

Train to Pakistan (Film)

Directed by Pamela Rooks

M.A. Sem II

CC-5

Unit II

(Part I)

Train to Pakistan (1998) is a film adaptation of eponymous novel by Khushwant Singh published in 1956. Being true to the genre of historical fiction Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh draws upon the humanitarian crisis in the backdrop of the Partition of India.

The film tells the story of love and sacrifice in a period of mindless violence and religious intolerance. It is set in the fictional village of Mano Majra on the border of India and newly carved Pakistan where Sikh landowners live with Muslim workers in peace and amity. ~~In one of the dialogues of the film~~ The narrator of the story, Hukum Chand the District Magistrate tells the viewers that the problem with Mano Majra was not that there was mutual distrust and a feeling of enmity between Muslims and Sikhs but that they loved each other indicating at the sense of loss that is to remain with the villagers for their lives even after the frenzy of partition subsides.

The protagonist of the film Jaggat Singh alias Jagga is an ordinary, almost reluctant dacoit who is often laughed at his disinclination by fellow robbers. But Jagga is courageous and is innocently proud of his heritage of being born in the family of notorious dacoits. Both his father and his grand

father were dreaded dacoits. Jagga's source of disinclination towards the life of crime stems from his love for Nooran, a Muslim girl and the daughter of a ^{blind} weaver in the village. In one of the scenes of the film when Nooran says that it does not seem plausible for her and Jagga to get married owing to her being ~~of~~ a Muslim, Jagga says that he ~~too~~ is a "daku" (a dacoit) and dacoits have no religion. It is not difficult to observe that the characters made in love with each other indicate that the vices in the society do not follow the ^{principles} ~~dictates~~ of religion.

Comrade Iqbal, an atheist social worker from Britain arrives at Mano Majra to promote amity between Hindus and Muslims in a communally charged atmosphere and lodges in a Gurudwara. Iqbal's eating tinned food and drinking whisky suggests how far are educated Indians from the spirit of India predominantly rural in structure.

In a separate incident a gang of dacoits kill a presumably rich villager in Mano Majra and Jagga and Iqbal are arrested by the local police for the murder.

District Magistrate Hukam ^{Chand} ~~Singh~~ Celebrates the fact that his jurisdiction is still untouched by communal violence.

But one fateful day a train arrives at the local railway station from Pakistan filled with the butchered bodies of Sikh passengers from Pakistan.

The train changes everything pertaining to peace and mutual care in Mano Majra.

In a bid to keep his records clean District Magistrate Hukam Chand conspires with the Sub Inspector and orders him to spread the rumour in the village that the murder has been committed by the gang of Sultana daku, a Muslim dacoit and sends a letter to the Pakistani authorities to arrange for safe evacuation of Muslims from Mano Majra (To be continued...)