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CHAPTER 16

Love in the Time of Partition: Re-Reading Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* from Postcolonial Perspective

Dipanjoy Mukherjee

Khushwant Singh's art is revealed in not merely probing deep into the real but in transposing the actual into symbol and image. His art of realistic portrayal cannot be described merely as an exercise in the bookkeeping of existence; in effect, it is a creative endeavor of transcending the actual, asserting the value and dignity of the individual, and finally, of expressing the tragic splendor of a man's sacrifice for a woman. (Shahane 68)

Post-colonial writers of English literature considered the language of oppression as their medium of expression with a view to criticising the detrimental impacts of imperialism, the deleterious constraints of colonialism and decolonising the mind of the colonised. Post-colonial writings are less about a nation's recovering the political control of its territory and more about addressing the psychological crisis to surmount the state of psychic subordination. Published in 1956, Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* focuses on merciless violence in the post Partitioned state of India and unmask the politics of identity of the new citizens. Set in a fictitious village called Mano Majra, Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* records a real account of a journey of humanity from peaceful coexistence to communal violence. The arrival of the train in the village on one fateful night with dead bodies created tension which destroyed the sanctity and purity of the village. Both Hindus and Sikhs had not only erected a shadowy wall to prevent the Muslims from staying in the village but also get engaged in traumatic killings in the name of religion before the border-crossing migration began. Nooran who is pregnant with Jugga's child is desperate to protect her love and her unborn child from the rage of Muslims. The knowledge of

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