

Haunted by Partition: Jugga's Trauma in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

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Abstract

The Partition of India, 1947 is one of the most destructive in South-Asian history, because of which there have been displacement, violence, and scattered identities. In the 1956 novel *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, this political catastrophe is transformed into a human narrative with the help of the character, Juggut Singh, also known as Jugga, who holds inherited shame, personal guilt, and a desire to redeem with loving emotions. Using trauma theory as an analytical tool, this paper will demonstrate that Jugga's experience embodies trauma and moral understanding. Drawing on Cathy Caruth's idea of trauma as an "unclaimed experience," Dominick LaCapra's concepts of "acting out" and "working through," the study situates Jugga's transformation within the wider psychosocial aftermath of Partition. Through historical context, literature analysis, and the theory of trauma, the paper demonstrates how *Train to Pakistan* works as a loss narrative as well as a cultural testament that is a witness to the wounds that never heal in the South-Asian collective consciousness.

Keywords: Partition, Trauma, Jugga, Khushwant Singh, Love.

Introduction

In 1947, the Partition of India was not an exercise in boundary modification - but a ghastly remaking of individual lives, personal identities, and cherished memories. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were split apart in British India during the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. Millions of people fled as refugees. Violence of staggering magnitude, massacres, abductions, rapes, and forced conversions engulfed both sides of the newly drawn borders. The novel "*Train to Pakistan*" by Khushwant Singh effectively illustrates how the trauma of partition violence could not be ignored in the small, isolated community of "Mano Majra" in Punjab. The novel illustrates how Partition transforms that peaceful culture into a horrific place. Singh rejects the grand narratives of political freedom and focuses instead on the trauma of ordinary individuals, peasants, lovers, and outcasts whose lives are torn apart by forces beyond their control.

The word "trauma" originated in Greek, where it was used to describe wounds. Trauma is an extremely shocking and distressing experience that contrasts the victim's perspective and position about the internal and external worlds. The study of trauma focuses on how memory shapes a person's cultural and personal identities, as well as how language reflects this. Following World War II, significant issues pertaining to trauma emerged, which gave rise to trauma studies. But in the 1970s, the focus moved to the psychological effects of sexual violence against women. With the concepts of trauma, paper interpreted the violent defiance of Jugga as acting out. Raised in the aftermath of his father's wrongdoings, Jugga transforms social prejudice into personal conviction about his predetermined path. However, his affection for Nooran, turns out to be the turning point that gives an indication of working through trauma, making decisions of empathy and moral agency. The self-sacrifice of Jugga to rescue the refugees in a train, reveals his change of attitude towards

communal disdain to moral witnessing, which is a symbolic gesture of reclaiming grace in the face of violence. The only thing that makes *Train to Pakistan* stand out, is that it does not romanticize martyrdom or blame.

The opening scenes of the novel shows inter-communal hatred, numerous deaths, trains full of dead bodies and sexual molestations. Khushwant Singh represents: “There was a man holding his intestines. There were women and children huddled in a corner, their eyes dilated with horror, their mouths still open as if their shrieks had just then become voiceless. There were bodies crammed against the far end of the compartment, looking in terror at the empty windows through which must have come shots, spears and spikes” (Singh 85). The "terror" that caused their eyes to "dilate with horror" is a clear indication of the trauma inflicted upon those lifeless bodies when they were alive. The character of Sundari in *Train to Pakistan* shows how trauma inflicted upon the migrants during partition. When she was on her way to Gujranwala with her husband she became a part of the horrifying journey of partition. “She who had not really had a good look at Mansa Ram was shown her husband completely naked. They held him by the arms and legs and one man cut off his penis and gave it to her. The mob made love to her. She did not have to take off any bangles. They were all smashed as she lay in the road, being taken by one man and another and another” (Singh 187). The “smashed” bangles lying all over the road become a representative of the “smashed” psyche and identities of numerous female victims.

Lala Ram Lal, a Hindu moneylender in the village was killed while the raid was taking place in the middle “Mano Majra was a village where Sikhs and Muslims had lived together peacefully for generations” (Singh 3). Hukum Chand makes a difficult decision when a ghost train arrives at Mano Majra station in Pakistan carrying carts full of corpses of dead Hindus and Sikhs. Hukum Chand was reminded of his aunt's passing by the horrific circumstances surrounding the deaths in the ghost train at Mano Majra. He was traumatized, disturbed, and distorted by the killing of Hindus and Shikhs. The horrors of Partition strike home when the Pakistani train stops at Mano Majra “The train had come from Pakistan on schedule, but no one got down” (Singh 87). All those carriages are crowded with dead Sikhs and Hindu bodies “Every compartment was full of the dead bodies of Sikhs” (Singh 88). The news arrives the next day, and Sikh refugees arrive with new stories of killing and misery. When magistrate ordered to evacuate Mano Majra, all the people were traumatized and shocked. Nooran went to Juggut Singh's home after learning about it.

The next day, the convoy arrives with strict rules: Muslim families have only ten minutes to pack their things. Thousands of families are simultaneously uprooted and divided because of partition. Most of the time, the displacement is violent and unintentional. It creates traumatizing emotions. Muslims were uprooted from their thousand-year-old ancestral land when they were expelled from Mano Majra village. In addition to causing the Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Shikhs who had been coexisting as brothers and sisters in Mano Majra to suffer greatly from their separation, it would also cause them to have terrible emotions in the future. As Muslim groups are forced towards Pakistan, Mano Majra went into moral and psychological fall. As another train arrived filled with dead bodies, shows trauma as recurring and collective experiences rather than a single destructive event. In the gurdwara, the militant Sikhs, conspire to kill and blow up the next train of Muslim refugees to Pakistan by dragging the rope across the bridge and pulling the passengers from the roof. “They would stretch a rope across the bridge and sweep the Muslims off the roofs of the train” (Singh 152). This situation shows the transformation of victims into perpetrators and reveals how unresolved trauma continues the cycle of violence. Hukum Chand is unable to deal with the massacre, he gave commands to free Jugga whose personal trauma or love for Nooran leads to ethical act rather than revenge. Jugga pulls out his kirpan and cut the rope, the novel presents an uncommon counter- gesture to Partition trauma. The train flies over Jugga's body, and it lands Nooran, her unborn child, and a bunch of refugees safe in Pakistan, proposed that trauma can still results in moral resistance even which it cannot be reversed.

Trauma experienced by Jugga and the silence of the past

Many times, trauma is less about what happened once and more about what continues to be passed down. For Juggut Singh, the main character of *Train to Pakistan*, his trauma can be traced back to what Kai Erikson states “Sometimes the tissues of community can be damaged in much the same way as the tissues of the mind and body” (185). This is seen in Mano Majra where the lives of people are developed by social reputation and communal identities. People of the village characterize Jugga by the way he was brought up rather than by what he has done. Jugga depicts how social stigma and grief are transmitted through the generations after being judged for his father’s crimes. This is depicted by Singh in his line regarding this when he says that trauma is inherited by one generation to the next- the past does not exist only in the past, but also in the thoughts that define who we are. We all know that Jugga will eventually give in to his community's demands, yet he continues to fight against them. The act of his shoplifting and violence against others are the sorts of LaCapra's concepts, called "acting out": repetitive actions that, in this case, unconsciously reenact an unresolved past. “In acting out trauma, the past is compulsively repeated in the present as if the subject were unable to distinguish between the two.” (21). This is reflected in Jugga’s behaviour as he unwillingly reinforces the social stigma caused by his father’s crimes. The community’s constant doubt of Jugga goes on to ensure his existence on the very margins of society, where he gets stuck in a social pattern that reflects the cycle of trauma. However, Singh does not only associate Jugga with his less socially accepted side but also brings out his frailty. Even the love of him and that of the Muslim weaver's daughter, Nooran, is his first experience of emotional harmony. But there remains a secret and dangerous between them because it violates the social and religious norms. Singh scrutinizes the integration of personal and communal trauma in Jugga's character in relation to inherited stigma. Partition simply brings out the scar that is already there, shame, and the desire for honour. The life of Jugga reflects the postcolonial Indian struggle to regain meaning and humanity after being oppressed and divided for centuries.

Although the experience of growing up with a legacy of inherited wounds that Jugga goes through in his childhood reveals this legacy, Partition transforms these original wounds into open wounds. Singh's portrayal of the very first train coming from Pakistan is one of the most disturbing among Indian fiction: “The train came in quietly. Almost without a sound, it seemed. But when the doors were opened, a foul smell filled the air.” (Singh 82). The fact that the train is loaded with the dead bodies of refugees turns Mano Majra's innocence into one of paralysis. The response of the villagers is not instant outrage but rather shocked silence. According to Caruth, “Trauma is not locatable in the simple chronology of events, but rather in the way it returns to haunt the survivor later” (4). Thus, the train of corpses is the delayed shock - as death comes silently, and only after is it understood. This lack of comprehension can be seen in the life of Jugga. Initially, he is a political and he remains indifferent to political activities, but when he sees violence approaching his own area, he cannot take it any longer and understands the wrongness of it. When Muslims of Mano Majra are told to leave, among them, Nooran—Jugga loses his only way of a normal life. His sorrow is increased by his powerlessness; as a Sikh, he is not allowed to go with her, and as an outcast, he does not have the authority to help. The novel rounds up the scene of his mind breaking: “Jugga felt as if someone had torn his heart out. He stood on the bank watching the boats move away into the mist” (Singh 144). This is when the trauma of the characters come into conflict. Partition destroys not just the era of collective harmony, but also the tender love that had been the only power able to stand against it. Mano Majra, the rural community, is turned into a traumatized community whose moral and emotional structure is severely harmed.

Jugga’s love for Nooran is the emotional thread that binds together the novel of Singh and Jugga’s drive towards instinctive acts towards what can be described as some form of moral awakening. Their bond defies Partition's rationale as it transcends religious boundaries, encompasses physical intimacy, and remains deeply

human. Upon freeing himself from jail, Jugga comes to know about the plan to blow up the train carrying Muslim refugees, which is also the train that will take Nooran and her family to a safe place. Juggat Singh, who also loses his love Nooran after the partition, reflects the trauma of losing something important. Despite his seeming coldness, only Juggut Singh chooses to rescue the people on the train that is meant to carry the Muslim refugees to Pakistan. Despite being insulted by the other criminals who brand him a coward by throwing bangles on him, Juggut Singh leaves his mark by dying and restoring harmony to his village. The moral problem that is brought to his mind sharply reflects LaCapra's idea of acting out and working through. The final scene, when he rescues the train by cutting the rope, is the one in which the trauma is converted to moral repair. Singh writes, "Jugga grasped the rope in both hands and sawed at it across his neck until it snapped. The train went through like a streak of light." (Singh 182). Despite Khushwant Singh's quick recognition of Juggut as a hero, Juggat Singh redeems himself from the trauma of partition by acting on his instincts and promoting peace rather than merely responding passively to the violent and hateful events of the day. Therefore, in the text, Juggut Singh represents humanity during a time of hostility and communalism, while Nooran, represents many women of undivided India who suffered during the 1947 partition. Nooran, who is expecting Juggat Singh's love child, is devastated to learn that she must permanently leave her village and travel to Pakistan.

Here, the woman's predicament is combined with the country's predicament. Singh highlighted the realities of women through the depiction of Nooran, the loss and deprivation women endured during the horrific event of partition. Sundari serves as a point of reference for the woman's body in the novel. During the division, they were tortured and defaced. Sundari, recently married, and she was gang-raped in front of her husband by Muslims. According to Singh: She did not have to take off any of her bangles. They were all smashed as she lay in the road, being taken by one man and another and another (Singh 187). In this instance, the newly married Sundari's sexual abuse represents the violation of hopes and desires of Sundari as well as the breach of the honour and dignity of the millions of women who suffered the same results during partition. Sundari displays the horrific scars left on the bodies of thousands of women who were raped by gangs and sexually abducted.

Conclusion

Train to Pakistan, by Khushwant Singh, is an excellent human and passionate narrative of the trauma of the Partition of India. India's population experienced unheard-of levels of bloodshed, relocation, disintegration, and long-lasting trauma because of the 1947 Partition. Millions suffered trauma for the rest of their lives as a result of being slaughtered, raped, butchered, and uprooted. Magistrate Hukum Chand is severely traumatized and shocked when the train carrying dead bodies arrives at Mano Majra. The collapse of communal harmony results in social and structural trauma that affects the village and the country, while the forced relocation of the Muslim population from Mano Majra causes long-lasting psychological wounds. The novel functions as a literary witness which can connect the painful past, collective memory and break silence and retain remembrance alive without giving any form of closure and comfort. Juggut Singh, the main protagonist, transformed from a stigmatized village criminal into a savior. By the character of Jugga, Khushwant Singh represent how trauma functions at personal and collective levels. And how it shapes identity through inherited stigma, loss and guilt. The life of Jugga is marked with repetition and emergence, wrongdoings, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of trauma. His last sacrifice is that trauma cannot be completely processed, but it can lead to an ethical awakening. The death of Jugga transforms personal suffering into a collective responsibility, and this theme reminds the concept of the trauma waking up survivors because of suffering in other people. Based on the Cathy Caruth concept of trauma as an unclaimed experience, Dominick Lacapra's acting out and working through and Kai Erikson's concept of collective

trauma this study has demonstrated that the life of Jugga as moral awakening. Along Jugga, Nooran his love forcibly displaced from mano majra, represents many women whose lives were shattered by violence and partition. Nooran 's suffering during partition were unspoken which shows the silence of women that surrounds trauma. When the train comes with killed people of Pakistan, it brings the violence and trauma to the country which shows partition not only affects individual but the entire society as well. Jugga is a lasting icon of hope that comes out of hopelessness that shows that even when loss is irreversible, compassion, love, and sacrifice can temporarily revive fractured humanity.

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