

HISTORICAL ELEMENTS IN TRAIN TO PAKISTAN

Parthiban.R

II MA English

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences

DR. Amutha Dhanaraj

Assistant professor

English Department

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences

ABSTRACT:

Historical novel is a novel set in the past with historical events as its background. It has a period of history as its setting and tries to convey the spirit of that particular age. The novels of Khuswant Singh have a historical background and they portray the impact of history on the lives of ordinary people. His novel train to Pakistan is an interesting blend of fact and fiction where he talks about the partition of India and Pakistan in the aftermath of independence. He brings to light the power politics of the era and how it affects the harmony of the people and also the sufferings endured by the people as a result of the partition.

Key words: New Historicism, politics, Hindus and Pakistan, Partition and Independence

New Historicism is using some historic events as examples in the novel or writing a novel about a historic event which is based on true and exact facts. Stephen Greenblatt is considered to be the father of New Historicism. One of the best known novels in Indian Literature which is based on New Historicism is *Train to Pakistan* written by Khuswant Singh. This novel is based on the partition of India and Pakistan after independence. This event is considered to be one of the black marks in the whole history because it killed hundreds of people. Khuswant Singh first introduces a village in India in which he portrays how he wants his nation be and then later portrays some of the historic events which killed people during that time.

Historicism began toward the end of the eighteenth century with German writers such as Herder, Von Ranke and Veaser. Historicism has been characterized by a number of concerns and features. According to M.A.R Habib, New Historicism is based on the idea that all systems of thought, all phenomena, all institutions, all works of art, and all literary texts must be situated within a historical perspective. Texts or phenomena cannot be somehow torn from history and analysed in isolation.

Stephen Greenblatt found New Historicism while he was working as a teacher. Stephen Greenblatt differentiated New Criticism which is used to view text as a self-contained structure and also from the earlier historicism which was monological. The New Historicist technique factors on the undertones implicit in a story. There are totally four principles contributed by Harold Aram Veaser. The first of the four underlying requirements of this concept embeds each expressive act in a community of material practices. Secondly, each act of criticizing and competition makes use of the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the workout it exposes. The third principle makes some mutual agreement with the literary and non literary works and makes it to cope with each other and the final one does not accept fancy conversation or old methods to unchanging truths or it says about the human behaviour. Harold Veaser espoused to forsake outdated vocabulary, allusion, symbolisation, allegory and mimesis by way of new Historicism seeks much less proscribing manner to show the manifold mutual interactions of society and lifestyle. The discernment of a literary textual content with data as foreground and history is difficult due to the fact that, in its pursuit of metaphors, narrows its worries to the gadgets by way of which literature shows or refracts.

Stephen Greenblatt who is referred as the father of New Historicism explains the muse of a positive terminology in literary criticism referring to inventive paintings and historical sports with allusion, symbolization, allegorization, example, and relatively mimesis. Even though critical, the inadequacy of those phrases in cultural phenomenon similarly extends to additives of contemporary and beyond manner of lifestyles. With a unique expression embedded in number one Indian English, as even though a record is dramatized, Khushwant Singh in his novel has eroded the discrimination between history and literature. The writer has Indianized the language, to capture the essence of India psyche.

There are many theories based on the partition of India and Pakistan and the violence that occurred during the partition. The British initiated the conflict between the Indians and the Pakistanis. The countries which showed the brotherhood of Hindus and Muslims started to split. The conflict started by the British gave the response which the British expected. The Hindus were led by Mahatma Gandhi who is regarded as the father of nation in India and also with some other freedom fighters and the Muslims were led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Hindus and Muslims begun to attack each other and blamed each other for starting it. This fight kept on killing each other to the extent that the Hindus in the Pakistan were killed and sent in a train to India but unlike Pakistan the Muslims in India were sent in a train with their lives to Lahore. Finally the leaders of both nations decided to rule each other's country in different path and then India and Pakistan were split. This partition is regarded to be the only partition to kill so much people in the whole history. Indians and the Pakistanis showed their anger and grudge towards each other. This problem was solved only by the idea of Lord Mountbatten who is the last British Governing General of India.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* says about some of the true incidents which are regarded as the main incidents during this partition. The novel starts by portraying about a small village called Mano Majra. Khushwant never portrays the incidents of killing at the beginning of the novel, at first, Khushwant explains about the village Mano Majra where Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs lived. He portrays in a way that the people in the village didn't have a clue about what is happening outside the village but he adds some incidents like robbery happening within the village. The people in the village depended mainly on cattle and farming. It is said that the people in the village calculated the time according to the timing of the train. The people will go to sleep when they hear the sound of the last train and they will begin to work when they hear the sound of the first train. The incident happening in the outside world is described in a smaller picture. The author explains the cultural and political differences within the village. The author mentions some historic references inside the novel and he also adds up some true historic incidents. The drama highlights the normal things which usually happen inside the village and in a small society like trust, helping, betrayal and conflicts. Khushwant makes the readers to feel the fear and the chaos faced by the Indians and the Pakistanis. The people in the respective nations did not even care about the past or the future, all they cared but was their present time and the way to survive the chaos. The officers like Humkum Singh worried about the uncontrollable chaos happening in the nation.

The author, discussing through Hukum Chand and the Sub Inspector, bewails the inefficiency and hopelessness of the state's missionary in containing the violence. Systemic failure of 1729, when Mughal empire was in decay, is compared with that of 1946 by historian Nirad C. Chaudhari and the riots followed in an usual way in India in 1729, Muhammad Shahid was emperor, he stood helplessly by the infamous Hindu Muslim riot in Delhi when even the men of the imperial artillery joined the fray. The complete ineffectiveness of the state, its inevitability to resist foreign invasion, put down internal rebellions, suppress Hindu Muslim riots, not ensure effective administration and not being successful in any of its projects made Chaudhari to apologize. Declining power of the state made one part predatory and the other panicky and adopted a habit of tolerance of anarchy and corruption and leads events resignation to them. Failed government missionary was scolded by the boy in uniform and took law onto one's own hand. the crime by uniformed personnels is stated confidently by Pandey, quoted Mayaram's record of an army officer's confession, stated that when he was the ruler of alwar the state of Muslim had been decided to be cleared and killing of Hindus at noakhali and Punjab to be avenged and as the refugees from Pakistanis were coming the meos from Firozpur Jhirka down were to be cleared and send to Pakistan.

Sudden withdrawal of the anarchy reminds us of the groups those are seeking to get benefit from it. Adrian Fort clarifies that the World War II weakened the cohesiveness of British that they had over the subcontinents. Fort discusses about how the British abandoned India to impress USA with the intention to see Britain taking their troops out of India's boundary and to leave Indians with their independence. Fort further asserts that with an increase in intention of promoting Indians brought difficulty to enrol Europeans, thus enrolment had ceased in 1939 and by 1946 there were only 500 British policemen in Indian civil service. With India's get changing conditions 1200 men were no longer enough to manage a country with more than 1.5 million square miles containing 400 million people with 300 different ethnic groups. Prime minister Clement Atlee 's words quoted by fort reveals his opinion: that even on the reversal of policy, pledges and reassertion of UK authority by force will not lead to any solution to Indian problems, is sure that opinion in UK would not support the measures, or to shoulder the burden targeted in Indian for fifteen more years and that he has no sufficient troops to meet the needs of Indian. British is aware of undesirable communist Russia's influence and scorns seeing Russia as India's strategic ally and ventures of Russia is evident in the role of Iqbal in the novel

If an incident occurred in the history is reviewed, then it is crucial to observe it in different perspectives. The viewer should be open to all the interpretations about the characters including the protagonist and the antagonist. The character Jugga ended his life as a hideous criminal. Nooran's family strongly believed in the unity of Hindus and Muslims and so Nooran went to the house of Jugga but she was insulted by Jugga's mother. This story's plot revolves around the two families having a boy and a girl in each side which is separated by religion and united by love. After partition people decided to separate and had no mutual thoughts in getting united. Nooran after the partition disclosed the affair of her with Jugga to Jugga's mother but Jugga's mother quotes," Get out of Bitch, you a Muslim weaver's daughter, marry a Sikh peasant Go to Pakistan! Leave him alone" (138) but still she was in a dilemma because of her poverty. Khuswant presented many sentiments, compassion, family background issues and also some communalist issues. Khuswant did not start any religious issues at the start of the novel," There are only about seventy families in Mano Majra, and Lala Ram Lal's is the only Hindu family and the others are Sikhs or Muslims, about equal in number(2).

We can observe clearly that Khuswant is having an ideology of Hindu-Muslim-Sikh in the pair of Jugga and nooran. Nooran revealing her pregnancy was unthinkable because it is an illegitimate child of Jugga. Nooran can be seen as the Muslims who are forced to go to Pakistan leaving their property and business behind.

The article describes the difference between the India which Khuswant dreamt of and the reality which occurred during that time. The time when the author wrote the book is not an era of technology which means it is not easy to collect resources via internet like now a days but still khuswant collected all the resources as much as possible and did a thorough research and completed the novel. Writing a novel based on New Historicism is much difficult in those days when compared to writing a fictional novel but still Khuswant used both in a single novel by establishing the incidents in the history and the incidents which he dreamt of.

WORKS CITED:

Habib, M.A.R *A History of Literary Criticism*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2005, Print

Veesser, Aram. *Introduction. New Historicism*. By Veesser. Ed. Aram Veesser. New York: Routledge, 1989. ix. Print.

Singh, Kushwant. *Train to Pakistan*. New Delhi: Penguin & Ravi Dayal, 2007. Print.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press. 1981. Print.

Singh, Khushwant. *Malicious Gossip*. Harper Collins: New Delhi, 2008. Print.