

## Chapter 2

### Postcolonial Masculinity in *Train to Pakistan*

Postcolonial sprouts from colonialism which begins with European modernity that starts with the advent of industrialization. The history of colonial system dates back to fifteenth and sixteenth century. Colonial system is the process of settlement of white people from European countries in Asia, Africa and America. This settlement by the European white people was the result of European modernity which mainly involved three elements i.e. Time, Space and Labour. With the help of machines the Europeans got ample spare time. Consequently these European white people found spaces in the world map. So these Europeans who started the process of visiting these spaces in the world in the name of business and falsely in the name of helping them started to colonise these natives who were not civilised according to their definition. This process of colonisation also helped these Europeans by providing them ample labour supply in the form of the native. The Europeans did not regard these Asian, African and American people as human beings rather they treat them as beasts. Their ultimate aim was to gain maximum profit. Overtly they pretended to be missionary who came to help the native people, covertly they had sinister designs.

While talking about colonialism, it should be kept in mind that colonialism is intrinsically related with two other terms: 'capitalism' and 'imperialism'. As Denis Judd argues in his book *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present*, 'no one can doubt that the desire for profitable trade, plunder and enrichment was the primary force that led to the establishment of the imperial structure'(Judd 3). In this book Judd argues that the main aim of the Westerners in colonisation was profit making. Colonising foreign lands was also motivated by the desire to create and control markets abroad for Western goods, and also with the desire of securing the natural resources and labour power of different lands. Colonialism was a very tempting commercial operation, bringing wealth and riches to the western nations by economically exploiting the colonies. Hence, it can be said that colonialism and capitalism are mutually related with each other. 'Colonialism' is sometimes used interchangeably with

'imperialism' but in truth the two terms mean different things. Peter Childs and Patrick Williams argue that imperialism is an ideological concept which upholds the legitimacy of the economic and military control of one nation by another whereas colonialism is only one form of practice which results from the ideology of imperialism, and is mainly concerned with the settlement of one group of people in a new land. Imperialism is not strictly concerned with the issue of settlement; it does not demand the settlement of different places in order to work. Childs and Williams define imperialism as 'the extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal and military controls' (Childs 227). So, it can be said that imperialism does not require the settlement of people from the imperial nation to a new land. Hence, it can be argued that while colonialism is virtually over today, imperialism continues to exist as the world superpower like America are still engaged in imperial acts by securing wealth and power through the continuing economic exploitation of other nations especially the Third World Countries. As Benita Parry puts it, colonialism is a 'specific, and most spectacular, mode of imperialism's many and mutable states, one which preceded the rule of international finance capitalism and whose formal ending imperialism has survived' (Oxford Literary Review 34). The process of colonisation was capitalistic in nature. Capitals were mainly of two forms: human capital (mind of white man) and money. The process of colonisation was the product of industrial modernity. It was the cultural domination of the European people that became more important. These Europeans culturally were able to change the ideologies of the natives. The natives started examining themselves through the eyes of the Europeans. So the east started the imitation of the west and this led to westernization. Postmodernity has become westernised in their rearing and bearing. In this way cultural domination became more powerful than military conquests and economic hold. This cultural domination was used as a technique by the Europeans to dominate the natives, consequently the minds of the natives were colonised. Cultural domination was reflected through representation in the form of literature, culture, art etc. The colonised or the natives were made to believe that their religion, their customs and traditions are full of superstitions. When the Indian writers started noticing that the Westerners were playing politics in order to exploit the natives politically, socially, economically they started to pen down their views and feelings.

In the field of politics it was Mahatma Gandhi who realized the malignant intention of the colonisers. Postcolonial theory derives its key ideas during the anti colonial struggle under the

leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji's system of Satyagraha based on local culture, language contributed a lot to the success of the movement. Gandhiji had a moral ground which was different from the philosophy of blood shedding as it rested on moral superiority. Gandhiji's moral ground was 'it's our country; we have the authority of Swaraj of our own country. It might not be as good as the westerners but it will be a self government of the country and the Swaraj government will be having the responsibility to think about the welfare of the people.' Swadeshi Andolan has revealed the exploitative methods adopted by the Britishers. Gandhiji developed a response to the ultra masculine colonial power. He posed the power of feminised Shakti embedded in Hinduism. This created a problem and the Muslims thought that Gandhiji's philosophy was completely based on Hindu way of life. So Gandhiji started operating upon the concept of *Hybridity* i.e. People from all religions and cultures were brought under one umbrella called India.

Theories of colonial discourses have been hugely influential in the development of post colonialism. In general, they explore the ways that representations and modes of perception are used as fundamental weapons of colonial power to keep colonised peoples subservient to colonial rule.

The issues involved in the identification and study of colonial discourses can be best understood by considering the following statement by the Trinidadian writer Sam Selvon. At the beginning of his 1979 lecture, 'Three Into One Can't Go – East Indian, Trinidadian, West Indian', Selvon recalls an Indian fisherman who used to visit his street in San Fernando, Trinidad, when he was a child. Sammy, the fisherman, was partly paralysed and was often a figure of ridicule by the children. One day Sammy appeared with a white assistant who was an escaped convict. Selvon recalls how he became very furious seeing the white assistant. It seemed to the young Selvon that this was not the usual way life was to be viewed as he thought that the system should be vice-versa: the white man should be the master, not Sammy. On the other hand Selvon felt sympathy and dismay for the white assistant, which he never felt for the lame Sammy. Selvon narrated this story in order to highlight the fact that how as a child he had learned always to regard non -whites as inferior: the idea of a white assistant to the Indian Sammy was an offensive act to his sense of order. This example of internalising of certain

expectations about human relationships clearly exhibits how colonialism operates, as Selvon notes:

When one talks of colonial indoctrination, it is usually about oppression or subjugation, or waving little Union Jacks on Empire Day and singing ‘God Save the King’. But this gut feeling I had as a child, that the Indian was just a piece of cane trash while the white man was to be honoured and respected – where had it come from? I don’t consciously remember being brainwashed to hold this view either at home or at school. (Selvon 211)

Colonialism continued for a long time because the colonisers were able to justify the idea that it is right and proper to rule over other peoples, and getting colonised people to accept their lower ranking in the colonial order of things—a process which we can call ‘colonising the mind’. Through this process the natives were convinced to internalise its logic and speak its language; to eternalize the values and assumptions of the colonisers as regards the ways they perceive and represent the world. The theories of colonial discourses mainly call for attention to the role that language plays in getting people accept a particular way of looking at things that result in the kind of situation Selvon describes.

Colonial discourses prove effective where an intersection takes place between language and power as language becomes more than simply a means of communication; it becomes an embodiment of culture, literature and value system. The vital role language plays in a society is stated by Ngugi wa Thiong’o the great Kenyan novelist in the following words:

Language Carries culture, and culture carriers, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other human beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world. (Currey 116)

So from the above statement by Ngugi we can very well understand the importance and the role language plays in a society because it does not just passively reflect reality; but in fact also goes a long way in creating a person's understanding of their world and on the other hand it also houses the values by which we live our lives. And this particular process of thought with the help of language was completely fractured during the colonial regime. Under colonialism, the colonised people are made to see the world which reflect and support colonialist values. The cultural values of the colonised people are deemed as lacking in value, or even as being 'uncivilised', from which they must be rescued. To be more precise, the British Empire did not only rule by military and physical force. It endured by getting both colonising and colonised people to see their world and themselves in a particular way, internalising the language of empire as representing the natural, true order of life. Selvon's anecdote clearly reveals how far – reaching the unfair effects of internalising colonialism assumptions about the 'inferiority' of certain peoples can be.

During the 1950's there emerged much important work that attempted to record the psychological damage suffered by the colonised peoples who internalised these colonial discourses. Prominent among them was the great Algerian psychologist who had seen colonialism from the psychological point. Psychological system started with the fact that the native started imitating the colonial ways in order to prove themselves as real human beings. As a result the natives left their own culture and traditions in order to become civilised and when they became like the white *Babus* the white men and did not recognize or accept them as their equals and on the other hand the native forces did not welcome them back. This kind of treatment made these pseudo westerners realise their original position which damaged their psychology and this injured psyche was termed as 'fractured psyche' by Fanon in his book *Black skins White Masks*.(1967) This book chiefly reveals the psychological effects of colonialism, drawing upon Fanon's experience as a psychoanalyst. In a narrative of which it is both inspiring as well as distressing as Fanon's focus is on the life of an individual who lives in a world where due to the colour of his or her skin, he or she is rendered peculiar, an object of ridicule and hate. In the chapter titled 'The Fact of Blackness' he recapitulates how he felt when in France white strangers pointed out his blackness, with derogatory phrases such as 'dirty nigger!' or 'look, a Negro!':

On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? But I did not want this revision, this thematisation. All I wanted was to be a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help to build it together. (Fanon 112-113)

*Black Skins, White Masks* explains the consequences of identity formation for the colonised subject who is forced into the internalization of the self as an 'other'. The 'Negro' stands for everything that is not in the colonising French. The colonisers were regarded as civilised, rational, intelligent whereas the 'Negro' remained 'other' to all these qualities which were believed to be associated with superiority and normality which only the colonisers possessed. This created a traumatised belief of inferiority among the colonised. One response to such trauma was to strive to escape from it by accepting the 'civilised' ideals of the colonisers. But however hard the colonised tried to accept the education, values and language of France, they were never accepted on equal terms because of their black skins. 'The white world', writes Fanon, "the only honourable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected to behave like the man. I was expected to behave like a black man." (Fanon 114)

His other book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967) deals with the theme of the natives i.e. the product of the earth suffering under the colonial rule. The native under the colonial rule lost his identity as a human being. He started looking himself through the eyes of the whites. This representation of the native by the white man reduced him to primitive, pagan and no better than animals. The natives accepted this prejudiced mentality. The concept was completely based on a racialized view. The native started looking himself through the eyes of the white man. It had double effect: firstly the natives considered himself as inferior and secondly the natives were so psychologically repressed that he didn't consider himself rational whereas considered the whites as rational. As a result the natives suffered from schizophrenia. As a result of this disease he started attacking his own fellow people or brothers. This was also because of another reason that the Algerians could not get success in driving out the whites and as a result of it they started

attacking their own fellow tribal which resulted into a lot of bloodshed in the form of a civil war during the 1970's. The native intellectuals under the influence of the Colonisers culture wanted to be like the white man but they were rejected by the whites and were neither accepted by the natives. So out of psychological frustration finally they started their movement against the whites.

So we can see how on both the levels the common people as well as the intellectuals were rejected which resulted in their suffering from schizophrenia leading to another disease called xenophobia. So they started a revolution against the colonial power to drive away the colonisers.

Négritude, originally a literary and ideological movement of French-speaking black intellectuals, reflects an important and comprehensive reaction to the colonial situation. This movement, which influenced Africans as well as Blacks around the world, specifically rejects the political, social and moral domination of the West. The term, which has been used in a general sense to describe the black world in opposition to the West, assumes the total consciousness of belonging to the black race.

This literary and ideological movement, developed by a group of black intellectuals, writers, and politicians in France in the 1930s that included the future Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor, Martinican poet Aimé Césaire, and the Guianan Léon Damas.

Aimé Césaire was a poet, playwright, and politician from Martinique. He studied in Paris, where he discovered the black community and "rediscovered Africa". He saw la Négritude as the fact of being black, acceptance of this fact, and appreciation of the history, culture, and destiny of black people. He sought to recognize the collective colonial experience of Blacks - the slave trade and plantation system. He attempted to redefine it. Césaire's ideology defined the early years of la Négritude.

The term Négritude closely means 'blackness' in English, then was first used in 1935 by Aimé Césaire, in the third issue of *L'Étudiant noir*, a magazine which he had started in Paris with fellow students Léopold Senghor and Léon Damas, as well as Gilbert Gratiant, Leonard Sainville, and Paulette Nardal. *L'Étudiant noir* also contains Césaire's first published work, 'Negreries', which is notable not only for its disavowal of assimilation as a valid strategy for

resistance but also for its reclamation of the word 'nègre' as a positive term. 'Nègre' previously had been almost exclusively used in a pejorative sense, much like the English word 'nigger'. Césaire deliberately and proudly incorporated this derogatory word into the name of his movement.

The native identity was completely destroyed by the white people. The natives were not just treated but even 'converted' into animals. The negroes were made slaves and were sold and purchased in the fairs. As a result the negroes lost the hope of becoming human beings. The term negritude was given by Aimé Césaire. The culture, manner, lifestyle that of the native Africans were good and they did not want to internalise a sense of inferiority on account of their culture, therefore, the intellectuals in the South African regions tried to transform themselves into whites but rather they traced the roots of the whites and concluded that the whites not only wanted to exploit them but they also wanted to develop their own culture, language, lifestyle by destroying their native culture. Realizing these facts, they started struggles against the white men of the west.

Charles Darwin's *Origin of species* and Freud's *Interpretation to dreams* of added a new dimension to the study of Postcolonial Theory. With the publication of *Origin of Species* the concept of Christianity was completely challenged and the Biblical theme was completely overturned. The concept of man coming from Heaven to Earth was completely overturned by Darwin as he was of opinion that man evolved from Apes. This led to the conclusion that on the earth the survival of the fittest is the survival between the Colonisers and the Colonised. According to Freud's book *Interpretation of Dreams*, the dream has a direct relation to unconscious hence the dream of the colonised was to get independence from the Coloniser. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) added a new way of examining the colonial relationships.

Said also looked at the divisive relationship between the coloniser and the colonised but from a different angle. He, like Fanon, explored to the extent to which colonialism created a way of seeing the world, an order of things that was to be learned as true and proper; but Said paid more attention to the colonisers than the colonised, but from a different angle. *Orientalism* draws upon developments from Marxist theories of power, especially the political philosophy of Antonio Gramsci and Michael Foucault. Edward said in his book *Orientalism* declared that the



construction of the east as primitive, savage, pagan, underdeveloped and criminal was the imaginative construction of the white men and this was done by the Europeans mainly to justify their presence. The first thing that the westerners did was that they attacked violently the religion of the natives. Rationally the natives were not much awakened and hence the Hindu and the Islamic scriptures were violently attacked by the westerners. The westerners slowly started collecting the notes on the native system of thought and concluded that the natives had no scientific thinking. Therefore, westerners concluded that the natives are Fatalist (one who believes in Fate). The white people represented all these views and convinced the natives and made the natives to believe that the whites are right.

European Authority was regarded as the rational authority to decide the right or wrong, good or bad. The white man very cunningly became the undisputed authority and started guiding the natives with the sole aim of the ruling them. In the field of literature and cultural, text written by the Europeans was taken as standard. The intellectual natives started understanding this politics through reading and at last finding no way out, the intellectual class of the natives started revolutions against the whites.

Oriental discourse moves from imaginative representation of the east to the actual administrative manifestation. It also moves from discourse to event. This kind of representation was made by the Europeans for the natives. In this way natives were placed in the frozen form i.e. Natives would never think, act or go against the Europeans. The westerners were of the confirmed opinion that the threat of change would never come.

Postcolonial studies locate a political role for a literary representation. They uncover the subtext to provide a meaning under the surface. Homi Bhabha in *Location of Culture* suggests that beneath the overt colonial ideologies the author might be subverting colonial discourses. Bhabha's emphasis on *Ambivalence* suggests that colonial authority was often subverted from the inside by the colonial and by the natives. Bhabha reveals that colonial discourse was 'fractured and flawed.' In postcolonial criticism we always peep into the subtext. For example if we have a postcolonial reading of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* we will find that it was a text which mainly focused on imperialism and its effects which Bhabha calls fractured and flawed. Though English language was the language of command and order and the main purpose of introducing this language by the Britishers was to control the natives, hence the language was

racialised and gendered. But when this language was introduced in a logical and rational way it proved a boon for the natives.

Bhabha's works reveal how the colonial discourse that sought to impose a uni directional flow of power from the coloniser to colonized in a monolithic structure which often failed. Building on Lacanian psychoanalysis and poststructuralism, Bhabha proposes that identities even in the colonial context are based on differences. The coloniser establishes his identity by positioning himself against the native. According to Bhabha the colonial master far from being the strong unflinching and certain Englishman is actually informed by two contradictory psychic states. This condition Bhabha terms as *Fetish* (psychic feeling of stronger or superiority feeling) and *Phobia* (fear). The native was mysterious and silent which generated a psycho fear among the Europeans and so they decided to give them some status or power. But this also resulted in a kind of fear in the mind of the Europeans that if they grant equal status then the Europeans will not be in a position to dominate. Bhabha presents a divided colonial discourse in which he perceives colonial master in a psychologically divided state of *Fetish* and *Phobia*.

In *Of Mimicry and Man: the ambivalence of colonial discourse* an essay by Bhabha he states that mimicry is the disciplined imitation of the white man by the natives. Though the natives started imitating the white in the hope that he will place himself in equal position of the Colonial master. But contrary to their expectation the natives were not accepted equally by the whites so the native started revolting against them. The natives had been taught consistently that they need to type and ape (imitate) the white man and his culture. Mimicry is sought through western education, religion and structure where the native is trained to think and behave like the white men. What happened in the colonial encounter was that the native became anglicised but was never fully or truly white which resulted in his injured psyche. At one stage the native thought of going back to the rooted culture but was totally uprooted from his/her native culture, neither he/she was given equal status by the whites and so he/she started revolting against the Europeans and created a third space for themselves. The mimicry of natives often encoded in facile obedience and disobedience. This was known as *Sly Civility*. The natives always pretended to display respect and obedience to the white man but as the white man turned his back the natives formed groups and started criticising the whites. This resulted in the developing of Hybridised nature which refused him/her to return to his/her discarded culture and at the same

time to be faithful to the colonial masters. The native found himself/ herself and in a position of in-betweenness i.e. between the adopted Englishness and the original 'Indianness.'

Postcolonial literature was so designed as to decolonise the mind and this approach was crystallised in an important book that appeared at the end of the decade titled *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (1989), co-authored by three critics: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. The book highlighted the increasing popular view that literature from the once-colonised countries was fundamentally concerned with challenging the language of colonial power, unlearning its world view, and producing new modes of representation. The authors tried to look at the status of English language in countries with a history of colonialism, trying to highlight the fact that how the writers of these countries express their own sense of identity by refashioning English using it a tool of expressing their experiences. English was being displaced by 'different linguistic communities in the post-colonial world' (Ashcroft 8). In a tone often more prescriptive than descriptive, they expressed the belief that the 'crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that post-colonial writing defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and replacing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonised people' (Ashcroft 38).

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin claimed that these writers belonging to the once colonised countries were creating new 'englishes' through various strategies like inserting untranslatable words into their texts; by using always obscure terms and by refusing to follow standard English syntax, and instead using structures derived from other languages.

*The Empire Writes Back* asserted that postcolonial writing was always written out of the abrogation (i.e. discontinuing) of the received English which speaks from the centre, and the act of appropriation (i.e. seizure) which brings it under the influence of a vernacular tongue, the complex of speech habits which characterise the local language' (Ashcroft 39). The new English of the colonised was different from the colonisers English operated at the colonial centre, separated by an unbridgeable gap: 'this absence, or gap, he's not negative but positive in its effect. It presents the difference through which an identity (created or recovered) can be expressed' (Ashcroft 62). The new 'englishes' could not be converted into standard English because of its broken rules. As a result of this difference, new values, identities and value systems were expressed, and old colonial values were completely rejected.

The next thing needs to be discussed is the concept of masculinity from Indian perspective. Looking into the history of India, it will be discovered that Indian civilization began with matriarchy as its ruling principle. Woman was viewed as the progenitor and therefore, was considered worthy of worship. This concept of worshipping female deities is still practiced in the contemporary Indian Society. It appears that when men discovered their contribution in the process of bringing life into this world, since then they also felt that there should be the concept of worshipping male deity and hence resulted in the worship of the phallus of Shiva, *adideva* or the first god according to the Hindu cosmos. This development along with the growth of consciousness among human beings living in a society about their private property and the need to continue the family line resulted in the patriarchal social setup privileging men and thereby marginalising women in the social and political spheres. With the passage of time even the religious myths started projecting men having the romantic notions of valour and physical prowess associated with them. For example the projection of the super-masculine image of Krishna who had eight wives and a large but unspecified number of lovers called *gopis*.

However, the Indian masculinity, so constructed did not always occupy the same higher position over the centuries. During the pre-British era Indian men came to see themselves as the submissive incapable of protecting their pride and the honour of their women in front of the colonisers. In fact the British colonial masters sought to feminise the Indian men by setting themselves up as the 'hyper-masculinity' race.

In the Postcolonial era there are several factors which combine to render Indian masculinity interesting and problematic. On the one hand, freedom from the colonial rule provided the Indian men an opportunity of regaining their lost confidence in themselves, whereas on the other hand there were several social and economic factors such as the caste system with grinding poverty as well as the series of gender biased laws enacted by the Indian parliament, have all had their profound implications for especially the middle-class urban men. These post-Independence developments have thrown Indian masculinity into a crisis and caused intense psychological turmoil in men. Patriarchal ideology which romanticizes men's achievement of higher cultural aims, such as access at work, often takes its toll on their lives by obliging them to adopt risky lifestyles, do potentially dangerous things, resulting in their concern for their health and personal well-being and in the process subject themselves to tensions and psychological

pressures. But this re-evaluation is filled with great difficulty in Indian context. Patriarchal ideology cannot easily be isolated from the traditionalism, conservatism and the general philosophy that rules the lives of Indians.

At last but not the least, the Indian society itself, with all its contradictions and imperfections, has been very stubborn, conservative and rigid all through the postcolonial period. While on the one hand on the economic and political fronts there are now greater choices and opportunities, because of liberalisation and democratisation but on the other hand in matters such as caste, religion, love and marriage the choices have hardly expanded. Indian men and women thus find themselves in a dilemma, on the one side, rapid modernization and democratisation on the economic and political front attract them to go ahead while on the other side conservatism, rigidity and lack of choice on the social front repel them.

Masculinity studies and women studies need not be at cross purposes. In fact, they should complement each other and foster understanding between the sexes. Studying the depiction of masculinity in Indian fiction in English can be a good beginning for understanding Indian masculinity and its changing contours in the postcolonial period because this is the branch of literature which faithfully reflects the new social mores, every day ideology and popular psychology of the ever expanding middle class. Indian fiction in English is the only body of Indian literature which is pan-Indian in its conception and appeal. This fiction, especially of the postcolonial period, is produced by writers who are equally familiar with East and the West and are largely free from cultural, linguistic and regional prejudices. It is because of this open-mindedness and receptivity to new ideas that Indian fiction in English has been at the forefront of treating unconventional themes including masculinity.

In *Train to Pakistan* Khuswant Singh has presented a very united and secular face of India, people belonging to different religions living in complete peace and harmony for the last few centuries. That is why in the first part of the novel the writer points out that, during the summer of 1947 when the frontier had become a scene of rioting and bloodshed in the wake of Independence, Mano Majra remained unaffected because partition did not yet mean much for the Mano Majrans.

Mano Majra is a tiny place. It has only three brick buildings, one of which is the home of the money lender Lala Ram Lal. The other two are the Sikh temple and the mosque.... There are only about seventy families in Mano Majra, and Lala RamLal's is the only Hindu family. Then others are Sikhs or Muslims, about equal in number....But there is one object that all Mano Majrans – even Lala Ram Lal – venerate. This is a three foot slab of sandstone that stands upright under a keekar tree beside the pond. It is the local deity, the deo to which all the villages – Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or psuedo – Christian – repair secretly whenever they are in special need of blessing. (Singh 3-6)

It was the symbol of communal harmony in the village. The inhabitants of Mano Majra, lived in an idyllic atmosphere in the lap of bountiful nature. They still enjoyed cordial relationship which had been existing between them since so many centuries. They were hardly aware of the meaning of Partition. They didn't know this even when the British partitioned their country and left India for ever. Mano Majra's tranquil atmosphere reminds one of the famous lines of Thomas Gray's poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard":

Far from the madding crowd ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;  
Along the cool and sequestered vale of life,  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way. (St. 19)

Situation of the village starts deteriorating with the dacoity and murder of Lala Ram Lal by Malli and his gang. Khuswant Singh after this very aptly brings to the scene one of the most important character of the novel Mr. Hukum Chand, the district magistrate. The arrival of Hukum Chand on the same day when the evil act of dacoity takes place very clearly gives an indication about the character of Hukum Chand. Through the character of Hukum Chand the author tries to represent the colonial power and also through the character of Hukum Chand, Khushwant Singh presents the colonial power as inhuman, immoral with no care for emotions and feelings.

The exploitative nature and the sense of authority of the colonial power can be seen by the description, given by the author of the preparations that takes place on the morning before the

dacoity in Mano Majra for the arrival of the district magistrate Hukum Chand in the following words:

... The rest house had been done up to receive an important guest. The sweeper had washed the bathrooms, swept the rooms, and sprinkled water on the road. The bearer and his wife had dusted and rearranged the furniture. The sweeper's boy had unwound the rope on the punkah which hung from the ceiling and put it through the hole in the wall so that he could pull it from the verandah. He had put on a new loincloth and was sitting on the veranda tying and untying knots in the punkah rope. From the kitchen came the smell of currying chicken. (Singh 24)

The above description is a very vivid depiction of the colonial rule one's perception about the exploitative nature of the postcolonial bureaucrats can be vividly witnessed in the following description:

An hour later a grey American car rolled in. An orderly stepped out of the front seat and opened the rear door on his master.... The bearer opened wire gauge door leading to the main bed sitting room. Mr. Hukum Chand, magistrate and deputy commissioner of the district, heaved his corpulent frame of the car. He had been travelling all morning and was somewhat tired and stiff. A cigarette perched on his lower lip sent a thin stream of smoke into his eyes. In his right hand he held a cigarette tin and a box of matches. He ambled up to the sub-inspector and gave him a friendly slap on the back while the other still stood at attention. (Singh 24-25)

In the description of the above paragraph there are two incidents which clearly confirm the colonial status that Hukum Chand enjoyed. The first is the difference in the smoking style between Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector: "Hukum Chand's style of smoking betrayed his lower middle-class origin" (Singh 25) while "the sub-inspector, who was a younger man, had a more sophisticated manner."(Singh 25) What is worth noting here is the behaviour of the sub-inspector who like the colonised lights the cigarette of Hukum Chand and the imperial staging of Hukum Chand as king or emperor waited upon by his retinue of attendants. Secondly the act of

slapping on the back of the sub-inspector by Hukum Chand underscores the gradation of power in their relationship.

Then Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector sit down for a discussion about the recent happenings of the village. Hukum Chand enquires from the sub-inspector whether there have been some killings in Mano Majra upon which the sub-inspector answers negatively. Hukum Chand elaborates his own experiences regarding communal violence by specially mentioning of a case of violence against a train he recently witnessed near the Indo-Pakistan border. The ensuing exchange between the sub-inspector and the magistrate runs as follows:

“Do you know,” continued the magistrate, “the Sikhs retaliated by attacking a Muslim refugee train and sending it across the border with over a thousand corpses? They wrote on the engine ‘Gift to Pakistan’!”

The sub-inspector looked down thoughtfully and answered: ‘They say that is the only way to stop the killings on the other side. Man for man, woman for woman, child for child. But we Hindus are not like that. We cannot really play this stabbing game. When it comes to an open fight, we can be a match for any people. I believe our R.S.S. boys beat up Muslim gangs in all the cities. The Sikhs are not doing their share. They have lost their manliness. They just talk big. Here we are on the border with Muslims living in Sikh villages as if nothing had happened. Every morning and evening the muezzin calls for prayer in the heart of a village like Mano Majra. You ask the Sikhs why they allow it and they answer that they are getting money from them.’  
(Singh 26)

The distinct feature of this passage is its revelation of the religious identities of Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector as Hindu and the amount of religious antagonism that they have in their hearts about other religions especially the Muslims. But the supreme irony, here, is that in the face of his disavowal of Hindu involvement in recent killings, the sub-inspector is very confident that if in the near future any need arises then Hindus can be just as culpable of communal violence as Sikhs, Muslims and people of any other religion. The sub-inspector is of the opinion that the Sikhs “just talk big” and “have lost their manliness,” (Singh 26) failing to



retaliate for killings by Muslims and openly accepting money from them. Then the sub-inspector and the magistrate start discussing the concept of masculinity. The sub-inspector characterizes the Hindus as manly, the Sikhs as effeminate and the Muslims as deserving of violent acts of retaliation from either Hindus or Sikhs. They exchange ideas on partition and political violence, unfurl the concept of masculinity as a topos for thinking about contemporary political violence between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. For the sub-inspector, the recent communal violence provides evidence of the way in which masculinity is under attack. He is of the opinion that Hindus honour their masculinity by joining gangs in the big cities while the Sikhs, on the other hand, insufficiently defend their own “manliness” to the extent that they become effeminized in his analysis.

The discussion between the magistrate and sub-inspector upon the concept of masculinity for explaining recent political developments around the Indo-Pakistani border very clearly reflect their own professional relationship and the circumstances of their conversation. These two Hindu men come to understand and theorize their border related political and religious violence as an attack on Hindu masculinity. They form the opinion that the communal violence between the Sikhs and the Muslims is an attack on masculinity of the Hindus such as themselves. The sub-inspector’s prioritization on the attack on Hindu masculinity as the most important contemporary social problem clearly suggests that the real crisis confronting the magistrate is possibility of the destruction of colonial conditions for their professional relationship. Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector continue their remarks on contemporary violence around the Indo-Pakistan border as follows:

‘Harey Ram, Harey Ram,’ rejoined Hukum Chand with a deep sigh. ‘I know it all. Our Hindu women are like that: so pure that they would rather commit suicide than let a stranger touch them. We Hindus never raise our hands to strike women, but these Muslims have no respect for the weaker sex. But what are we to do about it? How long will it be before it starts here?’ (Singh 29)

Here, Hukum Chand presents the differences between Hindu, Muslim and Sikh masculinities by noting how the Hindus never raise their hands against women. Further he, without any concrete evidence also thinks that Hindu men have the privilege to live with pure

Hindu women because the Hindu women would rather commit suicide than let a stranger touch them. With his ambiguous knowledge of Hindu identity defined through a particular set of religious practices, Hukum Chand presents his understanding of Hindu masculinity through a course of exchange of dialogues with the sub-inspector. Through their exchange of dialogues without any concrete evidence they try to establish Hindu men as paradigmatically exemplary of masculinity, having the privilege to access the purest of women and as a result uniquely suffering from the defilement of their women near the Indo-Pakistan border. The two of them are also of the opinion that Muslim and Sikh men do not suffer the defilement of their women in the same way as Hindu men do due to the effeminate nature of men from the former two religious groups.

Hukum Chand being the personification of lecherous and corrupt Indian bureaucracy and hence is a degraded form of postcolonial masculinity, Khushwant Singh also wants to highlight the fact that how being totally intoxicated in enjoying power, Hukum Chand misuses his political, social and administrative power and even never hesitates to get involved in physical relationships with women for pleasure, thereby using woman as a commodity. This is facet of his character can be very well witnessed in his illegitimate relationship which he establishes with the teenage prostitute Haseena.

Another evidence of Hukum Chand's aura of colonial authority can be seen in the first evening of his visit to Mano Majra where an entertainment has been organized for him. His attendants serve him with food and drink and the entertainment party immediately stands up to greet him as he enters the living room. The musicians salaamed bowing their heads low. Hukum Chand on the other hand like a master makes a gesture with his hand ordering them to sit down. This in a way very clearly demonstrates the existing relationships of domination as revealed further below:

The old woman spoke. "Cherish of the poor. What does your honour fancy?  
Something classical- pukka- or a love song?"

"No, nothing pukka. Something from the films. Some good film song-  
preferably Punjabi." (Singh 35)

The exchange between the old woman and the magistrate clearly reveals his higher status of superiority and also his role as a dictator of Mano Majra. Ironically the magistrate is called as the

“cherisher of the poor” whereas presently he is involved in exploiting the poor which ultimately will finish when the teenage Haseena will prostitute herself before the magistrate later in the evening. The word ‘your honour’ finally reveals the relationship that of a coloniser and colonised, shared between the entertainers and the magistrate.

The song that the teenage girl sings reiterates the idea of evacuating one’s subjectivity for that of one’s lover:

O lover mine, O lover that art gone,  
I live but would rather die,  
I see not for the tears that flow,  
I breathe not, for I sigh.  
As a moth that loves the flame,  
By that flame is done to death,  
Within myself have I lit a fire  
That now robs me of my breath,  
The nights I spend in counting stars,  
The days in dreams of days to be  
When homewards thou thy reins shall turn  
Thy moon-fair face I again shall see. (Singh 36)

The girl sings about a lover who has gone and whose absence haunts her life. She continues to live but prefers to die and has difficulty in performing the basic bodily functions like reading and seeing. Like a moth hovering around a flame that ultimately consumes it, she spends her nights and days dreaming of the day when she will see her lover’s “moon-fair face” again. Tragically the song’s theme speaks of suffocation and death. While singing, the girl directly addresses the magistrate, Hukum Chand as her long lost lover and also the cause of her torment.

At this point of time we learn that Hukum Chand knew the song that the teenage Haseena was singing because this was the same song which his own daughter used to hum. This fact reminds Hukum Chand about his daughter and he becomes very nostalgic and also has his pangs of conscience about the lecherous life which he was leading and also about establishing physical relationship with a girl who was of his daughter's age. This made him feel quite uneasy. His inner conscience dissuades him from committing the sin but he brushed it aside quickly with a sip of whisky:

He stared at the girl who sat sheltered from the light. She was only a child and not very pretty, just young and unexploited. Her breasts barely filled her bodice. They could not have known the touch of a male hand. The thought that she was perhaps younger than his own daughter flashed across his mind. He drowned it quickly with another whisky. Life was like that. You took it as it came, shorn of silly conventions and values which deserved only lip worship. She wanted his money, and he...well. (Singh 37)

The thought of his misgivings about her age and relationship to him as a prostitute, Hukum Chand quickly dispels them with whisky and the fatalist position that "life was like that." (Singh 37) "She wanted his money" and "he...well." (Singh 37) After this Hukum Chand completely lost his senses and became so obsessed with the feeling of lust that he started behaving like an animal that is ready to do anything to have his prey:

The girl got up and went to the table. She stretched out her hand to take the money; Hukum Chand withdrew his and put the note on his heart. He grinned lecherously. The girl looked at her companions for help. Hukum Chand put the note on the table. Before she could reach it he picked it up and again put it on his chest. The grin on his face became broader. The girl turned back to join the others. Hukum Chand held out the note for the third time. (Singh 38)

The most astonishing and interesting part here is to see the behaviour of both the teenage Haseena and the old woman. Whereas on one hand it can be noticed that the teenage girl is very apprehensive to go near Hukum Chand and fulfil his desire of getting her, while on the other

hand the old woman tries to convince the girl that it is Hukum Chand who she has to ultimately submit because he is the lord who only when he is made happy will take care of entertainers like them and it is better on the part of Haseena to understand this and make herself available for him.

‘Go to the Governor,’ pleaded the old woman. The girl turned round obediently and went to the magistrate. Hukum Chand put his arm round her waist.

‘You sing well.’

The girl gaped wide-eyed at her companions.

‘The Government is talking to you. Why don’t you answer him?’ scolded the old woman. ‘Government, the girl is young and very shy. She will learn,’ she explained. (Singh 38)

The unpleasant and exploitative behaviour of the coloniser, presently in the form of postcolonial masculinity i.e. Hukum Chand meets out towards the colonised i.e. Haseena reduces her condition to that of a doubly subaltern girl, the example of which is in the following section of the extract:

Hukum Chand put a glass of whisky to the girl’s lips. ‘Drink a little. Just sip for my sake,’ he pleaded.

The girl stood impassively without opening her mouth. The old woman spoke again.

‘Government, she knows nothing about drink. She is hardly sixteen and completely innocent. She has never been near a man before, I have reared her for Your Honour’s pleasure.’(Singh 38-39)

Ultimately the time which Hukum Chand was waiting for, arrived and he immediately dismissed the other entertainers including the old woman and the musicians and brought the girl nearer to him and made her sit on his lap gulping another glass of whisky. Not particularly concerned about the girl’s reactions on his act because he believed that he had bought her and now he is free to do whatever he feels like with her, simply treating her like a commodity which

he has bought to satiate his hunger of lust. The colonial attitude of Hukum Chand and his illegitimate feeling of lust have been very wonderfully penned down by Khuswant Singh in the following words:

Hukum Chand pulled her on to his lap and began to play with her hair....  
'Are you angry with me? You don't want to talk to me?' asked Hukum Chand, pressing her closer to him. The girl did not answer nor look back at him.

The magistrate was not particularly concerned with her reactions. He had paid for all that. He brought the girl's face nearer his own and began kissing her on the back of her neck and on her ears. He could not hear the goods train any more. It had left the countryside in utter solitude. Hukum Chand could hear his breathing quicken. He undid the strap of the girl's bodice.  
(Singh 40)

So it can be said that the ultimate aim of Hukum Chand is to satiate his thirst for sex to which he has become habituated. Haseena here may be taken as the personification of enslavement by the colonial power i.e. Hukum Chand, the district magistrate and the local mistress i.e. the old woman. Like the colonial power who considered the colonised as a form of commodity which they can use for their own profit, in that same way Hukum Chand a representative of postcolonial masculinity having a colonist bent of mind uses woman as a commodity to satisfy his personal need thereby misusing his social and political power.

While discussing Postcolonial Masculinity in *Train to Pakistan*, one interesting event happening in the course of the novel may be observed when people of Mano Majra while discussing about the qualities of Hukum Chand, religious person like Bhai Meet Singh goes to the extent of calling him *nar admi*, meaning 'he-man' in Indian context, "a nar admi- and clever. He is true to his friends and always gets things done for them. He has had dozens of relatives given good jobs. He is one of a hundred. Nothing counterfeit about Hukum Chand." (Singh 63) He-man refers to the kind of strength i.e. the combination of mind, body and spirit possessed by a male in India who uses his strength in positive direction by indulging in social welfare activities like protecting the women from being exploited, raising voice against ill-will done to the poor

and corruption and so on. Now if we look into the original meaning of the *nar admi* in Indian context and referring to Hukum Chand as *nar admi* is completely ironic because the activities that Hukum Chand carry out almost in the entire novel, right from his behaviour with his subordinates, his illegitimate relationship with the teenage girl Haseena, his ordering to the sub-inspector for the evacuation of the Muslims from Mano Majra taking care that they are not able to carry any of their materialistic belongings and also his inability to save the train from being attacked by a group of miscreants in which his Haseena was to travel. All these acts performed by Hukum Chand throughout the entire course of the novel clearly reflect the fact that Khushwant Singh has used the word *nar admi* in a completely ironic sense to vividly depict the corrupt Indian bureaucracy in Post-Independent India.

While discussing Postcolonial Masculinity in *Train to Pakistan* the other character which comes to one's mind is Iqbal. Although one can argue the fact that the weakest link in the structure of the novel is Iqbal. It appears that Khushwant Singh contrived this character as one with no flesh and blood. Iqbal was a city dweller, who had received Western education and had imbibed Western culture which was reflected in his way of living. Iqbal carried with him an air mattress, a dressing gown, a tin of sardines and a bottle of whisky. His mind had been influenced by ideas of proletarian revolution. The implications of Iqbal's name are enveloped in ambivalence: "He could be a Muslim, Iqbal Mohammad. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand, or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh." (Singh 55) The religious ambivalence implied in his name is only an aspect of basic rootlessness of Iqbal's personality, though Bhai Meet Singh assumed that he must be a Sikh.

It appears that Iqbal is a rebel sentimentally, a person attracted to socialist thinking but primarily concerned with personal leadership. If we talk of Karl Marx, he was sceptical, even critical, of the middle-class in a revolution. Nevertheless, if we look into the history of revolutions there are a number of middle class men and women who have risen in revolt and became the source of social changes. If we look into the pattern of these men and women will find that their approach was primarily intellectual, academic, and impractical from the crying realities of a compelling social or political situation. It is the incapacity for action by Iqbal which is the hallmark of the young and fashionable politician. The fact of the matter is Iqbal does not belong anywhere and the worst part is he pathetically desires to contribute to the mass revolution

of India's rural communities. His condition is that of *trishanku*,<sup>1</sup> a being without fixity, dangling in a vacuum, incapable of belonging anywhere.

In spite of all these drawbacks with which Iqbal suffers one thing that deserves mention is the values about which Iqbal talks can only be achieved with democracy and secularism. The other positive quality that Iqbal possesses is his rational thinking which is also the product of modernism. His domination grounded in his own type of rationality is also reflective of Postcolonial Masculinity in the light of which he tries to establish a value system

A postcolonial reading of *Train to Pakistan* appears to be a 'Resistance to History' in a very unusual way. There is a paradigm shift from a mere glorification of the past to an interpretation of the recent colonial regime. *Train to Pakistan* hints at a sense of disillusionment regarding post-colonial social conditions.

The novel highlights a fact that common people- Hindus and Muslims- live together peacefully. It is a bunch of selfish politicians who 'politicize' religion that ultimately leads to the destruction of values. Khuswant Singh also highlights the fact that "Colonizers" from without have gone back but it is the 'Colonizers' from within that still continue to 'colonize.'

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<sup>1</sup> Tishanku was a King in ancient India who, according to the *Puranas*, was left in the mid-space between the earth and heaven. He did not belong to either heaven or earth. The word is now used as a common noun.



## Notes and References

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