

**Riots, Refugees and Communal Madness: A Comparative Study
of Saadat Hasan Manto's Select Partition Stories and
Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan***

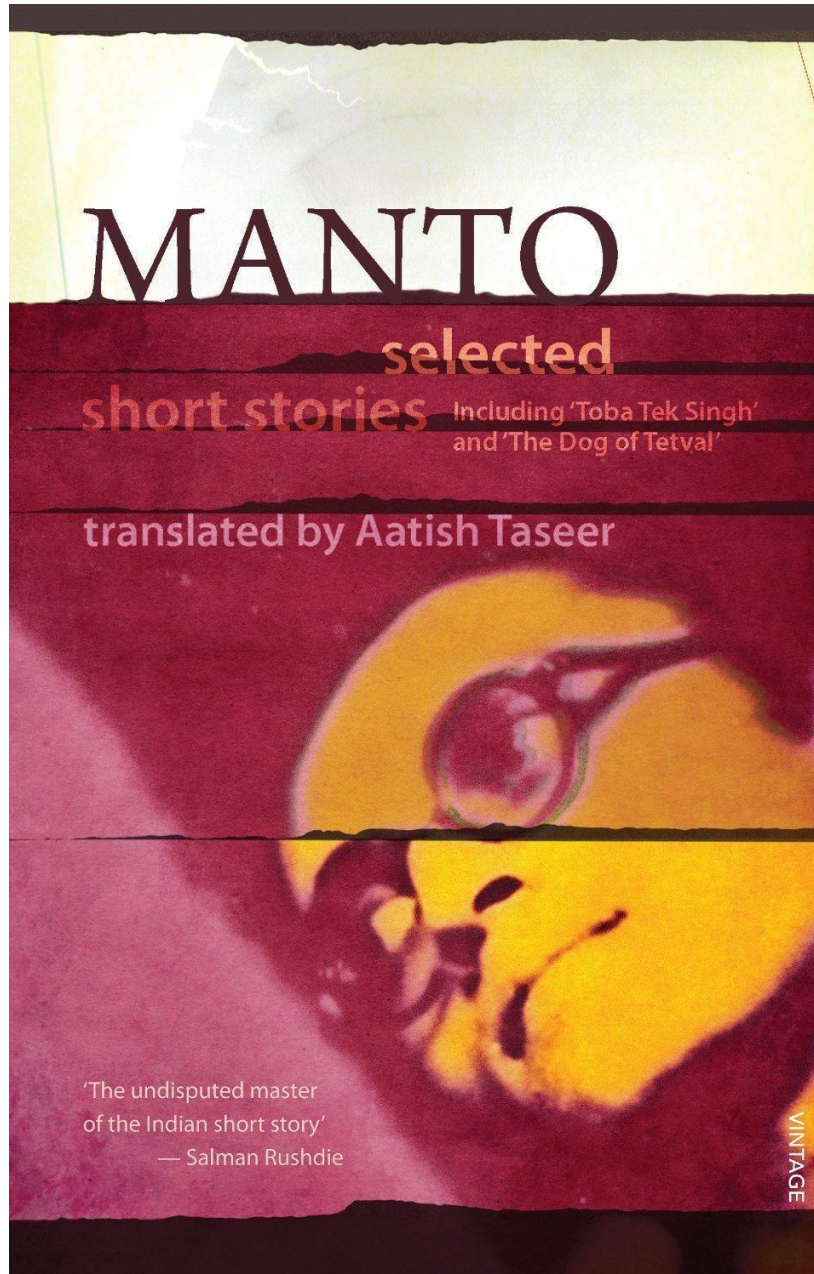
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Abstract

The article attempts a comparative study of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and the select stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, written against the backdrop of the India-Pakistan partition of 1947 which traumatized and affected millions of people. The study looks into the fictitious nature of the brand-new identity taken up by people and the manner in which they acted under the influence of radical nationalism and extremism. It unravels the consequences of partition madness upon women and children as they became the easiest targets of the fanatics. It intends to identify the similarities and dissimilarities between both writers in respect of their portrayal of the refugee crisis, partition riots, communal madness as reflected in their works, and their reactions towards the religious division of India. The adopted method of this study is a comparative study in which textual analysis involving close reading of the select texts is utilized, taking postcolonialism and feminism into account. The analysis is further substantiated with the data taken from secondary sources.

Keywords: Khushwant Singh, Saadat Hasan Manto, Partition of Indian subcontinent, Riots, Refugees, Communal madness, Comparative Study.



Courtesy: www.amazon.com

I. Introduction

Partition of the Indian subcontinent is an important subject matter for many postcolonial writers who depict partition violence in their works. Manto is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest Urdu short story writers. He provides a realistic version of the complexities of human psychology, partition violence, trauma, madness, colonial legacies, and displacement in his works as he was not only an eyewitness of the horridness of partition but also a victim of it. He exposes the evils of contemporary society through his short stories from a neutral

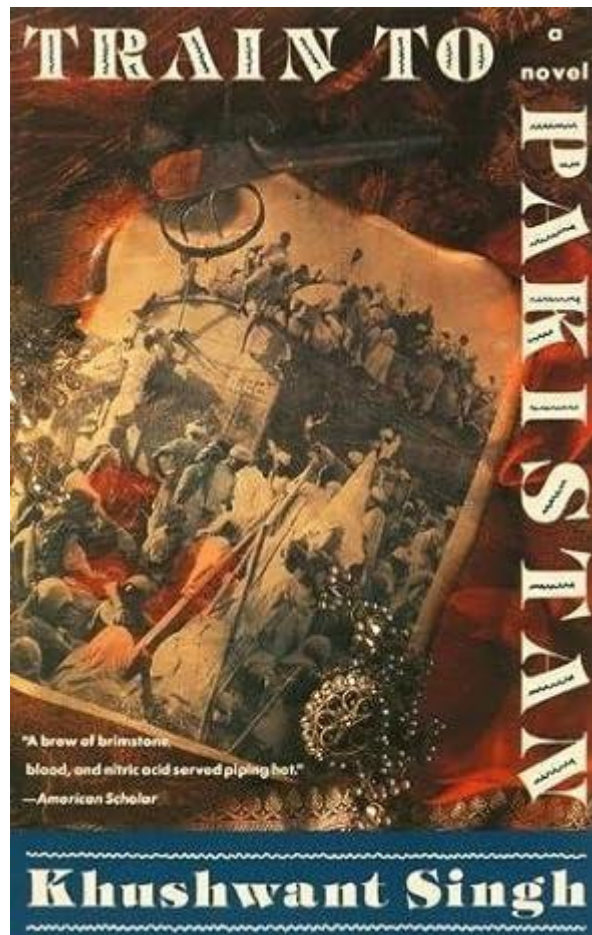
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standpoint. His stories reveal how the victims turn into perpetrators of violence. They are a gruesome reminder of the horrors of partition violence that took place against innocent women and serve as a lens through which the tragedy of partition is brought sharply into focus by capturing the dimension of sectarian violence on the eve of India's independence from the British in 1947 and the immediate aftermath of partition.

Fakrul Alam notes that “The Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 led to the exodus of millions of Hindus and Muslims across it” (12). Manto dreams of a better future for the subcontinent on the basis of religious tolerance, decent political affairs, secularism, and cultural diversity irrespective of color, caste division, or communal identity where there should be no hypocrisy, double standards, and hatred among the people of different communities. His idiosyncratic stories go beyond the limitations of national borders, religion, and ages.



Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Khushwant Singh offers an Indian perspective of partition in *Train to Pakistan*. It shows the dark history of India's independence from the British and how it resulted in a surge of violent activities and communal riots and created an enormous rift among the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs who used to live together in harmony for centuries and share a common identity based on their interreligious and inter-cultural harmony and peaceful coexistence. Singh makes a wonderful combination of contextual realities, historical truths, and fiction in *Train to Pakistan*. He reveals how partition affects the harmonious relationship and cultural unity of different communities by highlighting the pre-partition and post-partition events in Mano Majra. As a result of partition, Mano Majra turns into a place of communal madness and violence. According to Sudhwa Tiwari, "Partition not only created a 'mad' atmosphere but also made its victims 'mad', 'insane', losing their mental balances due to traumatic experiences" (55). Singh discloses the plight and psychological trauma of the refugees during their dreadful train journey from India to Pakistan and vice versa. His personal experience of partition helps him to portray the holocaust of partition in a realistic manner. Manto and Singh condemn the entire process of partition that provoked communal riots and violence in 1947. They blame religious leaders and spiteful politicians instead of religion who used it as a façade to carry out violence and atrocities.

The present article offers a comparative study of Manto's select stories and Singh's *Train to Pakistan* to examine how they portray the themes of partition riots, communal madness, and refugee crisis in their works. It shows their ideas and thoughts regarding the religious riots, the crises of the refugees, and the horrible things that followed after the division of India through the lenses of postcolonialism and feminism. Besides, it provides a critical assessment of Singh and Manto's views about the creation of Pakistan based on religion. However, the article first outlines a brief account of partition and the theoretical framework of the study.

II. Objectives of the Study

The current paper deals with four basic objectives. They are as follows-

1. To look into the nature of the brand-new identity taken up by people and the manner in which they acted under the influence of nationalism and extremism.

2. To identify the similarities and dissimilarities between Manto and Singh regarding their portrayal of the refugee crisis, partition riots, and communal madness.
3. To highlight the consequences of partition madness upon women and children.
4. To reveal the reactions and stance of Manto and Singh toward the religious division of the Indian subcontinent.

III. Literature Review

The partition of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan based on the “Two Nation Theory” is one of the most disturbing events of the twentieth century having many tragic and long-lasting repercussions. It was undoubtedly the indispensable outcome of many social, political, and economic factors, as well as religious dissimilarities and cultural diversity at the end of the British colonial rule in India and was the worst catastrophic event after the Second World War. The history of the division of India is a history of communal violence and forced migration in search of a safer territory. There was a sense of fraternity, respect, and intimacy among people before partition. They fought bravely side by side against the British colonizers for India’s freedom. The Indian subcontinent was under British rule for almost 200 years who used the formula of divide and rule to dominate the Indians. As a result, British India was divided into two independent states-India and Pakistan, having distinct religious, and cultural differences. Partition was devised by the British as a political resolution to put an end to all forms of communal and ethnic conflicts between the Hindus and the Muslims. But it caused the separation of families, and identities, millions of deaths, and displacements. In fact, it was tragically flawed because it was the outcome of communalism. Besides, the nationalist impetus and communal mentality of the people and the political leaders of the subcontinent facilitated the formation of ethnic and religious identity. Therefore, there was a clash of values and interests among different communities. In “Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India”, Gyanendra Pandey states:

Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus were all redefined by the process of Partition: as butchers by or as devious others: as untrustworthy and anti-national; but perhaps most fundamentally, as Sikhs and Muslims and Hindus alone. All over the subcontinent, for extended periods, at many times since 1947, men, women, and children belonging to these communities yet belonging to different castes, classes, occupations, linguistic and

cultural backgrounds have been seen in terms of little but their Sikh-ness. their Muslim-ness or their Hindu-ness. (16)

Partition created havoc by destroying the natural identities of millions of people as well as making them refugees in their own countries in a matter of seconds. Sheikh Mehedi Hasan opines that “The event of partition redefined and refigured identities by endangering history, memory, culture, and tradition” (121). On the eve of partition, people were consumed by nationalism and the religious supremacy of one community over the other. After acquiring communal identities, the people who once lived harmoniously in India without any kind of problem treated the ‘other’ as the worst enemy.

Yasmin Khan in *The Great Partition* questions the crises of the refugees, deaths of tens of thousands of people, identity dilemma, and other forms of violence caused by partition saying, “Where was India and where was Pakistan? Who was now an Indian and a Pakistani? Was citizenship underpinned by a shared religious faith, or was it a universal right, guaranteed by a state that promised equality and freedom to all? Were people expected to move into the state where their co-religionists resided in majority?” (4). People lost their near and dear ones as well as their ancestral homelands because the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs carried out atrocities, rapes, and other forms of brutal activities in the name of religion. “Religion played the key role in these particular historical disasters, and partition history invariably entails the horrors and stark drama of numerous religious riots and massacres” (Deb 215). The bigots peddled their communal hatred by misquoting and misinterpreting religious books. The idea of the homeland was erased from their minds completely and identity was shattered into pieces overnight.

Barnali Saha in “Violence, Gender and Religion: A Critical Study of Saadat Hasan Manto's *Siyah Hashiye*” comments that “Saadat Hasan Manto's short literary vignettes transport us into a hermetically sealed world of communal violence and sensitize us to the dichotomy between the glorified notion of Indian independence and the ground reality of Partition violence” (34). Partition created a bloody stain on the history and rich cultural diversity of India which could not be removed by any means. Manto’s stories are faithful representations of the diabolical nature of partition and the inheritance of India’s independence.

Partition cracked the psyche of victimized women who were forced to live with those psychological trauma and physical wounds. Women became the worst targets of communal violence in different ways. They were commodified as sexual entities and passive objects. Many women preferred death to dishonor to uphold their religious status and social dignity. Their vulnerable status makes them obvious targets of male sexual aggression during warfare, ethnic cleansing, illegal coups, foreign invasions, political turmoil, and riots. Therefore, the bodies of women and minor girls ultimately became the basic “instruments of communication between two groups of men” (Ivekovic and Mostov 11), and “their defilement symbolically signified the defilement of the other community's masculinity that failed to protect its women” (Saha 32). He sides with the oppressed women for their painful experiences and struggles. His stories provide “a scope to understand the psychological aspect of violence of the partition victims amid an ambiance of mass madness” (Ali 107). Manto was sad about the riots, bloodshed, sexual exploitation, and the traumatic experience of women. He states, “When I sat down to write I found my thoughts scattered. Though I tried hard I could not separate India from Pakistan and Pakistan from India...my mind could not resolve the question; what country we belonged to now, India or Pakistan” (qtd. in Mahey 153). Manto felt rootless in Pakistan because of his nostalgia for India. He lost his culture, and companions and experienced poverty and a sense of unwantedness in Lahore. He was also tagged as a pornographer by literary critics and government officials for his authentic presentation of contextual realities in his stories. The politicians and religious leaders of both states stirred up sectarian tensions among the masses.

Singh provides a human dimension to the tragedy of partition while describing the traumatic events to inject a sense of menacing atmosphere, and authenticity in *Train to Pakistan*. He gives a colorful insight into the nature of the refugee crisis, religious persecution, and mob rule in postcolonial India. O. P. Bhatnagar in “Indian Political Novel in English” remarks that “Khushwant Singh was the first Indian novelist in English to write about the horror and holocaust of the partition with great artistic concern in *Train to Pakistan*” (152). The novel reveals Singh’s insight into the sinister impacts of partition violence. Seema Chadda comments that “Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* pictures the brutal, realistic story of political hatred, and of mass passions during the tragic days that preceded and followed the partition of India. This political partition of India disturbed the Indian psyche and also its social fabric” (7). It is a symbolic novel that deals with the bitter truths and harsh realities of the contemporary

turbulent period. Vinod Kumar writes that “The novel *Train to Pakistan* is pregnant with history, romance, and bureaucratic voluptuousness, police atrocities, judicial excess, dacoity and murder, human stampede, unusual communal violence caused by the partition of the country, harrowing human experiences and ghostly scenes beyond human imagination presented by the incoming and outgoing ghost trains” (47). Singh criticizes both the Hindus, and the Muslims as well as the Sikhs for partition violence because none of the communities took the responsibility of communal violence; instead, they blamed one another. Singh remarks that “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, both shot, and stabbed and speared, and clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped” (5).

The other side of India’s independence was beyond one’s imagination. Partition created an overwhelming refugee crisis in India and Pakistan and the fate of many people remained unknown as their last traces were lost within mere seconds. He depicts “trauma, disruption, displacement, dispossession, dislocation, distrust, disgust, and violence suffered by the innocent people” (Bhatnagar 152). Amir Shehzad and Dr. Shaheena Ayub Batti interpret *Train to Pakistan* from the perspective of post-colonialism in “A Post-colonial Perspective of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*” and point out the impacts of colonialism in postcolonial India by giving a lot of emphasis on the issues of the appropriation of the English language, representation and resistance in the novel. Singh shows the clash between European culture and Indian traditions. He describes the challenges and conflicts that India has to face after getting independence to develop a brand-new national identity, and to be self-reliant. He shows India as a newly born country attempting to establish itself after the end of British colonial rule and battling to make a few steps towards development and economic growth. The violent issues, riots, massacres, and political turmoil during the early days and after the partition are the direct legacies of British colonialism that created a lot of disorders, and complexities in India.

Although many research works have already been conducted on the works of Singh and Manto as they are two legendary figures in the field of postcolonial literature, the current research is a deliberate attempt to critique the issues found in Manto’s select stories and Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* like partition violence, existential crisis, dislocation, trauma, postcolonial

identity, and victimization of women after the fall of the British Raj in the context of the Indian subcontinent.

IV. Methodology

The research is done following the comparative literature method for the evaluation of Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Manto's select stories like "Toba Tek Singh", "The Dog of Tithwal", "Mishtake", "Mistake Removed", "Open It!", "The Assignment" and "The Dutiful Daughter" through the lenses of postcolonialism and feminism to have an extensive study of the themes, historical background, and identify the similarities and dissimilarities between them. The primary data of the study is collected through textual analysis of the selected works of both writers. It estimates factors such as mass genocide, administrative failure, police brutality, gender discrimination, communal rampage, inferiority complex, sexploitation, and loss of ancestral home that result in restlessness, lack of communication, dilemma, schizophrenia, uncertainty, traumatization, and violent demeanor.

V. Theoretical Framework

Postcolonialism refers to a theory or concept that critically studies the negative effects of colonization and imperialism upon cultures, languages, and the psyche of the colonized as a result of oppression, and atrocities of the colonizers to maintain their authority over the colonized. The relationship between the colonizers and the colonized is a binary one. The postcolonial writers condemn the colonizing mission of European countries. According to Praveen V, "Postcolonialism tries to decenter/deconstruct Eurocentrism or Eurocentric beliefs" (47). Postcolonialism mainly challenges the colonial agenda, ways of thinking, and strongly writes back against such stereotypical notions and false ideologies. (McLeod 32). It represents the aftermath of Western/European colonialism and can be viewed as a mechanism to challenge colonial rule and reclaim the agency of people oppressed and tormented under various forms of European colonialism and imperialism.

Pramod K. Nayar defines the concept of "postcolonialism" as "the theoretical wing of postcoloniality. It refers to the mode of reading, political analysis, and cultural resistance/intervention that deals with the history of colonialism and present neocolonial structure...It invokes ideas such as social justice, emancipation, and democracy in order to oppose oppressive structures of racism, discrimination, and exploitation" (17). Aimé Césaire

emphasizes the legacy of violence inflicted on the colonized by Western colonizers in *Discourse on Colonialism*. He describes the brutal consequences of colonialism not only on the colonized but also on the colonizers by exposing the hypocrisies and contradictions implicit in European notions of progress, civilization, and enlightenment. Colonization not only brutalizes the colonized but also dehumanizes the colonizers by provoking them to act more violently toward one another. European colonialism results in discrimination, racism, class division, and exploitation. He blames modern bourgeois thinkers, academics, and journalists who work as allies of colonialism. They use their moral reasoning, and fine words to defend colonial violence by formulating white lies, and propaganda.

Frantz Fanon specifies the psychological effects of colonial racism in *Black Skin, White Masks*. He depicts how the colonizers shape the psychological makeup of the colonized by imposing colonial culture, education, and religion. Therefore, the colonized feel foreign in their own countries because of their dependency complex and try to adopt colonial culture and language. In Fanon's view, the violence of the colonized is morally justified as decolonization itself is a violent procedure.

Colonialism and psychological disorders are closely associated. Homi K. Bhaba introduces several fundamental concepts of postcolonialism like hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry. Hybridity means the construction of new cultural forms and identities because of cross-cultural encounters. In the discourse of hybridity, ambivalence produces a dual sense of blessing and curse at the same time. It is formed through hybridity, mimicry, and liminality. Mimicry indicates the way in which the colonized imitate the colonial culture, language, mannerisms, and values. Lacan asserts that "The effect of mimicry is camouflage" (99). The colonized find themselves stuck in-between two cultures and identities and formulate one kind of hybrid identity by imitating colonial culture, language, and manners consciously and unconsciously. They denounce their native culture, and identity, and turn into mimic men. Neo-colonialism is the continuation of colonial rule in an indirect manner through cultural hegemony. It is an extension of colonial rule by means of globalization, imperialism, and capitalism. The legacies of colonialism are noticeable in politics, language, literature, paintings, media, music, political manifesto, education etc. Undoubtedly, colonization has shattered the roots, identity, cultural traditions, language, thought processes, and social norms

of the colonized. Therefore, they suffer from inferiority complex, identity crisis, trauma, unhomeliness, and sexual exploitation which are the defining aspects of postcolonialism.

Feminism refers to a concept, or movement that deals with the advocacy of equal rights and opportunities for men, women, and transgender people in social, political, cultural, intellectual, and economic spheres. It tries to put an end to all forms of gender disparity, sexual violence, and mistreatment. According to bell hooks, “Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (hooks viii). It attempts to change the subservient status of women in terms of their relationship with men who exercise power and control over them as they are considered as subject, superior, and independent whereas women are submissive, dependent, inferior, and the other. It tries to balance the imbalance between men and women and establish equity. Estelle Freedman defines feminism as “a social movement that tried to achieve political equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies” (24).

There are four waves of feminism. The first wave of feminism was launched in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century under the leadership of Virginia Woolf who campaigned for female rights, education, suffrage, and equality. The second wave of feminism started in the 1960s to ensure sexuality, reproductive rights, and equality by removing gender disparity and oppression. Simon de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* inspired the birth of it where she states that “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman” (330). The third phase in the 1990s focused on racial, and gender discrimination, diversity, and individuality. Starting in the 2010s, the fourth phase focused on greater gender equality, empowerment, and justice for women against racial, social, and sexual violence, and harassment. The world of women is invaded by men during communal clashes and violent occasions.

Vishnu Ram writes that “women both suffered as the subjects of the country in troubled waters but also as themselves physically and emotionally in a patriarchal society in the midst of tumultuous political situations, communal madness, and riots” (111). Women of the subcontinent suffer more and endure psychological trauma because of societal structure, patriarchal ideologies, matriarchy, cultural and religious prejudices. Brass writes that “Women are boundary markers” (94). Postcolonial feminism emerged as a strong reaction to white feminism in the 1980s to depict sexploitation, marginalization, and the challenges resulting from colonialism, patriarchy, racism, and double colonization of non-European women in

third-world countries as Eurocentric mainstream feminism often ignores their identity, their socio-cultural and historical contexts or misrepresent them and their roots.

Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park define “postcolonial feminism” as “an exploration of and at the intersections of colonialism and neocolonialism with gender, nation, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of women's lives, their subjectivities, work, sexuality, and rights” (53). It is a criticism of white feminism that hardly stands for the fundamental rights and equal opportunities of the subaltern women who are the worst sufferers. The proponents of postcolonial feminism promote the socio-cultural, economic, and political autonomy of women irrespective of their color, gender, and ethnicity. The theories of postcolonialism and feminism serve as the theoretical framework to analyze the select texts of Manto and Singh.

VI. Discussion and Major Findings

Manto reveals the psychological trauma and existential crisis of refugees in his stories. Millions of people were forced to abandon their ancestral homes because of an illogical decision of Partition. The Muslims made their way toward Pakistan and the Hindus and Sikhs made their way toward India. Many refugees were killed, lost, or abducted while crossing the border. Manto describes the journey of refugees from Amritsar to Lahore in “Open It!”. Sirajuddin’s family is uprooted from Amritsar, and they somehow get into the train bound for Pakistan which is vandalized by the mob. They slaughter men mercilessly and abduct their women to force them into prostitution, and slavery. The rioters are the representatives of patriarchy and women are the scapegoats of patriarchal authority. They mutilate their dead bodies and mark national and religious slogans on their private parts. Sirajuddin’s wife is murdered and her dead body is disfigured. Sakina suffers most physically and psychologically. Manto shows a bleak portrait of partition violence in “Open It!” through Sakina’s madness and rape who ultimately fails to recognize her father and considers everyone surrounding herself as potential rapists. Her rape is a seal of patriarchy and her subservient status forces women to conform to certain code of conduct and actions imposed on them. She stands for those women who were not only forced to leave their country but also victimized by men of both sides in 1947 as a result of postcolonial madness, or for the purpose of deriving sadistic pleasure by inflicting tortures on women. They are exploited to set an example and bring disgrace to their

opposite religious groups. The rape of women is considered an act of systematic genocide that has long-lasting and traumatic impacts throughout their lives.

From the perspective of postcolonialism, Sakina stands for the colonized and her rape represents the forceful invasion of the colonizers upon a new territory. It is the rape of her culture, language, and independence. Sakina loses her honor because of her rape by the volunteers. Similarly, the Indian subcontinent lost its culture, freedom, and tradition because of the invasion of the British colonizers. The colonized are voiceless and lack agency. Throughout the story, Sakina lacks the agency to resist and fight back. Her feelings are only expressed through the perspective of other characters and the narrator. Her silence illustrates the silence of the colonized upon being tortured. The colonized are taken advantage of by the colonizers under the mask of civilization whereas the volunteers take the initiative to find Sakina in the name of humanity. They view her as an object of sexual appetite. However, Sakina can also be seen as an image of India that is violated and ripped apart by the British for their benefit. Sirajuddin's plight upon losing his wife and daughter represents the loss of his country, culture, and his own identity.

Manto shows the reluctance of the refugees to cross the border and accept their brand-new identity through the character of Bishan Singh in "Toba Tek Singh". He looks for his lineal home in no-man's-land as he suffers from a sense of rootlessness, and identity dilemma. "Toba Tek Singh" is a "metaphor for the absurdity of the entire partition saga" (Saleem et al. 925). Bishan Singh is shot dead in the buffer zone when he violates the order of the officials and raises his voice against the rehabilitation of the lunatics. The political leaders do not take responsibility for the death and suffering of the refugees. They are the epitome of colonial ideologies and mentality because they imitate the cultures, languages, and violent tactics of the colonizers. Bishan Singh's refusal to cross the border shows his detestation of partition and the loss of his homeland. The narrator of "Toba Tek Singh" states, "There, behind barbed wire, on one side, lay India and behind more barbed wire, on the other side, lay Pakistan. In between, on a bit of earth which had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh" (18). His death illustrates his refusal to accept partition, the struggle for the loss of identity, and the helpless state of refugees. The colonizers used to kill the colonized in different colonies for raising their voices against them for discriminatory treatment and freedom to set an example to create a sense of fear and vulnerability in their minds and maintain their supremacy over them.

Khushwant Singh provides a similar account of the troubles of refugees in *Train to Pakistan* when partition riots broke out in the Indian subcontinent. He describes the solidarity, and harmonious relationship among different communities in Mano Majra before the partition. However, the arrival of ghost trains from Pakistan with the corpses of the Sikhs reverses the communal harmony and peaceful environment. Regarding the horrible atmosphere and communal madness in Mano Majra, Singh remarks, “Trainload of dead people came to Mano Majra. We burned one lot and buried another. The river was flooded with corpses. Muslims were evacuated, and in their place, refugees have come from Pakistan” (160). He describes the widespread communal riots that took the lives of thousands of people in Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar, Punjab, and other areas of the country. Many women were abducted, raped, killed by the rioters or even sold by their own family members in order to settle their debts when they failed to get into the other side of the border because of their shortage of money or resources. People scattered everywhere in search of protection. The country became a disturbing battleground of conflicting loyalties, political ideologies, and communal identities. Prejudice toward Muslims is revealed through the character of the constable who shows his hatred towards them. He expresses his own feelings in the presence of two prisoners, Iqbal and Juggut Singh regarding the Muslims when he remarks, “Their intentions were evil. Muslims are like that. You can never trust them” (67). The constable goes into a verbal tirade against the Muslims and the Muslim soldiers for their conspiracies, and brutalities against the Hindus and the Sikhs on the other side of the border because of their religion and nationality. Sunder Singh and his family members are uprooted from Pakistan. They get on the train full of refugees. They suffer from extreme dehydration and hunger. He shoots his wife and children before they reach India.

Decolonization is a violent method that results in madness, disorder, and complete chaos. There are multiple instances of violence in *Train to Pakistan* such as the fanatic slaughter of the Sikh and Hindu men, women, and children in Pakistan and throwing their disfigured corpses into the river Sutlej. These corpses float in the water and make their way into Mano Majra because of the increase of water in the Sutlej. The villagers are shocked at the sight of the dead bodies. Singh describes the connotation of India’s freedom for the locals as it hardly means anything to them.

In the novel *Train to Pakistan*, one of the villagers states, “We were slaves of the English, now we will be slaves of the educated Indians- or the Pakistanis” (50). The commoners cannot reap its benefits because only the educated will take over the British and seize the opportunities whereas they are going to be transferred from one master to another. There is hardly any security in life after the British quit India. Banta Singh asserts, “We were better off under the British. At least there was security” (52). The villagers are always exploited by those who have power. Iqbal Singh and Juggat Singh are the victims of police brutality. They symbolize the oppressed, the colonized. Iqbal’s criticism of the police department and their double standards lands him in trouble and results in his imprisonment and mental torture at the police station. But he receives better treatment for his control over English whereas Juggat is dragged, kicked, smacked, and whipped.

Singh criticizes the administrators, police, politicians, and government officials for employing brute force and racial slurs to exploit people who do not belong to the same societal hierarchy. Juggat Singh is a victim of racial discrimination. The British colonizers introduced English as the administrative and official language when they colonized India. So, it became the language of power and control. The colonized imitated their language disregarding their native language to enjoy the facilities of the colonizers. Juggat becomes infatuated with Iqbal’s use of English and wants to have the same status. Singh indicates how colonial legacies exist in India in different forms such as bureaucracy, bribery, hypocrisy, corruption, misuse of power, and loopholes in the administrative system. Hukum Chand is a representative of the bureaucratic system in India. He is very good at flattery and uses imported cars, expensive cigarettes, perfumes, European wardrobes, and drinks. Regarding him, Meet Singh tells Iqbal, “He is the government and we are his subjects” (45). Hukum Chand’s infatuation with the European lifestyle shows his moral and mental colonial state. He uses Haseena Begum as a commodity to satisfy his lust. She takes after his daughter, but he does not hesitate to sexually exploit her. Simone de Beauvoir writes, “Humanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself, she is not considered an autonomous being...He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other” (26). Haseena is an embodiment of female victimization and passivity. Singh shows how women are treated as objects who have no say and no rights because of patriarchy and matriarchy. Men like Hukum Chand always take

advantage of women, in the same way, the colonizers used to invade many third-world countries.

Khushwant Singh pinpoints the existential trauma and identity crisis of the Muslims of Mano Majra and Chundunnugger when they are forced to migrate from India to Pakistan. The outsiders plan to attack the refugee train bound for Pakistan. However, Juggat Singh ruins their secret plan and loses his life in an attempt to save them. Manto's story "The Dog of Tithwal" deals with the same thematic aspects of "Toba Tek Singh". It is a tale of a dog that suffers from an existential threat when it is caught between the border of India and Pakistan. It finds itself stuck in the middle of the gunshots of Indian and Pakistani soldiers who cannot agree on its nationality. They use it as a symbolic medium to promote their nationalism and religious identity, as well as to unleash their disdain towards one another. Manto writes, "Even dogs will now have to decide if they are Indian or Pakistani" (21). He uses the dog to represent the sufferings of the refugees. The colonized suffer the same fate as the dog.

Manto shows the reluctance of the Muslims to migrate from India to Pakistan through the character of Mian Abdul Hai in "The Assignment" who remains in his house disregarding his daughter's advice to move into a Muslim area. Manto also focuses on the traumatic experiences of refugees in "The Dutiful Daughter". The governments of both countries launch recovery programs to rescue them and women and return them safely to their own countries. But it is very difficult to provide sufficient facilities for them. At the beginning of "The Dutiful Daughter", Manto writes that "Hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Hindus were moving from India to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India in search of refuge. Camps had been set up to give them temporary shelter, but they were so overcrowded that it seemed quite impossible to push another human being into them" (73). The refugees suffered greatly because of the lack of supply of pure drinking water, food, and other facilities in the refugee camps. "The Assignment" is about religious hatred and betrayal when mutual trust and harmony among the different communities were at their lowest point.

The character of Mian Sahib represents India, and his deteriorating physical condition symbolizes the systematic destruction of the Indian subcontinent due to violence and riots. His impaired speech signifies how a colony turns into a wasteland after an illegal foreign invasion. It also symbolizes the voiceless status of the colonized under the oppression of the colonizers. Santokh Singh takes advantage of his father's good relationship with Mian Sahib and his family.

He not only betrays Mian Sahib but also his own father by collaborating with the rioters directly in recognizing and killing them.

Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* reveals how the arrival of a ghost train from Pakistan containing dead bodies creates a stir in Mano Majra. The officials try their level best to maintain secrecy to avoid a communal riot in the village as a chain reaction to the killings of the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. The villagers see the mutilated dead bodies of men, women, and children. The Muslims find themselves in a state of panic and uncertainty when there are rumors in Mano Majra regarding the Sikhs butchering the Muslims, raping women, destroying the mosques, and insulting the holy Quran in different parts of India. Suddenly their Sikh neighbors appear to be anti-Muslim and menacing to them. Therefore, they view Pakistan as a safe asylum for themselves. The outsiders take the opportunity to instigate communal hatred, violence, and intolerance in the minds of the people. Singh indicates that “the forces that destroyed the age-old communal harmony are new and nameless” (Zaman 40). The unnamed leader of the fanatics’ questions their masculinity for doing nothing for the massacres of the Sikhs and Hindus in Rawalpindi, Multan, Gujranwala and Sheikhpura. His hatred towards the Muslim community is evident when he states, “For each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman, they abduct or rape, abduct two...That will stop the killing on the other side. It will teach them that we also play this game of killing and looting” (144). He views the Muslims as a curse and wants to kill them as a retaliation for the atrocities done to the non-Muslims. Ultimately, many villagers along with Mali, his gang of robbers, and the Sikh refugees join the outsiders who symbolize the colonizers to a great length as they hatch a secret plot to commit violence. Hukum Chand is informed of the conspiracy and his helplessness to stop the potential massacre is evident when he states, “The whole world has gone mad. Let it go mad! What does it matter if another thousand get killed? We will get a bulldozer and bury them as we did the others” (149). He is fed up with partition violence and wants to evacuate the Muslims safely from Chundunnuger. He criticizes politicians like Gandhi, and Nehru and their roles in dividing India. The government does not always work for the welfare of people. Rather, they are mentally and morally colonized.

Manto and Singh show how innocent children were exposed to the world of madness and violence during the partition. They suffered a lot physically and mentally due to their vulnerable status. The contextual realities were not in their favor. Even the fate of the unborn

children and war children was not encouraging either. Singh provides the horrific details of those children who are brutally killed, and their dead bodies are thrown into the river or in the dump. Sunder Singh makes his three children drink his urine and ultimately murders them when they cry for food and drink. Nooran thinks about the safety of her unborn child in Pakistan because of mixed parentage. The children are not even safe in their mothers' wombs. Manto expresses his concern about the future of the war children and their acceptance in society and community for their mixed lineage. They are regarded as the living embodiment of unholiness, and the fanatics always attempt to remove their traces. Therefore, India and Pakistan refused to accept them. In "The Dutiful Daughter" Manto writes, "When I thought about these abducted girls, I only saw their protruding bellies. What was going to happen to them and what they contained? Who would claim the end result? Pakistan or India" (74). Manto questions the recovery programs of the abducted women and war children in "The Dutiful Daughter". Like the failure of the recovery programs, the age-old civilization, and pre-colonial cultural authenticity cannot be recovered. He also reveals the dreadful experience of children through the character of Barashat who observes a religious assassination in "The Assignment". He is shocked at the incident and runs back to his house for safety. The fanatics ultimately kill him and his family members and set their home on fire to eliminate their traces.

Manto remains impartial and objective in terms of depicting partition violence and blames all communities equally for their involvement in riots and communal actions. He does not speak in favor of any particular community despite being a Muslim. He does not want to cover the ugly face of contemporary society. He is a stern critic of bigotry, superstitious beliefs, and extreme ideologies. He uses everyday language and striking symbols, and images to depict partition madness. His stories are also known for the use of dark humor, verbal economy, abrupt endings, and pauses which are open to the readers for study and close reading. On the other hand, Khushwant Singh is subjective and biased towards a particular community while depicting and interpreting the events of partition madness. Although he acknowledges the participation of all communities in hate crimes and ethnic genocide, he mainly holds the Muslims responsible for the division of India and the creation of Pakistan resulting in absolute anarchy, disorder, and communal frenzy. He addresses the Muslims as 'pigs', 'disloyal', 'traitors', 'liars', 'butchers', 'snakes', 'evil' in the novel and glorifies the Sikh men and women for their sacrifices. He views the counter attacks of the Sikhs against the Muslims in different

parts of India as an act of retaliation instead of a genocide. Singh's perspective of partition is undoubtedly the official perspective of India to some extent.

Manto and Singh describe how people are judged by fanatics based on their appearance, language, and circumcised penis which used to be the markers of one's religion during communal riots. Manto recounts the story of a killer who makes a mistake in identifying his target and stabs him to death in "Mishtake". When the killer comes to know about his identity after noticing his circumcised penis, he feels disappointed. Circumcision determines whether a person is Muslim or non-Muslim. In "Mistake Removed", Manto narrates the deadly experience of Dharam Chand who is forced to go through circumcision to avoid being killed by the Muslims. However, he is caught by the people of his own religion who identify him as a Muslim and terminate him. Manto writes, "The mistake was removed...and with it Dharam Chand" (148). Dharam Chand becomes a victim of mistaken identity.

Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* also points out how appearance and a circumcised penis turn out to be one's religious, and national identity marker. Iqbal is a Sikh but does not follow the doctrines of Sikhism. The police interrogate Iqbal and investigate his penis to decide his identity. They tag him as a worker of the Muslim League for his circumcised penis. The Muslim extremists attack public transports to single out the non-Muslims to eliminate them and abduct their women to assault them. They are forced to take off their dress to find out whether they are circumcised or not. Sundari's husband is a victim of such persecution. The Hindus and Sikhs do the same thing to the Muslims. Like Singh, Manto reprehends religious faith in his short stories as a sensitive factor to destroy communal harmony. He points out the ambiguities of communal clashes in his stories and describes partition as an act of collective madness.

VII. Conclusion

Manto and Singh depict the issues of communal riots, violence against women, psychological impulses, existential crises due to the loss of identity, and refugee crises in their respective works. There are many striking similarities and dissimilarities in their depiction of the tragedy of partition. They use their imaginations very skillfully and combine their fictional accounts of the incidents with their practical experiences to describe contemporary society, harsh realities, and psychological outbursts of people belonging to all classes and religions. They vividly describe how women are used as an important symbol to promote nationalism,

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Select Partition Stories and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

colonialism, communal hatred, and sentiments. They portray the passive and subjugated status of women and their defenseless status in the face of danger. They criticize the main excuse behind the division of India and the emergence of Pakistan as an independent country. It is not possible to wipe out colonial symbols, structures, and inheritances as they are deeply rooted in postcolonial societies, cultural values, and traditions. They point out the existence of colonial legacies in different domains like administration, education, bureaucracy, politics, mentality, police force, laws, etc. in the Indian subcontinent and show that India fails to attain complete decolonization after gaining its freedom in 1947. Both writers are successful in their deliberate attempts to awaken emotional feelings and consciousness towards the events surrounding the partition riots and involuntary migration of the refugees as well as the complications and disputes created among the people of different communities because of the creation of Pakistan as a Muslim state.

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