
Psychological Trauma in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*

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Abstract

The darkest period in the history of India was called partition. Partition has been popular theme in Indian English literature of 1940's. India's independence and the consequences lead to provide realistic story of political hatred and violence of those turbulent days. This article focuses on three partition novels and its horror. Khushwanth Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is the first Indian English novel written in the theme of partition. Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) depicts the struggle for Indian independence and its aftermath. Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975) recollects all the sources related to Indian history. All the three novels depict the psychological predicaments of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

Keywords : *Disaster, Riots, Massacre, Ghost Train.*

Khushwanth Singh's *Train to Pakistan* centered in a village called Mano Majra. It is situated at the frontier of India and Pakistan. There are more chances for communal riot. People have heard that Muslims started killing Hindus and vice versa. But Manomajrans did not believe the story of others because they lead a peaceful life. Sikhs are the owners of the land and Muslims are the tenants of Sikhs. They maintained a good relationship among them. Juggat Singh is an assumed dacoit of Mano Majra, but actually he did not commit any dacoit or murder. Malli and his gang from the next village murdered the Hindu money lender, Lala Ram Lal. In suspicion, Juggat Singh was arrested by the police. The social reformer Iqbal came to Mano Majra by the same train which is travelled by the police officer. He sought shelter in Gurudwara by approaching a Bhai Meet Singh. Police know that Iqbal arrived Manomajra on the next of Ram Lal's murder. They thought Iqbal was a Muslim and for safety purpose, they arrested him. After this scenery Mano Majra faced another problem by the arrival of ghost train. "At first glance, it had the look of the trains in the days of peace. No one sat on the roof. No one was balanced on the footboards. But somehow it was different. There was something uneasy about it. It had a ghostly quality."(82). The lambarder,

Banta Singh without disclosing anything, asked for fuel and wood from the villagers. The regulated life of Manomajrans is shattered and they forgot to do their routine prayer, household work and taking milk from the cows. They realized that the train came from Pakistan and they prayed God for the welfare of the village. Imam Bakh, a Muslim blind weaver started crying for the incident. Hukum Chand, the magistrate arrived there and noticed everything with frustration. The horrible scene was described as “ 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 comparatively safely”(90).

The Sikh started flee from Pakistan. The Muslims in Mano Majra remained in the same village. In order to prevent the communal riot Hukum Chand took precautionary actions by sending the Muslims to refugee camp. “we must get the Muslims out of this area whether they like it or not. The sooner the better” (103).

Juggat’s beloved the Muslim girl Nooran was uninterested to go to refugee camp. She met Juggat’s mother “You, a Muslim weaver’s daughter marry a Sikh peasant! Get out”(138)”. She warned her to go to refugee camp. Nooran revealed the truth that she carries Juggat’s unborn child in her womb. Juggat’s mother realized the situation and said that she would inform once Juggat returned. Without thinking further more she moves with the Muslims to the refugee camp. All Muslims packed their things and ready to move. Sikhs felt very bad for the partions of Muslims. Their brotherhood made them to cry a lot. They all gathered near Gurudwara and waited for trucks. Police instructed them to leave the properties of Muslims under the custody of Malli. They confused and handed over all the cattle and other properties to them. They gave a great farewell and left the Sikhs with tearful eyes.

People saw the floating corpses on the Sutlej River. The author says “ Some were without limbs, some had their belies torn open, many women’s breasts were slashed. They floated down the sunlit river, bobbling up and down. Overhead hung the kites and vultures”(151). A volunteer from the city asked Manomajrans “ Do you know how many train loads of dead Sikhs and Hindhus have come over? Do you know of the massacres in Rawalpindi and Multan, Gujanwala and Shikhipura? What are you doing about it? You just eat and sleep and you call yourselves Sikhs-the brave Sikhs?” (156). He aggravated the situation by saying

For each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two mussalmans. 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 side. It will teach them that we also play this game of killing and looting (157).

The fanatic leader further called the Sikhs and made plan to kill the train load of Muslims. Meanwhile Khushwant Singh explained the bad condition of Sundar Singh’s family. While travelling the train held up at a station for four days. Sundar Singh’s children cry for water and food. He gave the urine to drink. The condition became very worst and so he took his revolver and shot them.

A Bend in the Ganges was a popular work of Manohar Malgonkar. He starts epigraph from Gandhiji's words "This non-violence, therefore, seems to be due mainly to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing to our bosom the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true, voluntary non-violence come out of this seemingly forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? When fury bursts, not a woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his neighbor"(51). It shows Gandhiji's mistake to prevent the bloodiest upheavals in the history of India. This novel observes how the violence grew up, Gandhian's philosophy and the stages of youth. Like Khushwanth Singh's *I Shall not Hear the Nightangale*, Malagonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* has parallel characters. The main characters are Debi Dayal, Gian Talwar and Sunanda. Shafi Ushman, a firm believer of secularism and a nationalist. He left both and joined in Muslim League. The novel has been told in two levels. One is about Gian Talwar and another is about Debi Dayal. Both are from different family background. Debi is from upper class royal family who is the only son of Devan Bahadur. Whereas Gian is a member of rural background. Gian welcomes Gandhian principle and attended a meeting addressed by Gandhi in Punjab. One of Gandhi's young follower says "We are a new kind of soldiers. Our weapons are truth and non-violence. Our war shall be fought only by peaceful means. Gandhi has shown us the path. But make no mistake, our non-violence is the non-violence of brave, arising not from cowardice but from courage, demanding greater sacrifices than ordinary fighting men are called upon to make. We are aware that they are in our country those who nor believe in this methods, those who aimed to achieve freedom by resorting to violence (Malgonkar 1). The followers of Gandhi plan to follow non violence. Gian got motivated from Gandhi and he joined in the group. Debi joined in the terrorist group. They believe that the leader of the gang is Shafi Ushman. British announce a reward of rupees 1000 for one who gives clue regarding Shafi rupees. Debi Dayal joined in the group and acted energetically. The terrorist treated both Hindus and Islams equally by saying "Jai Ram and Jai Rahim". They are against Gandhi's non violence and also suspect Gandhi's movement supported by the British. To aggravate the situation, British man started Indian National Congressed. They carefully planned and trained themselves for the new world. They damaged a bridge and military plan. It leads to suspect Shafi and his gang. Shafi tried to know the reason for the misunderstanding between the Hindus and the Muslims. Hafiz, a clever Muslim politician says " we who once ruled this country as conquerors shall be living here as inferior servants, inferior citizens, as the slaves of Hindus" (2). Shafi's reply is remarkable here " The Hindus can never constitute a danger to the Muslims not here in the Punjab. Never; only fanatics can believe such non-sense" (2). Shafi thought that the present critical situation is created by Britishers to rule India. Hafiz supported Muslims and blamed Hindus. He showed the group of pamphlets which stands as a proof of Muharram riots. Eighteen Muslims killed and seven people injured by firing done by police. Gian and Debi are in the same ship to Andaman. Gian killed his brother Vishmu Dutt and went to Andaman jail whereas Debi went Andaman to participate in revolutionary activities. Gian who followed non violence involved in violence. Debi wondered and says

“ Was Gian the man,---- the non-violent disciple of Gandhi who had convicted for murder?... Gandhi was certainly not the man. He was the typical of youth India, vacillating, always sending new anchors, new directions, devoid of any convictions. He had been dedicated so he had told them, to truth and non-violence, how far would go with the truth?(1).

Gian and Debi wanted to escape from the prison. Japanese treated Debi as a guest. Debi found himself as a traitor of British because Japanese find him a good terrorist against India. They asked him to go to India as a refugee, so he reached Assam. He struggled between his decisions either to choose the British or the Japanese. Personally he suffered from the partition riots. Debi was under hectic situation, the Muslim girl Mumtaz was a favorite of Ushman asked him to disguise himself as Karim Khan. The Muslim mobs killed Hindu. Debi was the victim of this horrible incident and died. The author portrayed both Gandhian revolution and terrorist action in the novel *A Bend in the Ganges*.

Azadi is the imaginative work of Chaman Nahal. The story centered on the character Lala Kanshi Ram and his family. It depicts the sufferings of the Hindu family during partition. Partition shattered each and everyone. Through Lala Kanshi Ram Chaman Nahal explores the atrocities of partition. Like Mano Majra, Nahal created a peaceful village called Sialkot. This novel is more relevant to Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. Lala Kanshi Ram was in pathetic condition during partition because now Sialkot is under Pakistan. He loved his village but it changed to Pakistan by partition. Here the author portrayed a beautiful pair named Arun, a Hindu boy and Nur, a Muslim girl. Arun and Muni, brother of Nur are close friends. They had a new friend English man named Bill Davidson. With the friendship of Bill Davidson, they forgot that they were under the rule of British. During partition Arun and Muni felt bad about the situation and say “If the British were going to lose India, it was not because of Gandhi or the awakening among the masses, it is because of the tactical error they made in sending out an ugly Viceroy in the crucial days of their Raj”!(1). They have heard about violence, massacre, rapes, murders and slaughters of Hindus and Muslims. Kanshi Ram's daughter Madhu was also killed in the riot. Sunanda was also raped after her husband's murder. Arun's second wife Chandhini also disappeared. Finally Gandhi was assassinated by the Muslim gang. Kanshi Ram lost everything including his daughter. The train load of massacres, cremation of dead bodies made the condition very worst. After Mount Batton's declaration of partition, Hindus and Muslims were in pitiful plight. Sunanda worked in the sewing machine for her family. The sewing represented the cycle of life.

The lively brotherhood, compassion, tolerance was changed by partition. This led to the concept of life-in-death. Though Lala Kanshi was not connected with any political or religious group, he suffered a lot. Niranjana was an orthodox Sikh who honored his religion than his life. In the end of novel, author gave a note of hope. Lala had a house in Ringsway camp. Arun went to college, Sunanda started the sewing machine which gives the symbol of life cycle.

This article observes the psychological sufferings of the Hindus and the Muslims in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, mental agony of ordinary human beings in Manohar

Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* and emotional distress in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*.
Partition made all the people to suffer.

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