Chapter-II

Khushwant Singh : The Novelist

Khushwant Singh is the author of five novels. *Train to Pakistan*, was first published in 1956, and is widely accepted as being one of the classics of modern Indian fiction. After a gap of three years in 1959 came another novel, *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale* presenting a picture of a Sikh joint family their reactions to the Indian freedom movement of the forties. His third novel *Delhi*, published in 1990 is a vast 'magnum opus' on the city of Delhi. His next novel, *The Company of Women*, published in 1999 is actually an album of sex exploits of the protagonist and his last novel *Burial at Sea*, which came out in 2004 mocks at obscurantism that is plaguing Indian society.

Every year the celebration of India's independence begins at the stroke of midnight on 15th of August and it takes us down the memory lane where we try to visualize the India of 1947.

Indeed independence was a unique event in human history but there were the deep scars of partition too. One of the seventeen surviving
members of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. C. Subramaniam, shares his thought and experiences:

"On the midnight August 14-15, 1947 At 11 o'clock, as leaders entered one by one, it was an exhilarating experience. This was the ecstasy.

But then, there was the other side. The agony. The agony of the partition of the country and the communal riots that followed. On the eve of the Independence Day and later, large scale killings took place. Millions of Hindus from Pakistan were moving towards India and millions of Muslims were moving towards Pakistan. In spite of the country attaining freedom, all that Mahatma Gandhi had worked for .... non-violence... had brokendown."

It was traumatic period which left its impression on the society, the politicians and intellectuals. The trauma of partition also stirred the creative genius of Indo-Anglioan novelists. Attia Hosain, Manohar Malgonkar, Balachandra, Rajan, Chamman Nahal and Raj Gill have penned down the characteristic fea tures of the partition in their respective novels. Raj Gill's first novel 'The Rape' and Chaman Nahal's
'Azadi' faces mainly on partition of India. Another novel on partition, conceived on epic dimensions is Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*: H.S. Gill's *Ashes and Petals/too* records the significant facet of partition. Attia Hosain's *'Sunlight on a Broken Column'* evokes the partition theme.

Of all these writers Khushwant Singh enjoys the distinction of being the first novelist to capitalise the partition theme in his very first novel *'Train to Pakistan'*, which is perhaps one of the best and the most powerful novels on a relevant theme. This realistic masterpiece was published under two titles- *'Mana Majra'* (in the American edition) and *'Train to Pakistan'* in the year 1956. It also appeared under the title *'Dia Brucke am Satledsch'* in German. The first draft of this novel was completed in Bhopal with the original title *Mana Majra*: He sent the novel to Grove Press of New York which had announced a thousand dollar award for the best work of fiction in India. The novel won the award and was accepted by prestigious publishing houses including Gallimard (France). Since then the novel earned accolades from reviewers and it was also published in Italian in the year 1997. This publication brought him
the 1997 Italian Mondello Award for literature. And most important is that Singh is the first Indian to get the award.

The population of this novel can be adjudged from the very fact that 'Train to Pakistan' has been translated into several European and Indian languages, and quite recently a memorable film was made based on the novel.

Khushwant Singh states: "I had two books in my system which I wanted to get out. One was on the partition, the other on my community. The partition theme was born out of a sense of guilt that I had done nothing to save the lives of innocent people and behaved like a coward."²

The gestation period of this novel was perhaps six months and Khushwant Singh admits that "they (gestation period) ... were the most anxious years of my writing life."³ for he was just launching himself in the world of fiction writing. "It won me the Grove Press Award ... and restored my lost prestige in my family. I never looked back thereafter."²⁴ These are the words of Khushwant Singh whose 'Train to Pakistan' illustrates all the features of his excellent fictional art.
The freedom movement and the freedom of India were turbulent, heroic and bloody. These furious winds of change and destruction, death and rebirth, blow through the pages of 'Train to Pakistan'. The novel is set in an imaginary village, Mano Majra, situated on the border of India and Pakistan. It is the summer of 1947. The frontier has become a scene of rioting and bloodshed. But in one small village, Mano' Majra, partition does not yet mean much. Sikhs and Muslims have lived peacefully together until independence, until the summer of 1947. The story begins:

"The summer of 1947 was not like other summers. Even the weather had different feel in India that year. It was hotter than usual and drier and dustier. And the summer was longer. No one could remember when the monsoon had been so late... People began to say that God was punishing them for their sins."\(^5\)

This unusual mood of the summer reflected the riotous mood of the whole of the country. Like a whirlwind, the mad act of partition was uprooting masses of humanity. It was mangling them and throwing them across the border in heap after heap. "The riot had become a rout."\(^6\) The
opening lines of the novel actually have a distinct note of premonition that foreshadows the catastrophe which is looming over the tranquil atmosphere of Mano Majra. Actually the formal creation of Pakistan had by the summer of 1947 led to the massacre of almost a million of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. It was surgery without an aesthesia. But the "only remaining oasis of peace were a scatter of little villages in the remote reaches of the frontier. One of these villages was Mano Majra."  

The cool and calm ambience of this peaceful village at once attracts us. It is an isolated, border village on the banks of river Sutlej, with a railway bridge spanning the river. Its exceptional beauty existed in its functional integration. There were about equal number of Sikhs and Muslims and a single Hindu family. Still the law of peaceful co-existence, and not communal strife, prevailed there.  

The most striking feature of this tiny village is its 'railway station'. Only two passenger trains stop here "One from Delhi to Lahore in the morning and the other from Lahore to Delhi in the evening." The life of the village is regulated by these trains which rattly across the near by river bridge. We are informed that Mano Majra is very conscious of
trains: "Before daybreak, the mail train runs through on its way to Lahore and as it approaches the bridge the driver invariably blows two long blasts of the whistle. In an instant all Mano Majra come awake."9 The next train at 10.30, a passenger train from Delhi finds all the villagers at work. The midday express passes by when the inhabitants of Mano Majra are at rest. The evening passenger train again finds Mano Majra active and at work—men return home from their farms and women are busy with their daily chores: "When the goods train steams in, they say to each other, 'There is the goods train'. It is like saying goodnight."10

On the eve of the swelling acting Mano Majra high drama is going on, all simultaneously. Action begins with house-breaking and murder of Lala Ram Lal. Jugga that very moment is out in the fields with his fiance, Nooran. The same night Hukum Chand, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, is camping in Mono Majra, philandering with Haseena, a hired prostitute. Murder and romance, but are going on simultaneously just before the arrival of the 'ghost-train'.

We are of the mysterious East. No proof, just faith. No reason, just faith."11 Mano Majra too belonged to this 'mysterious east'. It was not
an exception. The mind of communal suspicion had begun to surround it. Soon, this little oasis of communal harmony was engulfed by the fire of hatred and violence. The tyrants did not come at the usual time. Now they were late by hour and when they came, "they were crowded with Sikh and Hindu refugees from Pakistan or with Muslims from India." The storm that had begun to blow was ready to uproot whatever came in its way. The 'ghost-trains' went past at odd hours of night which disturbed the dreams of 'Mano Majra'. And the arrival of one such, train shattered their dreams, for a train load of corpses from Pakistan crossed the railway bridge near Mano Majra. Hukum Chand tried to hus-up the matter, but the 'acid small' of burning flesh made implicit to the villagers that the train had come from Pakistan. The village which once throbbed with life 'was stilled in deathly silence.' Another 'ghost-train's arrival ignites the fire and the village becomes a battle-field of conflicting loyalties. The Deputy Commissioner plans a strategy to evacuate the Muslims dividing Mono Majra in two halves. Immediately the Sikhs become suspicious over Muslims' loyalty. The swelling up situation compiles the two communities-one to leave the village and another to let them leave.
The voice of sanity and reason in drowned in the voice of aggression, hatred and revenge. The Sikhs plan to send for each train load of dead from Pakistan, two across. A conspiracy is hatched to stretch a rope across the first span of he bridge a foot above the funnel of the engine so that when the train, fully loaded with Muslim refugees, passes under it, the rope will sweep off all the people sitting on the roof of the train.

At this thrilling and nail-biting climax, Hukum Chand releases Jugga, the badmash, who had been imprisoned under the false charge of Lala Ram Lal's murder. His philosophy was - "individual's conscious effort should be directed to immediate ends, like saving life when endangered, preserving social structure and honoring its conventions." He was concerned only with Muslims' safe departure and landing into Pakistan. Skillfully he manages to scare away the Muslims to refugee camps and incites Jugga to let the train pass on to Pakistan.

According to the scheduled plan, the avengers tie the rope making it as stiff as a shaft to steel and await the trains' arrival in tense anticipation. Suddenly Juggat Singh, manages to reach the rope: "He whipped out a small kirpan from his waist and began to slash at the rope...
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 centre as he fell. The train went over him and went to Pakistan."14

Thus the high mounting drama brings a sense of relief only at the end. When all failed, it was only Juggat Singh who saved the Muslim lives. Actually, the novel is a nightmare with an exciting finish. What is unbelievable has actually happened. A simple uncalculating love of a man (Jugga) for a woman (Nooran) saves the situation.

The theme of the novel revolves around the haunted days of August 1947 - the bestial horrors that were enacted on the Indo-Pakistan border: "It was a drama of degradation and shame a drama of human decay..."15 The theme of partition has been popular with many other Indian novelists, for instance, 'A Bend in the Ganges' by Manohar Malgonkar, 'The Rape' by Raj Gill and Chaman Nahal's 'Azadi'. But of all the novels, novelty of this novel, that is, 'Train to Pakistan' resides in the treatment of the tragic aftermath of partition. "Khushwant approaches the theme from a humanitarian perspective; he is more concerned with the
mutilation and massacre of humanity."\textsuperscript{16} In fact, Mano Majra is conceived as one of the living characters in the dramatis personae of the novel. It is the archetypal village, for there were perhaps tens of thousands of such villagers where the law always has been peaceful coexistence. But these frontier villages were atrociously destroyed under the gruesome impact of the partition. Like war and revolution, civil strife of the kind that was witnessed in parts of India in 1947 was, in fact, a bulldozer that leveled up things, leaving an ominous calm in the wake of the precedent destructive storm. \textit{Train to Pakistan} is silhouetted against this vast catastrophe that engulfed the entire nation and is presented with stark realism.

Indeed it would no have been an easy task to artistically present the plot, for the events were recent and so terrible in their utter savagery and meaninglessness. The central plot-evacuation of the Mano Majra Muslim and their safe entrance into Pakistan is in itself a complete plot and handling of this complex plot is one of the outstanding features of the book. "The division of the plot and the narrative technique sequence of \textit{Train to Pakistan} illuminate its architectural design."\textsuperscript{17} V.A. Shahane
divides the novel in four parts entitled: (1) Dacoity, (2) Kalyug, (3) ono Majra, and (4) Karma. The characteristic feature of these titles is their implicit Indian meaning, artistically interwoven in the plot. The first part Dacoity, meaning robbery, constitutes a detailed realistic description of the dacoity in Lala Ram Lolls house. This dacoity scene echoes the inhuman and cruel actions of 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." In the second part Kalyug, the "spirit of Kali or strife has entered into vast masses of men in both India and Pakistan at the time of partition..." The third part Mano Majra, is the microcosm of the world and the last part Karma has two implications in the narrative context of the novel. First, in Hindu as well as Buddhist mythology Karma means a person's actions determine his fate in the next phase of his life. Secondly, it also means unpredictable turns of fate or wheel of destine. This part of the story implies both the implications.
Though Shahane has divided the novel into four parts, actually 'Train to Pakistan' is a piece of continuous narrative discourse without any formal chapter division.

The structure of the novel is meticulously arranged into a systematic whole. The structure is well-planned having a beginning, middle and a satisfying ending. The novel has an almost conventional structure since it grows out of a conventional sequence of time. But it cannot be said that the structure is purely traditional because it is superseded by an intangible current of values and also an evolving form. At the same time the structure of 'Train to Pakistan' is not circumscribed by the areas of action and character, rather it transcends and enters the area of value judgment. Thus it is apt to conclude that the structural base of the novel evolves out of the combination of the traditional structural pattern with value judgments. One of the remarkable artistic features of 'Train to Pakistan' is its synthesis of reality and value.

The novel appears to be dramatically handled for it can be divided into acts and scenes. The action takes place once at the rest house and another in Mano Majra village. Very neatly the action changes from
one scene to another. Thus it can be called a dramatic novel. According to Edward Muir, a dramatic novel is "limited in space and free in Time." On these criteria, 'Train to Pakistan' can be only partly called a dramatic novel, because another dominant factor in the novel is action and character. Again Edward Muir defines action and character novels to be "limited in Time and free in Space." Thus 'Train to Pakistan' alternates between the novel of character and action and the dramatic novel. It simultaneously develops both these dimensions.

The story begins quite dramatically with the murder and dacoit in the house of Lala Ram Lal. This one episode is clearly interwoven into the main platform the beginning to the end. As a piece of fiction, 'Train to Pakistan' "is cleverly contrived, and the interior stitching and general colouring is beyond cavil." The whole episode is written in such a way that particularly every day and hour is accounted for. Any trifling action or incident actually advances the story and is connected with the whole and in this way a sharply rising graph of the plot is drawn. In the process Khushwant Singh has achieved a gradual tightening of the dramatic tension and a gradual broadening and deepening of his psychological,
social and philosophical content. Thrill, suspense and horror continues till the end with a few comical scenes interwoven in between to relieve us from the tension.

This excellently contrived novel is presented in third person and this Third person reporter has the voice of the sociologist and the journalist. He is a mere observer of facts. All the facts are thus, presented in descriptive and narrative technique and in this there is no lack of firmness. The first couple of pages serve as preface. A background or stage is prepared beforehand for what’s going to take place. The opening lines: "The summer of 1947 was not like other Indian summers", reverberates of the coming situation. The narrator states with objectivity: "Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is both sides killed. But shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured. But raped." At times, it is felt that the author intrudes for didactic purpose. For instance, when Iqbal lands in Mano Majra and goes for an evening walk, he sees: "..... from the bridge to the village and back to the railway station; the whole place was littered with men, women, children, cattle
and dogs..... Where in India could one find a place which did not teem with life? Iqbal thought of his first reaction on reaching Bombay. Milling crowds—millions of them—on the quayside, in the stress, on railway platforms: even at night the pavements were full of people. he whole country was like an overcrowded from. What could you expect when the population went up by six every minute - five millions every year! It made all planning in industry or agriculture a mockery. Why not spend the same amount of effort in checking the increase in population?"24 Such intrusions are interspersed throughout the novel.

Khushwant Singh's active imagination delights us in his use of symbols. The train, the weather, the rain and even the dacoity scene, all are symbolic. In fact, the train in the focal centre of Mano Majra. It is a rhetorical symbolic. In fact, the train is the focal centre of Mano Majra. It is a rhetorical symot:an extended metaphor meaningfully deployed as a functional device all through the novel:

"After dark, when the country side is steeped in silence the whistling and puffing of the engine, the banging of buffers, and the clanking of iron coupling can be heard all through the night."25
Train is a symbol of movement. It indicates the harrowing process of transfer of the two communities-Hindu and Muslim - from one place to another. Train is symbolic of the fate of the individuals. It determines the destinies of the two newly formed nations. It is the train from Pakistan which brings the corpses to India and it is that very train which makes a safe journey to Pakistan with thousands of Muslims: The last line of the novel is: "The train went over him (Jugga) and went on to Pakistan."26

Train, in the novel symbolizes life. We are told that the arrival and departure of the trains regulate the life of Mano Majra. Before day break the morning mail train to Lahore from Delhi, blows whistle to awaken the villagers. The next train from Delhi at ten-thirty finds all the Mano Majra at work. The evening passenger train finds the men returning home from their fields and farms. The freight train leaves the children asleep at night and its "rumble over the bridge" dull the older people to slumber. Even the dacoits fix their time for committing the crime with the arrival of the goods train. "It is time to call on Ram Lal"27 and the gang
moves on slowly towards Ram Lal's house looting his house and escaping after Ram Lal's murder.

Thus the train in the novel has a dual symbol. It symbolizes life and action and also stands for death and disaster. A normal train has a bright headlight signifying life, whereas the ghost-train which arrived from Pakistan had no headlights, even the "engine did not whistle". "The arrival of the ghost-train in broad daylight created a commotion in Mano Mara."28

The train in 'Train to Pakistan' also suggests the recurrent rhythmic pattern in the novel. It is at the heart of the sequence of events in the novel "Mano Majra has always been known for its railway station." The whistling and puffing of engines fill the atmosphere of the village. 'The repetitive movements, whistles and sounds of the train, throughout the novel, act as a refrain to the progression, in stages of action and character in the novel.

Khushwant Singh's artistic excellence is not only evident from his realistic portrayal of the historical fact, but his excellence lies also in his choice of characters.
Khushwant Singh has that broad nature, that faculty of observation, that curiosity of life which goes on to create a memorable character. He has endowed his characters, these imaginary creatures with real life. We need not have to go far away in search of characters like Meet Singh, Imam Baksh and Lambardar. They appear to belong from one of the neighbours. There are numerous characters in the novel for the village Mano Majra itself is the protagonist, consisting of different types of individuals. But there are a few personalities who attract our attention, for instance, Iqbal, Hukum Chand and Juggat Singh.

Iqbal is a hypocrite, representing sophisticated-urban culture. Perhaps Khushwant Singh has created this character to mock at the very concept of social-service and also communism. Iqbal's high sounding words are only a vanity. Although he is not a comic character, still his acts make him comical. Iqbal is sent to Mano Majra to stop killings. He enters the village just after the murder of Lala Ram Lal. He gives statements on high moral values, religion, generosity, wisdom and virtue. At heart wishing to, see his photograph on the pages of newspapers he always claims of his pompous patriotism. His name has various implications: "He
could be a Muslim, Iqbal Mohammad. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh."\textsuperscript{29} These implications of his name, in fact, is one of the aspects of the basic rootless-ness of his personality. Iqbal is bewildered by the news of Ram Lal's murder. Meet Singh, the Sikh priest, is surprised to see Iqbal's reactions. He queries: "Why, Babu Sahib, you have come to stop killing and you are upset by one murder."\textsuperscript{30} This statement throws light on Iqbal's role in relation to the problems of Mano Majra and India. He is calculating. He tries to assess his arrival in the village, whether it was right or wrong. When the time of declaration of his services comes, Iqbal felt feverish: "Should he go out, face the mob and tell them in clear ringing tones this was wrong-immoral.....

...... They would kill him just as they would kill others. It was pointless. "In a state of chaos self-preservation is the supreme duty."\textsuperscript{31} Heavily drunk instead of stopping the killings, he lies down flat in his bed. This shows Iqbal's delemma, his inability to take positive action, because he was overcome by chaos within and without. Actually he is indifferent to all values, human affairs, a dreamer and, finally, unaware of his identity. The writer has created this personality with utmost pity. Thus he
needs our sympathy. But we cannot stop smiling at him a great moralist, a great thinker and great philosopher"- who drowned himself in whisky at the time of chaos. Iqbal's nationalism demonstrates that individuality in India is more than mere renunciation of religious superstitions and social mores. He is not trapped by his environment, but has is trapped by his own selfishness. Iqbal's characterisation and Khushwant Singh's artistic pen-portrayal can be summed up in the following words:

"Atheist Iqbal, England-educated and communist-inspired, has all the theories but lacks the courage to put them into action in times of crisis. He is the book's best psychological portrait-the young, self-serving idealist who thinks he knows all the right answers but fail to ask the right questions. He is far more interesting than the papier-mache communists in Anand's novels."^{32}

With much strain, Khushwant Singh has drawn the pen-portrait of unheroic hero Juggut Singh, a complete contract of Iqbal. His name is first heard in the dacoity scene where the dacoits after committing the gruesome murder on their way back fire shots in the air and throw bangles in the house of Juggust Singh. Bangles here denote womanliness
and/impotence. At that very moment Juggat Singh is out in the fields making love with Nooran. According to Shahane: "The mode of introducing Juggut Singh aims at bringing out the essential duality in the nature of the character." Juggut Singh, notoriously known as Jugga, the budmash is a confirmed criminal. He had served several terms in jail on various charges. At the time of dacoity, he had been released from jail for his good behaviors. He is brought in front of us as a passionate lover, embodying a rare combination of a criminal and a lover. Juggut Singh's emotions are ruled by animal instinct. He possessed violent animal spirit and is guided by his impulse. We are told that Jugga was the most violent man in the district. All this is seen when Jugga is jailed on false charge of Lala am Lal's murder, and Malli the real murderer is brought in front of him: "Jugga kept staring through the bars as if he had not heard. He turned pale with anger .... His-hands tightened around the iron bars ....

Jugga's hands shot through the bars and gripped Mali by the hair protruding from the back of his turban.... Jugga yelled murderously and with a jerk brought Malli's head crashing-against the bars. He shook Malli as a terrier shakes a piece of rag from side to side......" Khushwant
Singh has portrayed this character like a lion. We remade conscious of his enormous size the tallest man in the area, like a stud bull. But at times he shows a degree of deep self-awareness. At times he becomes philosophical: "They cannot escape from God. No one can escape from God." Actually he is a combination of good and evil, ultimately becoming power for good. He casts off his philosophical fetters: "I am a budmash. All Governments put me in jail" - and dies in spontaneous act of love and courage which saves his mistress and the train full of Muslims. Thus we find that an individual love of a man for a woman enables the unheroic Jugga to transcend religious hatred and also prove that love is the most significant factor in human relations. "He is neither 'satanic' nor is he 'Machiavellian' in the Elizabethan sense; he is truly an uncouth Indian rustic who caught in the quicksand of evil, successfully struggles out of it and reaches the shores of a spiritual reclamation."  

Unlike Jugga, Hukum Chand the Deputy Commissioner, a rake, is not guided by impulse or emotion. Though a civilized man he is involved in certain unsocial activities. Still he is charitable and tolerant. His actions are guided by conscience. At the time of dacoity his enjoying
with Haseena. Unlike Juggut Singh who is genuinely in love with Nooran, Hukum Chand's association with Haseena is initially a superficial and casual relationship. But in course of time, he becomes sentimentally involved with her. Hukum Chand plays an important role in the dramatic presentation of ‘Train to Pakistan’, While assessing the awful situation of bloodshed and mass murder, he maintains his mental balance and poise. He is a seasoned; experienced and balanced bureaucrat. It is Hukum Chand's effort which leads to the climax of the story. His immediate concern is to save the lives of Mano Majra Muslims.

While presenting his characters Khushwant Singh, like a skilled painter, paints with a fine brush, all the minutest detail of his actions, behaviour and gestures. All the detailed descriptions are vivid and effective. Hukum Chand is presented as a typical Indian representative of bureaucracy in British:- governed India. "Hukum Chand is a type as well as an individual, a person as well" as a bureaucrat, and in various ways, an evolving character."37 His spontaneous, tender expression of feeling for Haseena compels him to manipulate the impending tragedy. The description of Hukum Chand's actions and attitudes are quite remarkable.
The internal tension of democracy is well presented by Khushwant Singh. The corruption in the police department too is highlighted-basically its inefficiency, unscrupulousness and greed. Khushwant Singh conducts his character with the skill of a choreographer. He sketches some very divergent Indian types and individuals in order to illustrate his despair. Meet Singh, the priest of the Gurudwara, typifies the stratified members of the society. Also, through characterization, Khushwant Singh lashes out at each religious group and the politicians.

The artistic quality of Khushwant Singh lies in his in-depth study of human nature. Although, the novel is not a study of human nature, still we find a successful exposure of this aspect. Actually human nature is a conceptual subject. Nature as conceived and illustrated in Juggat Singh, is that nature which all men share and the mark of its universality is its intelligibility. This human nature refers to two things that are obtained in every personality-they are a mixture of animal instinct and human intellect. In Juggat Singh we find that his character leans more towards animal instinct. This instinct is evident while he makes love to Nooran and when he hits back Malli in the prison. His actions can be
adjudged as mindless. But this does not mean that this animal-headed man is a fool; he acts impulsively. He is always foul mouthed, but sometimes he speaks philosophically. Words like "no one can escape from God"-uttered from the mouth of a criminal are really surprising. Jugga's actions are immoral, but his feelings are moralistic. Thus Jugga is better than rest of the characters because he is undistinguished, without mask and unpretentious.

Again we find sometimes beneficial sometimes damaging uses of intelligence in human nature. This type of human nature is presented in Iqbal a very calculating man indeed. In fact, human nature is a balanced mixture of instinctive drives and feelings and intellectual predilection. But an ideal human nature is a homogenous configuration of instinct and intelligence. To this category belongs Hukum Chand, for his philosophy was saving life when endangered, preserving the social structure and honoring its conventions.

'Train to Pakistan' is full of discussions on morality and religion. Iqbal believes morality is a matter of money. Poor people cannot afford to have morals. Only the satisfied can speak of morality. Iqbal's
stress is on the fact that poverty leads religion and not morality. Hukum Chand is involved in immoral acts still he is not immoral: "Although he accepted gifts and obliged friends when they got into trouble, he was not corrupt. He occasionally joined in parties arranged for singing and dancing......, but he was not immoral .... He lived well." So the writer himself says. Thus actions are not justifications of man's character and his morality. Morality is an attitude and behaviour towards mankind; it is above religion, caste and creed. For the very concept of religion has divided the hearts of villagers of Mano Majra-most important of all, the nation itself was divided into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. It is not appropriate to blame only the Politicians for the division of the country but also religious frenzy was the cause of devastation and destruction. It is a fact that to the teeming millions, religion is deep-rooted in their psyche. For the masses, religion is above everything and morality is highly influenced by religious orthodoxy, superstitions, fate and destiny. And the main cause behind such thoughts is lack of awareness because awareness is a part of education. Khushwant Singh also lays bare the very interest of the people in freedom. Political freedom means nothing to them. They
only believe in peaceful co-existence. Even Hukum Chand took life as it was not willing to recast it or rebel against it.

Novels and fictions are true mirror of the time and the novels of Khushwant Singh are, in fact, a documentary study on the men and manners of that specific period. In *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* he has tried to analyze the diverse relationship between the characters of two families. In fact, the novel provides us with what is called "shock of recognition", particularly in the case of human relationship. He has presented the vices and follies of human nature in particular with stereoscopic quality. By portraying characters like Champak and Madan, he has laughed at their favorite follies and vices. The worst nature is prudential ethic masquerading under the guise of virtue. This character has been depleted in Madan Lal and Champak. Khushwant Singh has also made a satiric hints that in upper aristocratic classes vices can easily be disguised under the name of virtue. Pleasures and amusements mostly rule these characters. Shunno, the maid servant, is there to represent the comic exposure of the sentimental and libertine conventions. The lower class to which Shunno belongs depicts how they are misguided and exploited in
the name of religion. Personalities like Buta Singh and Wazir Chand, both magistrates, play their roles in semi feudal world of power and greed in the British-dominated Punjab, As Buta Singh was much closer to Mr. Taylor, the Deputy-Commissioner, it aroused Wazir Chand's envy. Buta Singh's lust for power made him of pretentious nature. He was always the butt of comments and criticism. Wazir Chand's envy never spared Buta Singh. He was always ready to strip Buta Singh mockingly. In fact, Buta Singh and Wazir Chand are representatives of self-interest and basically men of practical affairs.

Khushwant Singh by putting full focus on the manners of the people has tried to show the double faced character of human belongs. Their aim and ambition restrict to the self. Even Sher Singh who is fighting for the cause of the country is not free from this vice. He tries to get the "best of the two worlds: the one of security provided by his father who was a senior magistrate, and the other full of applause that would come to him as the heroic leader of a band of terrorists." 39 We notice that Buta Singh and Sher Singh have mostly tense relationship, but both father and son are guided by sheer self-interest and double0faced nature. Buta
Singh too shows his loyalty to the English in order to avail himself of power, position money and prestige, and at the same time he allows his son to take part in the nationalist movement. Buta Singh's advice to Sher Singh proves his double-faced nature:

"And", added Buta Singh with indulgent pride, "don't anything which may cause trouble. Remember my position. I do not mind your hobnobbing with these Nationalists-as a matter of fact, it is good to keep in with both sides-but one ought to be cautious."

Of all the characters it is Sabhrai who is the most virtuous. She is always on the right path, guided by her faith. She is a deeply religious woman, who possessed "the quality of correct reasoning. It is her manners and nature which comes near to perfection and it is because of this quality, it is only Sabhrai who sustains the novel. She dislikes gossiping like Shunno and discourages her when she makes slandering remarks about others. Her knowledge is derived from her religion. The nature exemplified in Sabhrai is the nature which can sustain humanity.
Khushwant Singh is at his best in showing the general, universal and moral defects of the society as he saw them. In *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* he has shown all the oddities of social relationship and social convention. But the odd revelations are not that of the whole society; it restricts to only two families of Buta Singh and Wazir Chand, K.R.S. Lyengar remarks:

"Khushwant Singh observes as with a microscope, and records his findings without any squeamishness; and his analysis of the complex of relationship within the family and in the wider world, and his unraveling of the tangle of confecting loyalties, show both understanding and Skill."[41]

Indeed, one of the remarkable features of this novel is its critical treatment of Indian nationalism and its satirical exploration of Indian marriages. Khushwant Singh hits at the very concept of early marriage. We are informed that Madan being the only son had been married as soon as he finished school and Madan became a father in the second year at college. Sher Singh was married to an exhibitionistic girl
Champak with who he was never at ease. Madan has no respect for marital relationship. He is basically a rake and flirts with everyone. Khushwant Singh rather mocks at the very concept of arranged marriages and the pattern of man-woman relationship that exists among the vast majority of Indians. According to Khushwant Singh the very concept of love is not understood properly in India.

"Love, as the word is understood in the West, is known only to a tiny minority of the very westernized living in the half-a dozen big cities of India who prefer to speak English rather than Indian languages, read only English books, see only Western movies and even dream in English."42

Here Khushwant Singh's opinion is rather Western. He asserts that arranged marriages are the accepted norm in India. And in arranged marriages it is lust which rules the couple and later on they get the chance to discover each others' mind and personalities.

"It is only after lust begins to lose its potency and there is no clash of temperaments that the alliance may in later
years develop bonds of companionship. But the chances of this happening are bleak. In most of the cases, they suffer each other till the end of their days."\(^{43}\)

And perhaps Khushwant Singh has tried to focus on these issues through showing us the marital relationship of Madan and Sher Singh. In the novel the writer has given a nice commentary on 'privacy'. He writes:

"Absence of privacy is a phenomenon that pervades all life in India, urban and rural of the rich and the poor.... the weight of tradition is heavy against those who live in society and still wish to be alone."\(^{44}\)

The description is quite realistic. He has also discussed the joint family system and its drawbacks and how joint family system is a consequence for the absence of privacy and unfulfilled desires. All this leads to frustration, sadism and 'most common of all, exhibitionism'. And that is why when people get privacy they behave in odd ways. This explains Champak's behaviour and attitude. This also explains the psychological difficulties stemming from over-sheltered home-life, early-
marriage and lack of privacy in a joint family system. All this is depicted in the personality traits of Sher Singh. He is in fact a psychological case—a failure as a husband and in political life---' -a mixture of absurdity and heroism. Khushwant Singh has been complimented for his stark realism. According to Santa Rama Rau, he is "direct to the point of brutality, unsentimentally observant...."45 Even his characterization is bold and realistic, through which he explores the "least appealing aspects of human nature and' "relationships."46

Of all the characters painted by the writer, it is Sabhrai's portrait which attracts the most. Though her characterization Khushwant Singh has shown that religion and faith leads one towards positive values. Sabhrai is the strong force behind the family around which all the other members revolve. It is purity of her faith that guides her in he calamities. She is extremely religious and always looks forward to the welfare of her family. Sabhrai, says Khushwant Singh, "was possessed of that sixth sense which often goes with people of deep religious convictions."47 The sacred *Granth Saheb* is the source of all knowledge and enlightenment for her. She deeply loves her children and her family. She is also concerned
with other creatures. She advises Sher Singh to sell his shot-gun for "It is the cause of sin. To take the life of innocent creatures is sin." She is illiterate; still her talks arouse our interest in her. When she knows about her sons speeches at the meetings, she tells him not to say so, as they eat the self of the British. Sher Singh reacts: "Who eats whose salt? They suck our blood."

"This is no way to talk, son" remonstrated Sabhrai gently. "Your are welcome to your views, but do not say things which you know may embarrass your father. At least we eat his salt."  

This shows her loyalty to her husband and the employers who give her family the bread. She was satisfied with whatever she had. She".... looked up at her family. They were all there including the dog and they were all well and happy. That was enough for her." She is a traditional lady who cannot defy the words of her husband. Sabhrai knows how to overpass the talks of Shunno and chides her for gossiping and slandering other' names. She also possess a good sense of humour. Sabhrai's illness had cast a dark shadow on Buta Singh's family, and every
member of the family was anxious about her health. Surprisingly, after a period of two months of sighing and sickness, Sabhrai, regaining her poise, had cracked a joke:

"What is it?" asked Beena.

Shunno' could not speak: she was convulsed with laughter. The smile still played on Sabhrai's pallid face. Beena came close to her and she whispered the same words into her daughter's ear. Beena also burst out laughing.

"Tell us the joke too." said Buta Singh, smiling eagerly.

Beena held her laughter. "Mama says there is a bulbul on the bough." Everyone including Buta Singh began to laugh. He brushed his moustache with his napkin and asked: "Has it flown?" Sabhrai nodded her head slowly still smiling.51

Here we find that Sabhrai experienced and expressed the comic spirit. At the time of crisis, when everyone fails she comes as a saviour of her arrestees son and also the family. In fact she serves as saviour of all the lost souls in the novel. When she received a telegram
from Buta Singh at Simla asking her to return home at once, the world of telegrams and violence invaded her religious and pious life of moral values. After her return she was received at the railway station by Mrs. Joyce Taylor. At once she though something was wrong with her family. She prayed to God to give her tight and hope in the hour of depression. When on reaching home she found everything in disarray, she too was shocked but quickly regained her posture and poise. Sabhrai who was in the habit of announcing her decisions at the spur of the moment, on the question of visiting her son in the jail refuses to do so at a short notice. She says: "What is the hurry? We have waited so many days. We should think about it a little more." She is cool and calm; almost like a vast sea whose depth cannot be fathomed. Sabhrai who never defied her husband's words, her moral values encourage her to do so; she takes her own decision to be guided by her Guru. At the moment of crisis, her rock-like adamant faith instilled in her the strength and guided by her Guru she guides her son. First of all she went for a non-stop reading of the *Granth*. Then Sabhrai meaningfully decided to spend the long cold winter night in the precincts of the Gurudwara. She passed the night sitting beside the
"sacred Granth" "on the hard and cold marble floor. An icy wind blew over the water, through the trellised fence, into her bones ....

Sabhrai did not know what prayer one recited during the night; so she went through all she knew by heart.... But the tumult in her mind was not stilled. They were going to hang her son if he did not mention the names of the other conspirators. Hang her little Shera...."53

Her mother's heart wept bitterly for her son. But suddenly a picture of the last Warrior Guru came to her mind. "There was a man. He had lost all his four sons and refused to give in to injustice. She was to lose only one."54 And with the thought of her Guru she got the enlightenment. The gray light of the dawn brought hope and confidence to her anguished heart. She found peace in her soul and returned home to be ready for her visit to see Sher Singh in jail. Now she had no doubts. "She was a Sikh; so was her son." She is ready to sacrifice her son for the sake of the country. She is indeed a true warrior. When Sher Singh seeks her advice, she says: "He said my son had done wrong. But if he named the people who were with him he would be doing a greater wrong. He was no longer to be regarded as a Sikh and I was not to see his face again."55
Sabhrai pasted the sacred dust on her son's forehead: blessed him and left. Sabhrai in fact is not only guided by her faith and religion but also by her conscience. She is an embodiment of true faith, morality and simplicity. Her last thoughts are whether Sher Singh has confessed and ignored her advice. Joyce Taylor respects her and feels specially, drawn towards her. Even Taylor's her opinion is that Sabhrai had dignity of an "ancient people" behind her. She embodies the instinctive understanding of life and the wisdom of the race. Sabhrai represents the wisdom of the ancients, and had power to probe in to realities of life and discover the truth of man's existence.

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