should have started his political career by finding an excuse to court imprisonment. But there was still time.”

Thus, his resorting to imprisonment was merely a means to an end, an extension of his acquisitive and domineering self. It is ironic that his dream, which was to escape from Mano Majra, could be a means of getting back to the real world, where ambition is
folly. His dream is an odd paradox because it is not a gateway to the unfathomable unconscious; rather it is door which will open on a real, bizarre world. The dream may thus lead to an eventual experience of the real.

The mode of effecting the arrest of Iqbal has a melodramatic tinge. His political bravado and conceited nature are brought into full play in this process. First he was shaken rudely by the policemen; but his aggressive, curt reaction put them off, and they were overawed by his superior posture. He was handcuffed and marched off from the Gurudwara to the Officer’s rest house across the river. Iqbal believed that the march would be heroic, but the mild surprise and cold indifference of the villagers disappointed him, and his ego was considerably deflated.

The principle of contrast, which is an essential feature of Singh’s scene-making art, is again shown in the way Iqbal was held and the manner in which Jugga was arrested. Whereas Iqbal was eager to be fettered and jailed, Juggat Singh, owing to his earlier experience, had no such foolish, romantic notions. Their arrests took place almost simultaneously, but in very different ways, Jugga was a strong, hefty man, and arresting him was not easy since he had to be physically overpowered. The police managed to do this while Jugga was fast asleep, and he woke up and sensed the new situation with “philosophic detachment”. “See how he sleeps like a pig without a care in the world”, said one of the policeman.
Since Jugga had no part in the crime of Ram Lal’s murder, his conscience was clear. His mother, who was shaken by the arrest, produced a packet of broken bangles which had been thrown by Malli soon after the dacoity. The police did not accept the broken bangles as evidence of Jugga’s innocence, nor did Jugga reveal to them the place he had gone to or the person whom he had met. He left home “without showing a trace of emotion for his mother” He also recovered his temper because “he had no malice or ill will toward the policemen”. His way of walking was characteristic; he had “a devil-may-care jauntiness in his step”. Khushwant Singh brings on the sheer ludicrousness of the situation with a sense of humour which seems almost a psychic release:

Iqbal and the two constables joined Juggat Singh’s party by the river. They all proceeded upstream towards the bridge. The head-constable walked in front. Armed policemen marched on the sides and at the rear of the prisoners. Iqbal was lost in the khaki and red of their uniforms. Juggat Singh’s head and shoulders showed above the turbans of the policemen. It was like a procession of horses with an elephant in their midst - - taller, broader, slower, with his chains clanking like ceremonial trappings (58).

This scene is quite a contrast to the nerve-wracking event when Iqbal is stripped naked by the police sub-inspector to see whether he had been circumcised and hence a Muslim. Earlier, Iqbal had been greatly shaken by the knowledge that he had been arrested as a suspect in a criminal offence and not for his heroic part in creating political awakening and unrest. The sub-inspector was painfully surprised to see Iqbal jailed by the head-constable, but the mistake had to be acknowledged. The constable was
The sharp difference between the treatment meted out to Iqbal and the behaviour towards Juggat Singh amply indicates the class divisions in Indian society between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the Westernised, the townsman and the villager. Though age-old caste barriers are crumbling in many ways, they tend to reappear, with subtle variations, in new forms as indefinable distinctions which seem to be primarily social and cultural in a fast-changing society supposedly moving towards the utopian ideal of a classless society. The police sub-inspector’s treatment of Jugga and Iqbal substantiate these age-old attitudes to class. In a society peopled by Hukum Chands and Haseenas, Iqbal’s and Juggas class distinctions and caste divisions are almost as inevitable as weeds in marshy lands. Khushwant Singh realises that the concept of a classless society is more a nebulous ideal than a tangible reality.

*Kalyug*, or the age of strife, implies the inversion of humanist values and their suppression by forces of destruction, disruption, division and negation. The view of the world marked by order and harmony gives in to a world-view characterised by conflict and disorder. Singh, while portraying this inverted world, skilfully suggests that “the time is out of joint” (*Hamlet*, Act I, Sc. V, 189) and that in Mano Majra the “trains became less punctual than ever”; the alarm clock seemed “set for the wrong hour”; even “children did not know when to be hungry”. *Kalyug* projected itself on Mano Majra, creating chaos and nightmarish atmosphere. The freight train ceased running because there was no lullaby: “Instead, ghost trains went past at odd hours between midnight and dawn, disturbing the dreams of Mano Majra”. 
In this nightmarish world a strange train arrived from Pakistan which had a "ghostly quality". Its arrival was followed by secretive and ominous activities of the police and the Sikh soldiers. The villagers became anxious over the arrival of the ghostly train. Banta Singh, the Lambardar, Imam Baksh, the Muslim Mullah, Meet Singh, the Sikh priest and other villagers conferred among themselves but could find no clue to the train. They met in the Gurudwara only to exchange expressions of despair and regret. Later they were called upon to carry wood and kerosene to the station. Imam Baksh faithfully carried his contribution and greeted the Sikh officer: "Salaam, Sardar Sahib." The Sikh officer looked away, insulted Imam Baksh publicly, and Banta Singh expressed his agony to the villagers: "And didn't you see how that pig's penis spoke to Chacha? One's self-respect is in one's hand."(83) This was the foreboding of the conflict. The events of the day were climaxed in the large number of the dead being destroyed by fire near the station. The train had carried about fifteen hundred corpses, and when "red tongues of flame leaped into the black sky", everyone knew the horrible reality of the massacre. This was how the Kalyug struck its gong in Mano Majra, spreading darkness over the land. Man did not raise his hands in prayer to God: "for the first time in the memory of Mano Majra, Imam Baksh's sonorous cry did not rise to the heavens to proclaim the glory of God."

The sight of the dead in the ghost train deeply affected even the sun-dried bureaucrat, Hukum Chand, and made him aware of the horror of death. His inward eye re-created the scenes which he had seen in the train: There was a man holdings his intestines, with an expression in his eyes which said: "Look what I have got!"
Lavatories were filled with corpses. An old peasant with a long white beard “did not look dead at all.” (85) His hand “stretched itself grotesquely and gripped the magistrate’s right foot” and then “its grip loosened.” Hukum Chand was completely shattered by the feeling of horror and “broke out of the nightmare with an agonised shriek.”

Khushwant Singh’s portrayal of the horror of the ghostly train and its effect on Hukum Chand recalls the nightmarish descriptions of the novels of war in Evelyn Waugh (Decline and Fall, 1928; Men at Arms, 1952) and Norman Mailer (The Naked and the Dead, 1928). British and American novelists depicted war as a special hell — particularly the 1914-18 war — and the soldier’s nightmarish experiences on the battlefield. In Mailer’s The Naked and the Dead a group of American soldiers, in their Pacific Campaign, land as an advanced patrol on a Japanese-occupied island named Anopopei. We get a feel of the hot, damp, smell of the jungles and the sweat of the soldiers. Here Hukum Chand, while he saw the train, was overcome by “the nauseating smell of the jungles and the sweat of the soldiers.” The stench of the war and the bad odour of inhuman killings are the same because war is a collective murder-suicide. Singh’s depiction of the fratricidal conflict in the Indian subcontinent makes us recall Norman Mailer’s trenchant portrayal of the war in The Naked and the Dead.

Hukum Chand shrieked with horror, which shocked his servants; but slowly recovered his composure and became very tender in his responses to Haseena. The change in his attitude to Haseena, from considering her as a teen-aged prostitute to viewing her merely as an inexperienced child, who reminded him of his deceased
daughter, is tenderly portrayed. Hukum Chand “stroked her thighs and belly and played with her little unformed breasts;” yet in the end he “snuggled against her like a child and fell asleep.” (TTP, 90) Haseena, a teen-ager, was quite lively and had a child like sense of humour. Hukum Chand asked her whether she was Muslim. She replied, “Yes, I am Muslim. What else could Haseena Begum be? A bearded Sikh?” Then she related to him the funny incident (40) of the party of hijras (hermaphrodites) who beat their drums and sang to convey the idea that they were neither Hindus nor Muslims, but a peculiar lot by themselves. Haseena got over her nervousness, sat in Hukum Chand’s lap and put the buttered toast in his mouth. Hukum Chand’s latent feeling of affection was invoked by this action, and, recalling his deceased daughter’s face, he began to stroke her hair with “a vague sense of fulfilment.” He asked her to be careful in those disturbed days, and, she, acknowledging his paternal care, said that no one could harm a hair on her head as long as the powerful magistrate gave her his protection. Hukum Chand was overwhelmed by these expressions of affection and could not say anything: “Words would not come out of his mouth.” Later he said gallantly to her: “I am ready down my life for you.”

Hukum Chand’s spontaneous, tender expression of feeling for Haseena impelled him to manipulate a situation which would make it possible for Mano Majra Muslims to migrate to Pakistan in peace and with honour. His confabulations with the sub-inspector resulted in the release of Malli and his men from the police, though the police knew that they were guilty and also that Iqbal and Jugga had no part in Ram Lal’s murder.
Meanwhile, Juggat Singh attempted to be friendly towards Iqbal by pressing the latter’s feet as a mark of devoted service. Juggat was an extrovert and freely confessed his abnormal and immoral deeds and practices to Iqbal. Jugga’s visits to prostitutes and his religiosity indicate his dual nature. His attempts to learn a few expressions in English are odd and superficial, but his involvement with Nooran is deep, and he almost confesses that it was this emotional response that brought him to the jail, since he could not tell the police where he had been on the fateful night of the dacoity.

It was this deep feeling for Nooran that provoked his outburst against Malli and also his most violent attack on his person. Malli on his way to the prison deliberately provoked Jugga by expressions of “mock friendliness.” He asked, “why can’t we say ‘Sat Sri Akal’ to our old friend? Sat Sri Akal, Sardar Juggat Singhji. Is there any message we can convey for you? A love message maybe? To the weaver’s daughter?” (115) Jugga was shocked by this provocation, and he yelled like a tiger and, gripping Malli by the hair, shook him “as a terrier shakes a piece of rag from side to side, forward and backward...” Malli began to bleed and Jugga spat in his face until the sub-inspector brought their brawl to an end.

Malli is conceived as a foil to Jugga, though he is ignoble, violent, immoral and mean. The significance of Kalyug partly lies in the fact that Malli, the real culprit in Ram Lal’s murder, was freed, whereas Jugga and Iqbal, innocent, remained behind bars. The dacoity in the first part is symbol of violence; the second part, “Kalyug” ends
on a note of violence. In the first section, Malli got away with his violent deed; in the fourth section, he is himself justifiably subjected to violence and is momentarily subjugated.

The symbolism of rain is a significant aspect of the atmosphere in *Train to Pakistan*. Singh accurately portrays the seasonal cycle of rain in India—summer rain and winter rain. The summer monsoon brings out the most pleasant fragrance from the earth, which, scorched in the severe sun for months, is bathed in divine waters and blossoms as a thing of beauty. But before this final phase of joy and fulfilment there is a period of false hopes for man: it is the dust storm which brings down the severe summer heat though it does not bring showers. The first heavy rain after the severe summer is extraordinarily joyous but is followed by thunder and lightning; and as the season advances, towns and villages on the riverbank are swallowed by the river's swelling waters. The rain, which is the principle source of life in nature and civilisation, also causes death and destruction: “With the monsoon, the tempo of life and death increases.”(93)

The rain is thus an ambivalent symbol pitch-forked between conflicting forces of life and death, of creation and destruction, of good and evil. The year 1947, the time of India’s partition was marked by a late monsoon and a scanty rainfall. Hukum Chand saw raindrops falling in a gentle patter: “At long last, the rain.” Though it was late, it was welcome. The ambivalent quality of the rain is revealed in this description: “It
smelled good, it sounded good, it looked good - - and above all, it did good. Ah, but did it? ...

Did the rain do any good to the sad earth or to the suffering humanity? A thousand charred corpses sizzled and smoked and the rain put out the fire and the smoke. Thus, in effect, the rain washed away the sins of man and his destructive deeds so that he could create a new life and a new world out of the ashes of the old. The Kalyug had claimed human and animal life and humanist values, but there was still hope, all was not lost.

The arrival of the train loaded with corpses is a moving symbol of Kalyug. It creates a conflict and division in Mano Majra. Mano Majra was a small rural world where Sikhs and Muslims had lived together in peace for generations, but that small world had become invaded by the larger world of India-Pakistan or Sikh-Muslim conflict. The symbol of this invasion was a train carrying the dead from Pakistan to India. The machine had taken hold of man and had succeeded in dehumanising him. Under the impact of Kalyug, men cut the throats of their fellow men, and the swollen rivers carried the corpses and carcasses, the tangible victims of man's self-destruction.

The head-constable, who was a blind instrument of Kali, had arrived and "divided Mano Majra into two halves as neatly as a knife cuts through a pat of butter."

(120) He deliberately created in the minds of the villagers about Iqbal and Sultana and ignored Meet Singh, who unsuccessfully emphasised that Iqbal was a shaven Sikh. The
fifty Sikh refugees who came to Mano Majra created a new problem for the local Muslims. The atmosphere was thick with stories of atrocities, real and imaginary, in Pakistan; Muslims and Sikhs became mutually suspicious: “Quite suddenly every Sikh in Mano Majra became a stranger with an evil intent.” The Sikhs, reviving past incidents of Muslim oppression, began to distrust Muslims. They were angry and agitated since “logic was never a strong point with Sikhs; when they were roused, logic did not matter at all.” (120) In this emotionally surcharged situation, created by distrust and fear, the meeting between Sikh villagers and their Muslim fellowmen is exceptionally well portrayed. In this moving drama, forces of union and love alternate with forces of division and hate. Meet Singh was provoked by the remarks by the educated Sikh and asserted that Mano Majra Muslims were innocent and not responsible for massacres which took place elsewhere. Imam Baksh and his co-religionist joined the group of Sikh villagers, and they talked animatedly about their problem. Imam Baksh: “Well, brothers, what is your decision about us?” The Lambardar replied: “This is your village as much as ours.” The others reiterated their fraternal approach: “we die first and then you can look after yourselves... we first, then you...”

Imam Baksh was overwhelmed their spontaneous expression of affection and fellow feeling and “wiped a tear from his eyes.” He said, “What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers.” Then he broke down, and Meet Singh embraced him and began to sob. Imam means a religious and pious person and Meet means an affectionate friend, so that these
names have an allegorical significance in the context of the tragic conflict in Train to Pakistan. The name "Iqbal" means "fortune", "compromise" or "agreement" and Iqbal Singh's role in the novel signifies these implications of action and thought.

The rigid realities of life break into the ideal world of mutual friendships and loyalties, and the Muslims decide to leave for the Chandannagar camp for safety. The Sikhs also agree that this was the best possible course of action in the circumstances. They realised that this was the way of the world. After all, the bulbul does not sing always, nor does the spring last forever.

While the Muslims were preparing to leave their homes, Nooran who was with Jugga's child, visited his mother and said that had promised to marry her. The mother was taken aback by this revelation: "Go to Pakistan! Leave my Jugga alone." Nooran knelt, clasped the old woman's legs, and, began to cry: "when Jugga comes back just to tell him I came to say 'Sat Sri Akal' ". The mother assured her that Jugga would bring her back to his home, and Nooran felt "as if she belonged to the home and the home to her." She went home and packed her few belongings carrying with her, symbolically, "the piece of broken mirror in her hand." The broken mirror symbolised her fate as well as the future of Jugga's life.

Against the setting of personal relations, the scene of the evacuation of Muslims from Mano Majra to Pakistan in trucks brought by Pakistani soldiers symbolises the working of the dominant, compelling, dehumanising process. The Muslim officer
declared: “I will give you ten minutes to settle your affairs. Then the convoy will move.” Men were treated like chattels. The small world of personal relations is overcome by the objective, impersonal, cruel world of external forces. The outer life supersedes the inner life. The Sikh and Muslim villagers who were so deeply attached to each other could not even say good-bye. Pathan soldiers rounded up the Muslims, drove them into carts, and then took them away in trucks; the evacuation symbolised the blind forces of history and the wheels of destiny.

The irony of fate was revealed in Malli becoming custodian of the property of Muslim evacuees. His gang “unyoked the bullocks, looted the carts, and drove the cows and buffaloes away.” The process of dacoity thus came full circle in an organised way, and the full impact of Kalyug was felt in the hearts of men.

The last part, “Karma”, is a kind of a crescendo of the waves of action and feelings that rise and fall in the disturbed world of Train to Pakistan. Karma is action, consequent upon fate or upon the record of previous birth, and its ramifications are delicately portrayed. Karma takes hold of man, but man too, by virtue of his free will, fights against his destiny and tries to reclaim his lost soul.

The Sutlej river swelled to great proportions, and the Lambardar and other villagers went out to watch it. They saw a “black oval object” which “looked like a big drum” but it was, in fact, the dead body of a cow with bloated belly. Jackals howled plaintively, and the men shuddered with fear. They saw Sutlej water carrying bloated
carcasses of bulls, horses, and dead bodies of children; then came the revelation that “they were not drowned, they were murdered.” Near the station the soldiers carried the dead on canvas stretchers, and the bulldozer was at work for the whole day burying the dead and flattening the ground.

This was a world of the naked and the dead. The dead were being deposited into the earth by the bulldozer: the machine which overwhelmed and controlled man. All humanist values were shattered, the bulldozer becoming the symbol of the forces oppressing humanity. Into this world of the naked dropped a few strangers, who were Hindu reactionaries, and their leader, who “had an aggressive bossy manner.” This leader, who looked like an American cowboy, was rather effeminate, and strangely enough, called for revenge. He wanted the Sikhs to retaliate on Muslims for what was happening in Pakistan. Meet Singh argued in vain that it was a sin to kill innocent people and that the Muslims of Mano Majra could not be made scapegoats for the crimes of the people in Pakistan. The leader spoke to the villagers in the Gurudwara about the train which was scheduled to carry Muslim refugees to Pakistan: “Tomorrow a trainload of Muslims is to cross the bridge to Pakistan. If you are men, this train should carry as many people dead to the other side as you have received.” The leader outlined his plan to blow up the train on the bridge and asked for volunteers. Quite ironically, Malli, entering the Gurudwara, volunteered for this gruesome act. The boy wanted all those present to pray since Meet Singh did not wish to lead the prayers. The words of the prayer had an element of irony:
In the name of Nanak,
By the hope that faith doth instil,
By the Grace of God,
We bear the world nothing but good will.(152)

The leader, who spreads a map on the bed to explain his strategy of blowing up the trainload of innocent Muslim refugees, claims ironically that he bears nothing but goodwill for all men. He then reveals his diabolic scheme that the following day they would stretch “a rope across the first span of the bridge” and that when the train passes under it, the people sitting on the roof would be swept off. He asks the volunteers to be ready with their swords to kill the passengers on the train.

Hukum Chand, the sober bureaucrat, was shaken by the sight of the corpses. He was almost dazed for a time by the violent expression of the madness of groups of men. He was so physically and mentally exhausted that he appeared to age rather suddenly. The sub-inspector told him of the evacuation of Muslims at Chandannagar, but Hukum Chand was not himself and could not grasp what the inspector intended to convey. Later he asked: “You mean to tell me there is not one Muslim family left in Chandannagar?” “No, Sir, not one,” was the reply.

Then he was told that all the Chandannagar Muslim refugees were being taken by train to Pakistan that night but they would be afraid because people feared an attack on the train. Hukum Chand discussed in vain the possibility of postponing their departure
and then his fertile brain, it seemed, conceived a plan. He asked the inspector the names of the two prisoners, Jugga and Iqbal and at this point revealed the fact that he had known all along that Iqbal was not a Muslim: “Do you think any party would be foolish as to send a Muslim to preach peace to Sikh peasants thirsting for Muslim blood, Inspector Sahib? Where is your imagination?”(159) He ordered the immediate release of Jugga and Iqbal and wanted them to be released in Mano Majra before the evening.

The sub-inspector carried out the orders at once by releasing both Iqbal and Jugga, purposefully informing Jugga that all Mano Majra Muslims were to be evacuated to Pakistan by train that night. They were also told of Malli’s misdeeds in looting and killing Muslims. Iqbal and Jugga got into a tonga (horse carriage) on their way to Mano Majra. On the way, Iqbal dreamed of being a hero consequent of his being in jail. Jugga’s main concern was the fate of Nooran and her welfare. He jumped off the moving tonga and disappeared in the darkness.

Iqbal met Meet Singh at the Gurudwara and learned of the diabolic plan to attack the refugee train. He asked Meet Singh to “do something” to stop the dark deeds. Meet Singh said he could only pray to God; others, including Iqbal, could do something to stem the rot. “Me? Why Me?” asked Iqbal with a startled innocence, “what have I to do with it” I do not know these people. Why should they listen to a stranger?”(168)

Iqbal was involved in the dilemma of the self. He had no moorings, and he felt incapable of positive action. He was not able to take any positive action because he was
so overcome by chaos within and without. He could not face violence and believed that self-preservation was the best policy in times of disorder. He realised that India had many drawbacks, but he was unable to escape from or to overcome them. He drowned his doubts and nervousness in whisky. He seemed to face the agnostic’s dilemma and was therefore unable to find either a code of God or of man to guide his conduct. He appeared indifferent to all values; nothing seemed to matter for him. He was a looker-on of the game of human affairs, a dreamer, an agnostic groping in the dark unaware of his identity.

Jugga’s arrival at a late hour at the Gurudwara to seek the blessings of the Guru underscores the duality in his character. He asked Meet Singh: “I want the Guru’s word. Will you read me a verse?” Complying with his wishes, Meet Singh read the prayer that God, the Giver of Truth, honours the work of men who want to perform good actions. In the rest house, Hukum Chand thought of Jugga as a “notorious daredevil” and his mind went back to Haseena and lingered on the hope that she would be hale and hearty and safe.

The ways of feelings and expectations in the minds of Jugga, Hukum Chand, and Iqbal rise to a crescendo in the final climactic scene in Train to Pakistan. The moon rose a little after eleven in the night, and the large eyes of the signals shone brightly in the darkness. A jeep arrived, and the men dispersed in the neighbourhood of the railroad bridge. The strangers whispered among themselves since they were keen on implementing their diabolic design. The leader guided and watched the operation. A
man appeared running on the rails and the leader shouted: “Come back, you fool!” At long last, the much-awaited train was on its way to the bridge. Meanwhile, a man climbing the steel span of the bridge tugged at the rope. He stretched himself on the rope near the point of the knot. The train was quickly approaching the bridge and its roof was occupied by men. The leader shouted at the man who was clinging to the rope, “Come off, you ass! You will be killed. Come off at once!” But the man began to slash at the rope with a small *kirpan* (a sharp dagger) and went on hacking it powerfully. The leader, in sheer desperation, fired at him and the man’s leg was hurt and it began to dangle in the air. But he was still at work hacking the rope and the train seemed very close to the spot. Another shot was fired but the man clung to the rope and continued to attack it until it was cut in shreds. He finally cut the tough strand with his knife and teeth and the engine was almost on him. His body was subject to a volley of shots and he collapsed and fell, but the rope was at last cut in the centre. “The train went over him, and went on to Pakistan.”(181)

The form of the plot of *Train to Pakistan* is, to borrow a term from Norman Friedman, in part “pathetic” and in part “punitive”. In the “Pathetic plot” a sympathetic protagonist is shown undergoing misfortune through no particular failing of his own. The protagonist has a weak will and a naivety of thought. His lot of suffering and misfortune makes him a pathetic being. Jugga’s will, of course, is not weak, but his thinking is naïve, and he suffers quietly and heroically. It is through suffering and sacrifice that his lost soul is reclaimed, and in this context he seems to be a character emerging from, and growing in, the area of the “pathetic” plot. He also seems to be part
of the "punitive" plot because he is a hero-villain, with an apparent affinity with the hero-villains of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama -- with many inevitable deviations. The reader's responses to Jugga, as to these hero-villains, are curiously mixed and compounded of admiration and indignation, love and hate, sympathy and apathy, fondness and dislike. Whereas the hero-villains of Elizabethan drama succeed in victimising truly good people and thus create a sense of horror, Jugga, who is surely a different type of a hero-villain, rehabilitates himself in our eyes by his supreme self-sacrifice. Although he is compounded of good and evil, he ultimately becomes a power for good. He is neither satanic nor Machiavellian in the Elizabethan sense; he is truly an uncouth Indian rustic, who, caught in the quicksands of evil, successfully struggles out of it and reaches the shores of spiritual reclamation.

Another interesting aspect of Train to Pakistan seems to revolve round the idea of Hindu trinity. The Hindu triad, or the Trimurti, is composed of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Brahma is also the supreme God of post-Vedic Hindu mythology, and in later pantheistic systems he is the Divine Reality, of which the whole universe of matter and mind is only an external manifestation. The symbolistic interpretation of the roles of the three main characters in Train to Pakistan seems to follow this three-dimensional philosophical postulate of the Hindu triad. Hukum Chand, the humanistic bureaucrat, is the preserver, whereas Iqbal Singh, the Communist, is the destroyer. Juggat Singh plays a dual creator and destroyer. He destroys only to create again and thus symbolises the triumph of good over evil within himself as well as the concept of renewal. His soul like that of the phoenix, rises from its
ashes only to proclaim that at least his ‘Train to Pakistan’ is a symbol of hope and light in the cruel world of darkness and despair.

Although Juggat Singh occupies a very central position in Train to Pakistan, he cannot be called the true hero of the novel. Mano Majra is the real protagonist in Train to Pakistan, and neither Jugga nor Hukum Chand nor Iqbal has a fully dominant role which may be described as the hero’s imperial sway over the created world. The individual is important in Khushwant Singh’s created cosmos, but not obtrusively, because he is part of a vaster and greater reality of man and nature. In effect, the fate of the individual is so closely linked with what is in store for his community and his religion that the conclusion is inevitable: the collective destiny of groups and communities dominates the individual’s fate. Man has his own self and his own free will, but at least for a time, he becomes part of the train and is overrun by it.

A significant aspect of Singh’s realistic art, which has been commented upon elsewhere, needs to be emphasised with respect to Train to Pakistan. The quality of realism in Train to Pakistan is very different from the general characteristics of nineteenth-century realism of the French novel as reflected in the works of Gustave Flaubert and Emile Zola. Realism as a doctrine was fully crystallised in France by 1858, when Taine’s well-known essay on Balzac, “Honore de Balzac; vie et caractere; l’esprit; le monde; grands personnages; philosophie.” (in Balzac: A Critical Study) appeared. Zola strengthened the realistic tradition by his adherence to the naturalistic mode. “He virtually established naturalism”, writes Harry Levin, “as an official doctrine of the
Third Republic, a hardening orthodoxy from which the divergent movements of the twentieth century still take their departure.” (Realism in Perspective, 109) The photographic and accurate representation of reality which characterises naturalism is far removed from the qualities of the created world in Train to Pakistan. Whereas Khushwant Singh exhibits a genuine faith in the humanistic ideal, in depicting a real Jugga laying down his life for the woman he loves, naturalists seemed to be content to portray merely the sordid actualities of life. It is Khushwant Singh's deep and ethical humanism that governs his portrayal of the real and the actual. Train to Pakistan, therefore, is no mere realistic tract, nor is it a bare record of actual events. On the contrary, it is a creative rendering of the real, and it reaffirms the novelist’s faith in man and renews artistically his avowed allegiance to the humanistic ideal.