CHAPTER 4
CHAPTER 4

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh is a saga of socio-political upheaval of 1947 when ruthless communal passion indiscriminately victimised men, women and children of all ages. Being himself a victim of forced exile, Khushwant Singh has very poignantly presented the ethos and the aura of the time in his novel. Iyengar writes:

Khushwant Singh . . . has succeeded through resolved limitations and rigorous selection in communicating to his readers a hint of grossness, ghastliness and total insanity of the two-nation theory and partition tragedy. The pity and horror of it all — and the novel adequately conveys them both.¹

The novel has been significantly divided into four parts — (1) Dacoity, (2) Kalyug, (3) Mano Majra, and (4) Karma. 'Dacoity' here stands for spiritual bereavement of people. The people believe that there is no regular succession and the world is there only for the sake of enjoyment, and therefore, giving themselves upto insatiable desire, full of hypocrisy, excessive pride and arrogance, they act with impure resolves. They follow the materialistic doctrine — of eat, drink and be merry. Bound by hundreds of ties of undue desires, given over to lust and anger, they strive to amass hoards of wealth by unjust means. Dacoity committed by Malli is symbolic of the same trend.

In Hindu mythology a cyclic system has been envisaged both in respect of time and human behaviour, which consists of four eras, namely

the Satyug, the Tretayug, the Dwaparyug and the Kaliyug. The Satyug is the era of truthful behaviour which through Treta and Dwapar enters into the Kaliyug. Such is the continuous decline in human values that Kaliyug is full of Kali or vice or Pap. The fateful partition days were characterised by the spirit of Kali.

The third part of the novel has been titled 'Mano Majra'. Mano Majra, a small village, serves as the microcosm of the world. It "... suggests the reign of Kali. This title establishes an equivalence between the human portent and the cosmic design of the novel."² The spirit of Kali shattered the peaceful life of Mano Majra and turned the neighbours and friends into enemies.

The fourth part has been called 'Karma'. The law of Karma states that as you sow, so you reap not only in the present birth but also in the subsequent births because Nature is an order of determinism but not a closed order. Every deed, whether good or bad, produces its natural effect and the doer is definitely rewarded for good deeds and is punished for bad ones. Jugga's belief in the theory of Karma inspired him to make superhuman sacrifice because he believed that his good act would yield a good harvest.

"Khushwant Singh's novel Train to Pakistan stands out among the partition novels by virtue of its being concerned with the dialectics of human response to an overwhelming tragedy. The novel concentrates on an

enveloping gloom that is relieved only at the end by an act of self -
abnegation." The story of *Train to Pakistan* is set up in the small village of
Mano Majra. Its social milieu, like the other Punjabi villages, revealed that:

Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims made the
traditional structures of the Punjabi society in the
pre-Partition India. Culture, language and
customs contributed to the larger Punjabi identity
though at a certain level religion divided them into
communal groupings — almost separate identities.
Another identity — a tense emotional
belongingness to the village — also operated at the
immediate level which subsumed even the
separate religious identities.  

Politically the village was of strategic importance because it was astride on
the Pakistan–Hindustan border. But the villagers were devoid of political
consciousness. They knew not that their country had won freedom and had
also been vivisected into two halves. The Mano Majrans lived in perfect
harmony and peace. Its population consisted of Sikhs and Muslims, almost
equal in number. There was only one Hindu house of Ram Lal, a money
lender. The Sikhs of Mano Majra were mainly land owners and Muslims
were tenants. But the local deity called *deo* was worshipped alike by people
of all the communities. "Religious diversities are thus overcome by the centre
of supernatural and divine power, and forces of division alternate with
religious forces of union." 

---

3 Sunil Alhuwalia, "The Ordeal of Atomised Consciousness: A Study of Khushwant Singh's *Train to
4 D. Prempati, "Train to Pakistan: Some Reflections", in Dhawan (ed.), *Three Contemporary Novelists*,
p. 114.
5 Shahane, "The Novel as Realistic Epic: *Train to Pakistan*", in Dhawan (ed.), *Three Contemporary
Novelists*, p. 64.
The idealised peace of Mano Majra was to succumb to destruction and repeated communal thrusts. "Khushwant Singh sees in the border village Mano Majra a microcosm of the communal temper of the country in the days following the partition."6 The proposed vivisection of the country drew a clear dividing line between the two major communities, i.e. the Hindus and the Muslims. Sporadic communal violence was catalysed by the rumours of atrocities committed by the two communities on each other:

The summer before, communal riots, precipitated by reports of the proposed division of the country into a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan, had broken out in Calcutta, and within a few months the death roll had mounted to several thousand ... From Calcutta, the riots spread north and east and west: to Noakhali in East Bengal, where Muslims massacred Hindus; to Bihar, where Hindus massacred Muslims ... Hundreds of thousands of Hindus and Sikhs who had lived for centuries on the Northwest Frontier abandoned their homes and fled toward the protection of the predominately Sikh and Hindu communities in the east. They travelled on foot, in bullock carts, crammed into lorries, clinging to the sides and roofs of trains. Along the way — at fords, at crossroads, at railroad stations — they collided with panicky swarms of Muslims fleeing to safety in the west. The riots had become a rout ... 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.7

People were feeling that the summer of 1947 was drier than ever before. As the monsoon had never ever been so late, the earth was parched. With the help of this image from the natural world Khushwant Singh successfully presents the heated state of human beings. The partition of the country

---


generated suspicion, hatred and confusion which dried up the very inner springs of goodwill:

Singh's presentation of the setting of natural phenomena characterized by the unusually excessive heat is symbolic of man's heated state, of his agonized 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.\(^8\)

Khushwant Singh depicts a love affair between Juggut Singh, a Sikh peasant and Nooran, a Muslim weaver's daughter. This love affair helps the story grow smoothly. Juggut Singh was a confirmed criminal, who inherited criminality from his ancestors and had been to jail several times. He was known as "Jugga the budmash" because of his notorious nature. But a daredevil like him, too, was won over by the power of love. He was deeply in love with Nooran. Though Jugga was a dacoit, yet he showed a "... rare combination of the criminal and the lover...."\(^9\) It is evident from the fact that it was his deep emotional involvement with Nooran that had brought him to jail. At the time of dacoity he was with Nooran in the fields. When police raided his house and interrogated him about the dacoity he kept quiet. Very easily he could have saved his skin by revealing his affair with Nooran; but his passionate love for her did not let him soil her name and he preferred to bear the police's torture.

\(^8\) Shahane, "The Novel as Realistic Epic : Train to Pakistan", in Dhawan (ed.), Three Contemporary Novelists, p. 62.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 66.
Parallel to the Jugga-Nooran episode runs Hukum Chand-Haseena affair, but there is a great difference between the two affairs. Jugga's involvement with Nooran is based on strong emotion, whereas Hukum Chand's association with Haseena is a casual relationship. Khushwant Singh presents the contrast between the two love affairs in the following terms:

Jugga's love for Nooran represents one of the most positive and dynamic forces of the novel. Although he is tolerant of all people and most situations, and indifferent toward the police, Jugga's emotional ties are never questioned. His love for the Muslim girl carries with it a commitment unto death. Since Jugga, unlike Hukum Chand, is not troubled by his conscience, impulses of natural love move freely through his huge frame.\(^\text{10}\)

In the novel we get two aspects of Hukum Chand, i.e. that of a seasoned bureaucrat, and secondly, that of a nice human being. Showing the zeal of a true bureaucrat he discussed the complicated and critical situation of the country with the subinspector. The minds of the two bureaucrats were riddled with the problem of maintaining law and order. Though their area was still very peaceful and was unruffled by any untoward incident, yet they knew that convoys of dead Sikhs and Hindus were coming through at Amritsar. The subinspector, an inexperienced bureaucrat, was carried away by the waves of communal avalanche and believed in "Man for man, woman for woman, child for child."\(^\text{11}\) to stop the carnage at the other side of the


\(^{11}\) Train to Pakistan, p. 19.
border. But Hukum Chand, a veteran bureaucrat, maintained his calm and said:

'We must maintain law and order,' . . . '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. Let them get out, but be careful they do not take too much with them. Hindus from Pakistan were stripped of all their belongings before they were allowed to leave . . . . There must be no killing. Just peaceful evacuation.'

Though the magistrate was aware of the worsening condition of the country, yet he had come to Mano Majra in search of peace and pleasure. He ordered the subinspector to arrange for musicians and dancer. The teenaged prostitute reminded him of his daughter who died young. A disturbing feeling crept through his mind and pierced his heart. He had to gulp large pegs of liquor in order to suppress his conscience. "The idealistic trait in Hukum Chand's character is contrasted with the hedonistic side of his personality."

The night when Malli committed dacoity in Mano Majra Jugga was with Nooran and Hukum Chand was with Haseena. Unruffled by what was happening in the village Jugga successfully consummated his love with Nooran. But in the case of Hukum Chand his physical longing remained

12 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
unfulfilled as the firing of gun from the village scared Haseena. This episode is highly significant and in the very beginning of the novel hints that ultimately, Jugga would prove to be the man of action.

The tranquillity of Mano Majra was disturbed by the dacoity committed by Malli and his gang. He robbed and killed Ram Lal. And this was a prelude to worse acts in near future. Before leaving the village Malli's gang dropped glass bangles in the house of Jugga, as a sign of impotence, because he had refused to join them.

With this dacoity bureaucracy began its work at Mano Majra. A posse of police got down at the Mano Majra railway station. It had come to probe into the case of Ram Lal's murder. From the same train stepped down a young man named Iqbal. He talked of socialist philosophy but in fact he was a hypocrite who was primarily concerned with personal leadership. His attitude was sternly anti-imperialist. Very scathingly he criticised the British rule in India but he was appalled by the attitude of the villagers. The villagers believed that the English rule was a must for preservation of law and order. His attitude received a jolt when the lambardar said: "'Freedom must be a good thing. But what will we get out of it? Educated people like you, Babu Sahib, will get the jobs the English had. Will we get more lands or more buffaloes?'" He found it very difficult to explain the meaning of independence to simple peasants. Being a socialist he sought economic revolution as an integral part of political independence, but his thesis did not interest the villagers.

\[14\] *Train to Pakistan*, p. 48.
Iqbal believed that the process of social and economic change would be accompanied by the withering away of communal and cultural conflicts. He believed with economic growth the people would give up their primordial loyalties. He emphasised that ethnic sentiments and economic development were inversely related and that the more you have communal conflicts, the less would be economic progress. But Mano Majrans were already in harmonious terms and theirs was the religion of synthesis, where Mullah cries in long sonorous notes, "Allah-ho-Akbar," and the Sikh priest followed him and "intones his prayer in monotonous singsong..."\(^{15}\)

Iqbal had declared that his objective was to maintain peace and harmony and to check fratricidal strife and riots in Mano Majra. But the news of Ram Lal’s murder unnerved him. His bewilderment gave a glimpse of his weak personality, and also revealed the fact that he was a man of words and not of deeds. Though he told Meet Singh that he had come to stop bloodshed in Mano Majra, yet from the very beginning his attitude was evasive. After a long talk with the villagers when he started introspection he questioned himself: "What could he — one little man — do in this enormous impersonal land of four hundred million? Could he stop the killing? Obviously not. Everyone — Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Congressites, Leaguer, Akali, or Communist — was deep in it."\(^{16}\) When he heard the news of dacoity and murder all his philosophising and preachings came to naught before the

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p.4.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 50.
question of his own safety and survival. He forgot his mission and remembered the only question of his safety.

Though Iqbal championed proletarian revolution, yet he was neither ready to align himself with the rustics nor was ready to accept or accommodate their life style. The paraphernalia which he had brought with him—his urban, sophisticated accent, his fastidious style, a sense of superiority and an air of importance that prevailed his personality—did not let him identify himself with the rustics and also did not give him an opportunity to understand the basic nature of Indian villages. He had come to work in an Indian village but his mind was possessed with the ideals and ideas of Western countries. "Upon his arrival in Mano Majra, the political enthusiast isolates himself physically, spiritually, and intellectually. Although the so-called social worker admonishes the caste system of India, he perpetuates it, refusing the hospitality of both the Muslim and Sikh leaders."17 His approach proved to be a great fiasco as it showed great variance from the notions of fatalistic and simple village people. That was why he could not understand Meet Singh's grudges against Jugga. He was not able to understand the Punjabi code of moral that "Robbing a fellow villager is like stealing from one's mother."18. For the villagers Hukum Chand, who made favours to his friends and relatives, was a he-man. And the crime of Jugga was condemnable not because he had committed dacoity but because he had killed and looted his fellow-villager. The Punjabis

---

17 Adkins, "History as Art Form: Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan", JIWE, 2/2, p. 30.
18 Train to Pakistan, p. 40.
believed that loyalty to one’s friends and relatives was a more important virtue than pure moral values:

Iqbal, the superficial rationalist, is confronted with the odd realities of the Indian situation, which baffle him and expose his anemic 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.\(^9\)

The act of dacoity brought Jugga and Iqbal under the common guardianship of Hukum Chand. Both of them were convicted in the same case but their modes of arrest were different. When the police went to arrest Iqbal, initially he was somewhat bewildered and then suddenly turned aggressive. His aggressive attitude and curt replies made the constables uneasy. Sheepishly they waited for Iqbal to get ready whereas it fettered Jugga while he was in deep sleep. As he was physically well-built it was necessary to overpower him while he was still asleep. And when he woke up "He gazed at the handcuffs and the fetters with philosophic detachment..."\(^{20}\)

Hukum Chand had signed a blank warrant for arrests. This was a clear breach of rules, but it was typical of Indian bureaucracy. This illegal practice infuriated Iqbal. Before getting arrested he went on scolding the police and the bureaucracy. He planned to give a rebuff to the magistrate for their way of working. He had very fanciful ideas about jail and imprisonment and was eager to serve a jail term because he thought that

---

\(^9\) Shabane, "The Novel as Realistic Epic : Train to Pakistan", in Dhawan (ed.), *Three Contemporary Novelists*, P. 75.

\(^{20}\) *Train to Pakistan*, p. 55.
"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."\(^\text{21}\) That was why he was eager to serve a jail term. He was under the impression that he had been arrested for spreading political unrest and resolutely refused to veil his face because he thought that his march in handcuffs would stir the village people. But the indifference shown and the cold response given by the villagers considerably hurt his pride. The second blow to his ego came in the form of the information that he had been alleged of Ram Lal's murder. Finally, when the subinspector alleged him of being an agent of the Muslim League and stripped him to find out his religion his pride was completely deflated. Very pathetically he resigned to his fate because he was not in a condition to command the situation. All the romantic ideas about jail and imprisonment evaporated as soon as he was taken to task by the harsh, profligate bureaucracy. He found himself very vulnerable in comparison to the notorious Punjab police. Unlike Iqbal, Jugga had no romantic ideas about jail because he had been to jail several times.

Iqbal believed that the police system "\ldots instead of safeguarding the citizen, maltreats him and lives on corruption and bribery."\(^\text{22}\) On the contrary, Jugga "\ldots had no malice or ill will toward the policemen: they were not human like other human beings. They had no affections, no

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 50.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 37.
loyalties or enmities. They were just men in uniforms you tried to avoid.\textsuperscript{23}

Therefore, soon after he left his house he recovered his temper and started cutting jokes with the policemen. Though he was a criminal, yet he believed in the theory of karma. After narrating the story of the Baluch soldiers he concluded: "They cannot escape from God."\textsuperscript{24}

Khushwant Singh has very thoughtfully given title to his novel. Originally, it was titled \textit{Mano Majra}, but later he changed it to \textit{Train to Pakistan}. "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."\textsuperscript{25} The life of Mano Majra was mechanically regulated by trains. All the activities of the Mano Majrans were related to arrival and departure of trains from the Mano Majra station. "A veritable almanac and time-guide for the people of Mano Majra in normal times, it acquires sinister dimensions when its smooth running in and out of the village is disturbed in the wake of partition."\textsuperscript{26} In the train-conscious Mano Majra the news of partition and horrors accompanying it also came with trains.

One day a train stopped at Mano Majra. Though it looked like the trains of peaceful days, yet it inspired an uneasy feeling. It was not like the train that had been running on those days or like the train in which Iqbal had come to Mano Majra:

\ldots the compartment meant for fifty had almost two hundred people in it, sitting on the floor, on seats, on luggage racks, on trunks, on bedrolls, and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 58. \\
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 66. \\
\textsuperscript{25} Shahane, "The Novel as Realistic Epic: \textit{Train to Pakistan}," in Dhawan (ed.), \textit{Three Contemporary Novelists}, p. 52. \\
\textsuperscript{26} Raizada, \textit{Indian English Novelists}, p. 82.
\end{flushleft}
on each other, or standing in the corners. 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. . . . 27

After the arrival of the ghost train Mano Majra seethed with curiosity because it was followed by secretive activities of the police and the army personnel. The villagers were summoned and a military officer asked them to bring their stock of wood and kerosene. But when they tried to inquire about the train they were admonished. The village people were agog. But with the approach of the evening

The northern horizon, which had turned a bluish gray, 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. 28

The smell of burning flesh and the fact that the train had come from Pakistan answered all the questions. With the arrival of this unfortunate train the "... finer feelings and the past relationships were forgotten in the trauma and tragedy which befell the unfortunate victims of that train." 29

The day when the ghost train arrived at Mano Majra Imam Baksh, the Muslim priest, and Meet Singh, the Sikh priest, forgot to offer prayers. For simple and God-fearing people like them the ghoulish drama of death and destruction was unbearable.

27 Train to Pakistan, pp. 38-39.
28 Ibid., p. 84.
As a child Hukum Chand had suffered form thanatophobia. He had seen the painful death of his aunt. Her terrifying shrikes and painful groans had left an indelible impression on his mind. And in his youth he used to go to crematorium in order to overcome his obsession with death. And "He goes about his business with the conviction that the only absolute truth is death — the rest does not really matter." His fatalism had made him bear all the hardships of life with equanimity. But the macabre sight of the train load of dead unnerved him. The sight of fifteen hundred innocent people butchered mercilessly aroused a deep and poignant feeling in him. Even the Mano Majrans, who watched the event from a distance, were unable to keep their mental equilibrium. Though Hukum Chand tried to keep away the thoughts of ghoulish events, yet a panoramic vision of the event persisted in his mind:

There were bodies crammed against the far end wall of the compartment, looking in terror at the empty windows through which must have come shots, spears and spikes. There were lavatories jammed with corpses of young men who had muscled their way to comparative safety. And all the nauseating smell of putrefying flesh, feces and urine. The very thought made vomit come up in Hukum Chand's mouth. The most vivid picture was that of an old peasant with a long white beard; he did not look dead at all. He sat jammed between rolls of bedding on the upper rack meant for luggage, looking pensively at the scene below him. A thin crimson line of coagulated blood ran from his ear onto his beard.

---

31 Train to Pakistan, p. 85.
The heaps of mutilated bodies shocked him terribly and initially all his emotions were drained and he succumbed to self-pity.

Before this experience Haseena was only a prostitute for him who had come to entertain him. But after this terrible experience her presence became a source of solace to him, and the mental support extended by her, at the hour of deep mental agony, made him tender towards her. At night when Hukum Chand was afraid of being all alone in his room her presence gave him support and comfort. A sense of deep remorse came over him. Therefore, he tried to made up with her and the girl too responded animatedly to his paternal intentions. By now he had developed an emotional relation with the girl and asked her to be careful of ruffians as Chundunnugger, where she lived, was a Sikh dominated area. By now Haseena had overcome her shyness and very lively talked with Hukum Chand.

In her child-like humour Haseena narrated the story of hermaphrodites. The Sikhs of Chundunnugger threatened them to hack into pieces because they were Muslims. But the hermaphrodites were not ready to identify themselves with any of the religions and unhesitatingly gave apt answers to the threats given by the Sikhs. This episode narrated by Haseena is a bitter satire on the folly of partition.

Hukum Chand sent away Haseena unspoiled as by now he had developed a tender inexplicable feeling for her. His lust for her had gone and his feelings for her made him draw a safe migration plan for the Muslims. Though he knew that Malli and his gang were the real culprits behind Ram Lal's murder and that Jugga and Iqbal were guiltless, yet in order to
evacuate the Muslims without much harm he played a diplomatic game and ordered the release of Malli and his gang. Hukum Chand ensured that their release created a stir among the villagers. He instructed the head constable that his moves and activities should give the impression that the dacoity had been committed by Sultana, a Muslim ruffian, and his gang and that Iqbal was a Muslim Leaguer. The diplomacy played by Hukum Chand yielded fruit and Mano Majra was divided into two halves. For Muslims of Mano Majra "Quite suddenly every Sikh in Mano Majra became a stranger with an evil intent. His long hair and beard appeared barbarous, his kirpan menacingly anti-Muslim. For the first time, the name Pakistan came to mean something to them — a haven of refuge where there were no Sikhs."32 And Sikhs angrily said:

'Never trust a Mussulman,' ... The last Guru had warned them that Muslims had no loyalties. He was right. All through the Muslim period of Indian history, sons had imprisoned or killed their own fathers and brothers had blinded brothers to get the throne. And what had they done to the Sikhs? Executed two of their Gurus, assassinated another and butchered his infant children; hundreds of thousands had been put to the sword for no other offence than refusing to accept Islam; their temples had been desecrated by the slaughter of kine; the holy Granth had been torn to bits. And Muslims were never ones to respect women.33

The whole Mano Majra was in a state of dilemma. Its residents' condition was very pathetic as they were not able to decide whether they should renounce the old amiable ties and turn hostile towards each other or adhere to their neighbourly duties and prove their honesty to the Punjabi code of

32 Ibid., p. 120-21.
33 Ibid., p. 121.
morals. The news of crimes committed by Muslims on Hindus and Sikhs provoked them; but the news of evacuation of Muslims from other villages baffled them as well. The Muslims of Mano Majra asked: "What we have to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers." The atmosphere of the meeting became heavy and pathetic. The young Sikh youths who were abusing the Muslims few minutes back now pledged their safety. But, ultimately, they decided to evacuate the Muslims, much against their wish, in order to ensure their safety.

With heavy hearts the Muslims started pulling from Mano Majra. When Imam Baksh asked Nooran to pack she was startled, for she did not want to go to Pakistan. She decided to spend the night out and come back when the others had gone, but she knew she could not do that all by herself. And she decided to go to Jugga's house. There she revealed the news of her pregnancy on Beybey, Jugga's mother. The old lady assured her that Jugga would get her as soon as he comes out. Assurance given by Beybey filled Nooran's being with hope.

When the military personnel came to take away the Muslims they announced that the evacuees could take only their clothes, bedding, cash and jewellery with them and asked the Sikhs of Mano Majra to look after the evacuee property. But the villagers said: "Property is a bad thing; it poisons people's minds. No, we will not touch any thing." This exclamation from

---

34 Ibid., p. 126.
villagers irritated the Muslim officer who very sarcastically said to
lambarder, "'Shabash! Yesterday you wanted to kill them, today you call
them brothers. You may change your mind again tomorrow.'" And at last
he entrusted Malli and his gang the job of looking after the property.

The rain that started falling on the night of the arrival of the ghost
train continued and this rainfall swelled the river Sutlej. The peasants of
Mano Majra went to the riverside to keep an eye on the swelling river.
There, too, they witnessed or sight of mass killing:

An old peasant with a gray beard lay flat on the water. His arms were stretched out as if he had
been crucified. His mouth was wide open and
showed his toothless gums, his eyes were covered
with film, his hair floated about his head like a
halo. He had a deep wound on his neck which slanted down from the side to the chest. A child's
head butted into the old man's armpit. There was a
hole in its back. There were many others coming
down the river like logs hewn on the mountains
and cast into streams to be carried down to the
plains. A few passed through the middle of the
arches and sped onward faster. Others bumped
into the piers and turned them over again. Some
were without limbs, some had their bellies torn
open, many women's breasts were slashed. They
flooded down the sunlit river, bobbing up and
down. Overhead hung the kites and vultures.

With heavy hearts the villagers came back to Mano Majra and before they
could overcome the shock of carnage they had witnessed at the riverside,
came yet another ghost train from Pakistan. This time the villagers had no
kerosene or wood to burn the corpses, and therefore a bulldozer was brought
to bury the dead.

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., pp. 143-44.
The whole Mano Majra was trembling with fear and was charged with suspicion. The Sikhs of the village gathered in Gurdwara. No one had the courage to move out alone or to stay at his home. The whole community decided to spend the night in the Gurdwara. Late night a jeep stopped in front of the Gurdwara and a party of young Sikh youth entered the Gurdwara. The leader of the group challenged the gathering to take revenge upon the Muslims, but he did not get any overwhelming response from them. Therefore, very angrily he lashed the manhood of the gathering, and very bitterly exhorted that the Muslims were inferior to the Hindus demographically, educationally and materially yet they surpassed Hindus.

First of all Malli came forward and pledged to lay his life for the proposal. In fact, he wanted to improve his image because Jugga had beaten him severely because he had passed adverse remarks about his relation with Nooran. Jugga had shaken "... Malli as a terrier shakes a piece of rag from side to side, forward and backward, smashing his head repeatedly against the bars. Each jerk was accompanied by abuse ..."

Meet Singh very pathetically pleaded the goons to refrain from their murderous plan. He thought that the Muslims of Hindustan should not be punished for the deeds of the Muslims of Pakistan. But his words fell into deaf ears. The leader of the gang roared:

'For each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman they abduct or rape, abduct two. For each home they loot, loot two. For each trainload of dead they send over, send two across. For each road convoy that is attacked, attack two. That will stop the killing on the other

---

38 ibid., p. 115.
side. It will teach them that we also play this game of killing and looting.\textsuperscript{39}

The riots that escorted the freedom shattered the peaceful harmony of Mano Majra. The Mano Majrans felt compelled to resort to violence. The crimes of a serious nature hurled on innocent people travelling on trains by the Muslims invited their wrath. Now they were unable to deny the reality or inevitability of conflict. The bureaucracy became helpless in tackling conflicts and the problem became acute and threatened the peace. When Hukum Chand came to know about the plan laid by the Sikh revolutionaries he cried desperately: "What am I to do? . . . The whole world has gone mad. Let it go mad! What does it matter if another thousand get killed? . . . What is a few hundred out of four hundred million anyway? An epidemic takes ten times the number and no one even bothers."\textsuperscript{40} The deputy commissioner also found himself unable to prevent the calamity and promote peace. The time spirit was such that conflicts could not have been eliminated. The discussions and petty quarrels led to armed conflicts. It constituted an extremely grave danger for peaceful transfer of population. The helpless position of Hukum Chand made him a pathetic figure because what he witnessed was more than a violation against man and society.

The bureaucracy was unable to act for the promotion of peace. Therefore, Hukum Chand played a gamble based on the notion that possibly Jugga and Iqbal could do something for the unfortunate train. He ordered the release of the two suspects of Ram Lal's murder. Before releasing them

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 149.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 155.
the subinspector told Jugga in a dramatic way that all the Muslims of Mano Majra had been evacuated. This news greatly shocked him. While coming back from Chundunnugger to Mano Majra he kept on thinking about Nooran whereas Iqbal was lost in the thoughts of his safety and wanted to return to Delhi as early as possible." He wished he could get out of this place where he had to prove his Sikhism to save his life . . . . Where on earth except in India would a man's life depend on whether or not his foreskin had been removed?41

On his return, Iqbal learnt of the intended plan of the fanatics. He wondered whether he should interfere and try to stop the carnage, but his pragmatic outlook made him remain neutral. He realised that the sacrifice would not be the "... same thing as taking punishment at school to save some friend. In that case you could feel good and live to enjoy the sacrifice; in this one you were going to be killed. It would do no good to society: society would never know . . . . The doer must do only when the receiver is ready to receive. Otherwise, the act is wasted."42 Iqbal had an eloquent tongue but not a lofty mind or a courageous heart, and preferred to lay neutral and idle. Iqbal's approach was intellectual and academic but impractical and divorced from the harsh realities of life. He was incapable of action and was rather an immature, sensation-seeking and fashionable young man. The ambivalence and the vagueness of his name is very significant. Because ambivalence and vagueness were his intrinsic quality, he was not able to defend his stand-

41 Ibid., p. 164.
42 Ibid., p. 170.
point in any of the circumstances and finally his ambivalent nature led him to inactivity.

Even the timid Bhai of Gurdwara proved to be more courageous and sympathetic than Iqbal. Iqbal had come to Mano Majra to stop massacre, but at the moment of crisis he remained inactive. Bhai Meet Singh at least pleaded with the fanatics, though his voice was subdued in the welter. His timid personality and imploring voice could not persuade the hooligans from killing. Therefore, it was left for Jugga to handle the situation. "The heroic sacrifice of Jugga who is treated as a ruffian by the civilised society poses a challenge to it and unmasks its hypocrisy and duplicity." All the other well reputed characters like Hukum Chand with his bureaucratic power, Iqbal Singh with his pragmatic ideologies, Meet Singh with his faith in religion of love and Santa Singh with his genuine fellow feeling fail to do anything significant.

The three characters — Iqbal, a communist social worker, Hukum Chand, a district magistrate, and Juggut Singh, a dacoit — reacted very differently at the time of great crisis. When the time of action approached Iqbal succumbed to idleness and the only thing he could do was to cry for help from others. His pragmatic outlook gave him two choices — first led to self-destruction and the second to non-involvement, and very shrewdly he chose the second. When Hukum Chand learnt about the treacherous designs of the Sikh revolutionaries to waylay the train taking the Muslim refugees to Pakistan his nerves went limp and he succumbed to self-pity. Previously, he

\footnote{Raizada, *Indian English Novelists*, p. 84}
had exercised the absolute power of a bureaucrat, but in the communal
deluge the whole machinery had collapsed and he was left powerless. Unlike
Iqbal or Hukum Chand, Jugga was neither guided by any high-sounding
philosophy nor was fettered by government rules and regulations. The sole
motive behind his heroic step was his injured pride and love for Nooran. "In
the face of the nihilistic approach of Iqbal, it is made emphatically clear that
the most fundamental human aspect — the man-woman love — survives in
all circumstances." Jugga's concern for personal loyalty turned into a
general good. He had always believed in the theory of Karma and when he
came forward to sacrifice his life he knew that his act would yield good
results.

At night Jugga came to Gurdwara and asked the Bhai to read a few
lines of Guru's words. When Meet Singh finished the prayer Jugga naively
asked the meaning of the prayer and Meet Singh answered:

'What have you to do with meaning? It is just the
Guru's word. If you are going to do something good,
the Guru will help you; if you are going to do
something bad, the Guru will stand in your way. If
you persist in doing it, he will punish you till you
repent, and then forgive you.'

Jugga rubbed his forehead on the ground and left the Gurdwara.

Though Hukum Chand had ordered the release of Iqbal and Jugga yet
he was not sure of them. He felt uneasy about his own role in maintaining
peace and order. He also felt ashamed of his emotional involvement with
Haseena and found it to be too ludicrous. Mentally, Hukum Chand was very

---

44 K.K. Sharma and B.K. Johri, *Partition in Indian-English Fiction* (Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan,
45 *Train to Pakistan*, p. 174.
perturbed. The news that Sikh ruffians were going to attack the train going to Pakistan worried him but he was helpless and unable to control the situation. The inactivity of the political figures sitting in Delhi and making "... fine speeches in the assembly" infuriated him. He thought critically of Nehru's "tryst with destiny." The Prime Minister had made his tryst with destiny but people like Prem Singh, Hukum Chand's colleague, met their tragic end. He had gone to Lahore to fetch his wife and other valuables but did not come back. Sundari, his orderly's daughter, was publicly dishonoured. And Sunder Singh had to shoot his family when the suffering became unbearable. All these horrible incidents made him a pathetic figure but could not stimulate him to act. As Krishna Sharma observes,

The story is critical of the way the nation won freedom when it shows the bias and inefficiency of the administration in handling the unfortunate situation. It also deprecates the part played by the educated people of the country in fanning the situation and causing the devastation, ...  

After seeking the blessing at the Gurdwara Jugga reached the site where the hooligans had planned to ambush the train. He climbed up the steel span and started slashing the rope that was tied across the span to bring about the train disaster. When the leader of the ruffians saw that a man was vigorously hacking the rope, he

... raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired. He hit his mark and one of the man's legs came off the rope and dangled in the air. The other was still twined round the rope. He slashed away in frantic haste. The engine was only a few yards off, throwing embers high up in the sky with each

46 Ibid., p. 176
47 Krishna Sharma, Protest in Post-Independence Indian English Fiction (Jaipur: Bohra Prakashan, 1995), p. 10
blast of the whistle. Somebody fired another shot. The man’s body slid off the rope, but he clung to it with his hands and chin. He pulled himself up, caught the rope under his left armpit, and again started hacking with his right hand. The rope had been cut in shreds. Only a thin tough strand remained. He went at it with the knife, and then with his teeth. The engine was almost on him. There was a volley of shots. The man shivered and collapsed. The rope snapped in the center as he fell. The train went over him, and went on to Pakistan.  

Jugga had assured Nooran that "'No one can harm you while I live . . . .'" and he proved his words:

His last act in the last analysis fills one with a profound sense of the nobility of self-sacrifice, ideal love, the ultimate triumph of physical love over all other considerations including the desire to live, abundant goodness residing in evil, continuity of life, hope and exultation. Despite all its crudeness, naturalistic scenes and descriptions, and nihilistic remarks made by Iqbal, the overall picture that emerges at the close of the novel is that of the assertion of joy, nobility and glory of life.  

Another work by Khushwant Singh called Delhi is a historical novel. Its story extends over a period of six hundred years. Khushwant Singh has presented the spirit of different ages through the unknown common men of the era. The story of Delhi begins with the reign of Ghiasuddin Balban in the thirteenth-century. From there Khushwant Singh passes on to the reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb and then he moves on to write the causes that perpetrated the invasion of Nadir Shah. From the Mughal period he proceeds to give the important events that took place during the rule of the East India Company and then during the reign of the British Empire. Some

48 Train to Pakistan, p. 181.
49 Shrama and Johri, Partition in Indian English Fiction, p. 65.
of the major events of this era are — the revolt of 1857, the partition of Bengal, the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the horizon of Indian politics, terrorist nationalism, the Round Table Conference, and, of course, the communal rioting and the partition of India. Some important events of post-independence era which Khushwant Singh deals with are the assassination of Gandhiji, the terrorist activities in the Punjab and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984.

Khushwant Singh has used Bhagmati, the eunuch, as the symbol of cosmopolitan Delhi:

She is adjustable and has a resilience that makes her adapt herself to any circumstances. She has love abounding for everybody — love as 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Being a eunuch, she is an embodiment of contradictions, balances and ambivalence that characterise Indian society and politics — its unity and diversity, its patriotism and treachery, its bravery and cowardice, words and deeds, past and present secularism and communalism, hopes and frustrations, its glorious past and depressing present.\(^{50}\)

Starting from Balban Khushwant Singh very comprehensively portrays the motives, impulses and actions of the three major Muslim monarchs — Timur, Aurangzeb and Nadir Shah. As O.P. Mathur writes, this "... 'unholy' trinity primarily stands for the love of power, religious fanaticism and lust for wealth. ..."\(^{51}\)

Musaddi Lal, a Hindu Kayastha of Mehrauli in the city of Delhi, begins the description of the reign of Sultan Ghiasuddin Balban with the words: "'May Ishwar who is also Allah, and Rama who is also Rahim, bear

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 186.
witness that what I have written is true, that nothing has been concealed or omitted.'

52 He was a Hindu but in madarsa Maulvi Sahib gave him a Muslim name Abdul to save him from being bullied by Muslim boys. As he grew in years his association with Muslims made him lenient towards them. He celebrated all the Hindu and Muslim festivals alike. He bore the torture of being neither a pure Hindu nor a converted Muslim. He believed in the spirit of secularism but his Muslim friends asked him to embrace Islam and his wife detested his association with Muslims.

Muslim invaders who invaded Hindustan several times were accompanied by powerful hordes, who harassed and harried the Hindus in a variety of ways, destroying in the process their religion and ravaging the country. The happiness that deserted the Hindus with the demise of Prithviraj never returned to them. Though the Muslims settled down in India, the Hindu community could never look upon them as its own:

The Muslims had become masters of Hindustan. They were quite willing to let us Hindus live our lives as we wanted to provided we recognize them as our rulers. But the Hindus were full of foolish pride. 'This is our country!' They said. 'We will drive out these cow-killers and destroyers of our temples.' They were especially contemptuous towards Hindus who had embraced Islam and treated them worse than untouchables.

53

The Hindus considered the Muslims the abominable, impure mlechchhas. They considered them outsiders. Sultan Balban was despised by the Hindus because he was ruling the country while auliya Nizamuddin, the dervish of

53 Ibid., p. 54.
Ghasipur, was honoured by people of all the communities because he reigned over the hearts of people as he believed in humanitarian values. People of all the communities prostrated before the dervish because he believed in the unity of all religions. He said:

"There is only one God though we call him by different names. There are innumerable ways of approaching Him. Let everyone follow the way he thinks best for him. His path may lead to the mosque or the tabernacle, to a temple full of idols or to a solitary cave in the wilderness. What path you take is not important; what is important is the manner in which you tread it. If you have no love in heart then the best path will lead you into the maze of deception."\(^{54}\)

This fact shows that though there were certain differences between the two communities, the primary cause of the bitterness was the struggle for power between the Hindu kings and the Muslim emperors.

From the reign of Balban Khushwant Singh moves on to the account of invasion by Timurid. His aim and object in undertaking "... the invasion of Hindustan was to bring the infidels to the path of true religion and to purity the country from the filth of polytheism and idolatry."\(^{55}\) He drove his soldiers to the tedious campaigns not only by exciting their zeal for Islam but also their greed for gold. Though India was being ruled by a Muslim emperor when Timurid invaded India, yet he shed the blood of both Hindus and Muslims ruthlessly during his expedition of India.

Then Khushwant Singh moves on to the age when Aurangzeb sat on the throne of Delhi. Aurangzeb has been presented as a fundamentalist who

---

\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 67.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 96.
was pro-Islam not out of malice and hatred for the 'Kafirs' but, he claimed, out of concern and love for them. He declared: "We impose jazia tax on non-believers to induce them to tread the righteous path. In everything we did, our only guide was the Shariat." When the fight for throne became acrimonious between the four brothers — Aurengzeb, Darashikoh, Shuja and Murad — Aurengzeb decided to revolt against the will of his father. He held that if Dara became king, the empire of Hindustan would cease to be Dar-Ul-Islam. Throughout his lifetime he went on repressing the Marathas, Rajputs, Jats and Sikhs but, when he fell ill he was very sorry because his mission was not yet complete and his sons were not very able.

Nadir Shah was attracted towards India because of his greed for wealth. He was not compelled by any religious motive. But he tried to hide his avarice under the garb of religion:

"The people of Delhi are both ungrateful and cowardly. Instead of thanking us for the trouble we had taken by coming hundreds of miles over mountains through ravines and desert waste to save them from infidels, they had the audacity to insinuate that it was not the love of Islam but the love of gold that had brought us to their country." When Nadir Shah ordered the general massacre in Delhi his soldiers did indiscriminate killing.

Narrating other important events of Mughal period Khushwant Singh reaches the year 1857, the year of the first Indian war of independence, when the revolt against the tyranny of the East India Company shook the country.

---

56 Ibid., p. 159.
57 Ibid., p. 182.
Both the Hindus and the Muslims together shouted the slogan of "Long live the dynasty of the Mughals!"

With the advent of Gandhiji on the Indian National scene the Hindus and the Muslims came under one roof and made anti-British demonstrations. During the Gandhian era the Hindus and the Muslims could be seen "... marching through the bazars arm in arm chanting Hindu-Muslim Bhai-bhai — Hindus and Muslims are brothers."

The protracted freedom struggle of India drawn over a period of several decades ultimately culminated in the independence for which hundreds and thousands of her ablest sons sacrificed their lives. Independence brought with it the partition of this ancient land along communal lines. This unfortunate debacle opened the floodgates of communal tension and communal riots did take place at several places.

In Hadali village nearly one hundred and sixty families were those of the Muslims and nearly forty were of the Hindus and Sikhs. The Hindu and Sikh population was well off. Most of the Muslims in the village, however, were tenants of Hindu landlords and victims of their exploitation. The exploitation was in the form of seizure of land for rent arrears. Ram Rakha told about his village in the following words:

'We Hindus and Sikhs lived in brick-built houses and had buffaloes in our courtyards. The Mussalmans lived in mud-huts and looked after our cattle in exchange for a pot of milk a day. We looked down upon them because they were poor. They looked down upon us because we were few and not as big built as they.'

---

58 Ibid., p. 332.
59 Ibid., p. 347.
The politicians, both Hindus and Muslims, exploited the fears and prejudices of their respective followers to warp political issues. They gave a communal colour to personal differences and tacitly encouraged revivalist groups to spread the virus of communal hatred. The effect of this was an increasing number of communal riots.

The communal contagion reached Hadali. One day some Muslim boys of Hadali abducted a Hindu girl, Lachmi. The father of the girl, Sain Ditta, lodged a complaint against the culprit, Turrabaz Khan. But they could not get justice, for, as Ram Rakha assessed the situation: "The inspector and the police were Mussalmans. Our lawyer was a Mussalman. (All the Hindu lawyers fled to India). The Magistrate was also a Mussalman."\textsuperscript{60}

The incidence scared them very much. Now they realised that the partition of the country had created an unbridgeable gulf between them. They felt that they were not safe in the village anymore. Therefore, they decided to pack up and leave Hadali. As they journeyed from Hadali to Sargodha, from Sargodha to Lahore and from Lahore to Kurukshetra they witnessed the scene of decay and destruction everywhere. The Hindus and Sikhs were marching towards India and Muslims were pouring in Pakistan:

' We saw many Sikhs lying dead on the road with their long hair scattered about and their bearded faces covered with flies. We crossed the Indo-Pakistan border. There were many more corpses along the road. From the shape of their penises I could tell they were Mussalmans.'\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 352.
Sain Ditta was a money lender but now he had no money to lend. Therefore, he decided to seek help from his old bosom friend along with whom he had "... played together on the sand dunes around Hadali." The Sikh friend of Sain Ditta gave him the job of the night watchman but Ram Rakha was still unemployed.

Quite accidentally Ram Rakha joined the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. It gave a new lease of life to the popular remembrance of the past by investing it with respectability. The Hindu extremists believed that whether today or eight hundred years ago, the Hindus never fought the Mussalmans without being provoked. It was foreign invaders like Mahmud Gazanvi, Muhammad Ghori, Aurangzeb, Nadir Shah and others who harrassed the Hindus perpetually in earlier times. And to this day their grandchildren and great grandchildren were maintaining their hereditary enmity. Ram Rakha narrated the line of thought taken by the R.S.S. in the following words:

They told us of the greatness of Aryavarta, the land of the Aryans. They told us how the Mussalmans had come and destroyed our temples and massacred millions of innocent Hindus, abducted and raped Hindu women; how thousands of these noble Hindu women had burnt themselves on funeral pyre rather than be dishonoured by the Mussalmans. They exhorted us to fight for our dharma, cleanse Bharat of the unclean mlechchhas, ...\textsuperscript{62}

The refugees, driven out of Pakistan, wanted revenge upon the Muslims. The Sikhs and the Hindus of Delhi began looting and killing the Muslims. This fresh wave of violence made the Muslims flee from Delhi. Even in the multi-

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 358.
religious sermon and prayer meetings of Gandhiji the effect of Hindu-Muslim enmity was to be seen clearly. During a prayer meeting a man from the crowd muttered: " 'Not Ishwar Allah but Mohammad Allah Terey Nam!'\(^{63}\) Obviously it was a Muslim voice. And when a bearded Muslim started reading Quran a man from the crowd shouted: " 'shut up ... the Mussalmans have ravished our mothers and sisters ... we will not allow the Quran to be read in our country anymore.'\(^{64}\)

Fasting was the most effective weapon in the armoury of Gandhiji. His fast was to achieve a reunion of hearts of all communities brought about not by outside pressure but from an awakened sense of duty. The fast was also to persuade the government to pay to Pakistan what India owed her. The Indian Government had withhold the payment of Pakistan's share of the monetary reserves of undivided India because the government wanted to resolved the Kashmir problem first. Therefore, the government was not in favour of handing over Rs. 55 crore to Pakistan. But Gandhiji thought the act to be highly immoral.

This attitude of Gandhiji highly irritated members of the R.S.S. They believed that Gandhiji was their enemy number one because he asked the Hindu refugees to get out of the mosques and Muslims' homes. Nehru, who called them goondas, was their enemy number two. But they regarded Patel as their friend because he had said that "They are not thieves and dacoits

---

\(^{63}\) Ibid., p. 356.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., p. 363.
but love their country.  

Only to please Gandhiji he added that they were 'misguided'.

A section of fanatical Hindu plotted to kill Gandhiji because they felt he was enemy of the Hindus. The Indian Government, they held, would never have paid Pakistan its share of cash had Gandhi not intervened. They also felt that the Hindus' interests were being eroded by Muslim transfigence and yet Gandhiji was anxious to placate the Muslims:

Gandhi asks the Muslims to forgive the Hindus and Sikhs for breaking the marble screen. He tells them he has heard some very good news. One hundred and thirty Hindus and Sikhs have been massacred by Mussalmans at Parachinar near Peshawar in Pakistan. He says it is good news because the Hindus and Sikhs showed 'non-violent courage'. I say Shabash! Do you need any more evidence of Gandhi being our greatest enemy?  

But when Gandhiji was actually assassinated the news terribly shook everybody. Even a Hindu fanatic, who previously used to jeer at Gandhiji and his principles, shed off his extremism. The extremist held himself responsible for Gandhiji's death:

A fit of madness comes over me. I jump on the man and bring him down. I tear the hair of his scalp; I bash his head on the ground and call him all kinds of names: motherfucker, dog, bastard, son of pig. A policeman grips me by the neck, pushes me aside and grabs the fellow. There is a lot of confusion. I jostle my way out of the crowd and run away. I start crying — running and crying, crying and running. I sit down on the pavement and yell hai, hai. A crowd of people gather round me. They ask me very kindly: 'Son, why are you crying? I look up at them through my tears and reply: 'My bapu is dead.' They make clucking sounds of sympathy.

---

65 Ibid., p. 363.
66 Ibid., p. 372.
One says, 'You must be brave. You must stand by your mother. You must carry on whatever work you bapu was doing.' Then he becomes more serious and asks, 'How did your bapu die? Was he very ill?'

'No, he wasn't ill at all, I killed him, with my own hands, I killed him. Then I slap my forehead and yell, 'Hai, Hai, I murdered my bapu ...' \(^{67}\)

This feeling of guilt and lamentation over Gandhiji's death expresses the real spirit of India. While writing Delhi Khushwant Singh has not ignored the divisive factors in Indian history, but he has particularly emphasised the factors that present the real spirit of India, i.e. "... a harmonious blending of diverse elements." \(^{68}\)

In Train to Pakistan Khushwant Singh pours all the indignation he himself felt in the wake of the partition. With an unrelenting realism he exposes his readers to the bloody, brutal events that followed the partition and also exposes the theory of innate goodness of human nature. The novel portrays the juncture at which religious animosity reached its climax. Khushwant Singh's approach nevertheless is not nihilistic. He also reveals the bright side of life by showing his faith in human values. Delhi also presents an optimistic view of life. The novelist has forcefully portrayed the partition and other events affecting the Indian subcontinent. His presentation includes blood-curdling and highly disillusioning accidents before and after the holocaust of the partition, but in both the novels Khushwant Singh's tone is affirmative and optimistic.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., p. 374.

\(^{68}\) Mathur, The Modern Indian English Fiction, p. 188.