The Narrative of Manufactured Division and Artificial Segregation in *Train to Pakistan* and *Cracking India*

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Abstract:
Indian author Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan*, and Pakistani author Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *cracking India* recount the events of the partition of India. Both the novels are written against the backdrop of India's partition from different perspectives. The setting of *Train to Pakistan* is a rural Indian village called Mano Majra close to the India-Pakistan border in Punjab, whereas *Cracking India* mostly depicts the Pakistani city Lahore during the tumultuous period of partition. Despite this difference, both the authors are in dialogue with each other in terms of their treatment of India's partition where they highlight how the partition disrupted communal harmony and incited violence in the Indian subcontinent. Both the authors speak to each other when it comes to the portrayal of India's socio-cultural diversity, the increasing communal tension during partition, riots, and mass migration. In this essay, I will investigate how both the authors are in dialogue with each other when it comes to the portrayal of India's partition through which they highlight the negative outcomes of the partition and call into question the success of the partition of India.
Keyords: Partition, Violence, Diaspora, Religion, South Asia

India's Partition: A Brief Context

Train to Pakistan is the first partition novel in English which Khushwant Singh wrote from his personal experience (Roy, 2010: 34). The novel vividly captures the tragedy of India's partition in 1947. It embodies an extremely powerful literary representation of India's partition from the perspectives of ordinary Indian people who either suffered during the partition, or caused others to suffer. *Train to Pakistan* tells an epic tale of solidarity and communalism, sacrifice and vengeance, trust and betrayal, and above all, it tells the story of people's untold suffering emanating from the mass hysteria of the partition. *Cracking India*, on the other hand, tells a similar story of the partition from the perspectives of people who used to live in present-day Pakistan during the partition of India. With *Cracking India*, Bapsi Sidhwa

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"attempted to give a Pakistani perspective to the Partition of India" (Roy, 2010: 64). The novel is narrated in the form of an adult Pakistani woman's recollection of childhood memories during the tumultuous period of partition. One of the highlights of this novel is the representation of violence against women and children during partition.

The partition was a tumultuous period of extreme violence and mass migration as "at least sixteen million people – Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims – were forced to flee their homes and became refugees; at least two million were killed in ethnic violence" (Daiya, 2008: 6). According to the famous Muslim leader of Indian National Congress and India's first minister of education Abul Kalam Azad, "the whole of the Punjab, East and West, was becoming a graveyard of destruction and death" (Azad, 1988: 228). Such tragedy of the partition is successfully captured by both novels. Both authors give authentic and vivid description of communal violence and mass migration that affected the lives of millions of people in the Indian subcontinent during the partition of India. In this regard, both Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa are in dialogue with each other. Apart from portraying communal violence, the novels depict how life was in the undivided India, and how people used to live in an environment of peaceful coexistence despite their differences with regards to religion, cast, and creed. However, the partition changed it all. As the partition approached, agitation grew among the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in India. Suspicion and mistrust took the place of solidarity and brotherhood, and such rift between the people of different faiths eventually became a deadly catalyst for a series of communal riots so vicious in magnitude that they left an indelible scar in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Both *Train to Pakistan* and *Cracking India* masterfully capture this grim picture of India's partition.

India before Partition

India, throughout its history, has always been considered to be a melting pot of a multitude of cultures. Socio-cultural diversity has always been a significant feature of undivided India. The glorious legacy of assimilation and peaceful coexistence of different cultures goes back centuries prior to India's partition in 1947. People of various religious, ethnic, and socio-cultural backgrounds coexisted in united India. As a result, diversity became a fundamental feature of Indian society. This significant aspect of India's history is highlighted in Jawaharlal Nehru's (1994) famous book *The Discovery of India*. Nehru points out that the unparalleled cultural diversity of undivided India is the most remarkable facet of the "long panorama of India's history" (p. 52). Eminent politician and postcolonial scholar Shashi Tharoor also highlights this fact in his highly acclaimed book *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*. Tharoor (2017) points out that communal and religious

harmony was a key feature of India before partition because "Indians of all religious communities had long lived intertwined lives" (p. 113). Islam blended with Indian culture quietly nicely, as "Islam itself got transformed by India, intermeshing with it and ultimately being absorbed by it as an integer" – a process that took "almost a millennium and a half to evolve" (Singh, 2009: 4). In her book *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, renowned Oxford historian Yasmin Khan (2017) emphasizes on the fact that the Hindus and the Muslims, in most part, coexisted peacefully in undivided India. Khan points out that the forced migration of millions of people and the subsequent refugee crisis after the partition irreversibly disturbed the socio-cultural as well as the political fabric of the Indian subcontinent (p. 187). This reality was captured by both the novels in question. In undivided India, people of different religions coexisted for centuries despite their differences, and this fact calls into question the two-nation theory and interrogates whether or not the ultimate segregation in the form of India's partition in 1947 was warranted. Both novels in question show the coexistence of people of different socio-cultural, ethnic, and religious background in undivided India, and how, because of such diversity, the implementation of the two-nation theory was practically impossible without causing unprecedented communal violence and disturbing the socio-cultural as well as the geopolitical fabric of the Indian subcontinent.

The small, remote village which is the setting of *Train to Pakistan* is called Mano Majra. The village is situated close to India-Pakistan border, a village that is "lost in the remote reaches of the frontier" (Singh, 2016: 2). Similar to many other villages in India, people of different faiths, casts, and creeds live in Mano Majra. In this village, Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims live in peace with mutual respect and a shared tolerance for each other's religions until the unhinged frenzy of partition violently triumphs over solidarity, brotherhood, and sanity. Religious freedom is present in Mano Majra, as along with a mosque for the Muslims, there are also two gurdwaras or Sikh temples for the people of the Sikh faith. It is also important to note that despite the presence of Sikhism, Hinduism, and Islam in Mano Majra, the influence of organized religion is not very deep-rooted as a "three-foot slab of sandstone that stands upright under a keeker tree" is considered to be a "local deity, the *deo* to which all the villagers – Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, or pseudo-Christian – repair secretly whenever they are in a special need of blessing" (Singh, 2016: 2-3). Meet Singh is the Sikh guru in this village, and Imam Baksh is the imam of the mosque who is also the community leader of the local Muslims. Both Meet Singh and Imam Baksh are respected equally by all. Meet Sings' remarks manifests the respect and tolerance people in Mano Majra have for one another's religions:

"Everyone is welcome to his religion. Here next door is a Muslim mosque. When I pray to my Guru, Uncle Imam Baksh calls to Allah" (Singh, 2016: 39). As Mano Majra is a small village, people of all classes and religions depend on one another. Ram Lal is a wealthy Hindu villager who lends money to the locals, the Sikhs own most of the farming lands, and the Muslims are predominantly tenants in Mano Majra who also "share the tilling with other owners" (Singh, 2016: 2). A few families of sweepers also live in Mano Majra "whose religion is uncertain" as they do not strictly follow any particular religion (Singh, 2016: 3).

Religious identity of people has never caused division among the villagers in Mano Majra, and even during the tumultuous period of partition when one village after another start to succumb to communal violence, Mano Majra stands tall against communalism. Despite the outbreak of riots in nearby villages, the Sikhs in Mano Majra vow to defend their Muslims neighbors. Meet Singh promises Imam Baksh: "As long as we are here, nobody will dare to touch you. We die first and then you can look after yourselves" (Singh, 2016: 133). However, as communal violence escalates in other villages, the Muslims of Mano Majra are eventually left with no other option but to evacuate. But such displacement is anything but desirable as Imam Baksh laments: "What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers" (Singh, 2016: 133). As the Muslims depart, the "Sikh and Muslim villagers fell into each other's arms and wept like children" (Singh, 2016: 135). It is evident that people of different religions lived peacefully in Mano Majra, and that religion had never been a catalyst for division until the partition.

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* is quite different from *Train to Pakistan* when it comes to the settings of these two novels. *Train to Pakistan* unfolds in a rural setting, whereas the setting in *Cracking India* is much broader. *Cracking India* depicts life both in urban and rural setting, and captures the religious and cultural diversity of the part of Punjab that now belongs to Pakistan. The novel highlights the diversity of the historic city Lahore where Parsis, Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus live together peacefully prior to the partition. Lenny, the child narrator of this novel, is from a Parsi family. Mr. Singh is one of her closest family friends who is a Sikh. Her ayah Shanta is a Hindu, and Ayah's lover Ice-candy Man is a Muslim. Here, people of four different faiths have friendly relationships with one another, and Lenny's family functions as a microcosmic representation of the entertained life that people of different faiths in Lahore had before the partition. The town where the narrator lives in is a place where tolerance, reverence, and friendship among people of different religions are present. Local Muslims go to the Badshahi mosque, Sikhs go to the Data Shahib's shrine, and Hindus go

to the Hindu temple. All three places of worship for people of three different faiths are situated in close proximity, which is symbolic of the peaceful coexistence of people regardless of their religions differences. The bond among Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, and Hindus that exists among Ayah's friends and acquaintances is emblematic of the communal and religious harmony in Lahore before the partition. One of Ayah's Muslim friends is Masseur, who says that "there are no difference among friends" of different religions, as the Sikh faith originated in the Indian subcontinent "to create Hindu-Muslim harmony," which is why "the holy Quran lies next to the Grantha Sahib in the Golden Temple" (Sidhwa, 1991: 140).

Just like *Train to Pakistan* portrays a remote village called Mano Majra, *Cracking India* depicts a small village called Pir Pindo, which is far away from Lahore. Like Mano Majra, Pir Pindo, too, embodies communal harmony as people of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh faith live peacefully in this village. *Train to Pakistan* shows how the Sikhs in Mano Majra are committed to saving their Muslim neighbors amidst communal violence, and how devastated they feel when the Muslims are being evacuated. Similarly, *Cracking India* shows how the Sikhs in Pir Pindo vow to save their Muslim friends from riots. Jagjeet Singh is one of many young Sikhs in Pir Pindo who are ready to put their lives on the line to ensure that their "Muslim brothers" are safe (Sidhwa, 1991: 65). This is how both novels capture the communal harmony, unity, and brotherhood that prevailed among people in both India and Pakistan prior to the partition in 1947. This is a significant meeting-point between these two novels. However, unlike *Train to Pakistan*, *Cracking India* portrays characters who are aware of the pathetic charade that the British colonial rule is. One such character is Mr. Singh, who is a friend of the narrator's parents. Mr. Singh is passionate about India's independence and accuses the colonial administration of using religious difference to play a "divide-and-rule monkey tricks" with the people of India so that they remain busy fighting among themselves while the colonial administration remains unchallenged (Sidhwa, 1991: 72). Mr. Singh passionately utters: "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh: we all want the same thing! We want independence!" (Sidhwa, 1991: 71). This is how *Cracking India* captures communal unity among people in undivided India.

Both novels in discussion highlight the fact that the inhabitants of undivided India were living in a peaceful coexistence despite their religious and communal differences. They had reverence and tolerance for one another's religions. Community-feeling and Companionship triumphed over difference and division among people. Unfortunately, the partition upended such long-established social stability. A number of political analysts claim that the British colonial administration

implemented a divide-and-rule strategy to incite religious conflicts and to prevent unity among the people of undivided India. Historian Bimal Prasad (2001) maintains that such calculated incitement of religious conflict was the British colonial administration's "strategic position" to deter a mass unity among people of all religions in India (p. 257). He also asserts that "because of their strategic position, the British could easily play one community against the other" and this is something they "always did" (Prasad, 2001: 257). Renowned Indian politician Shashi Tharoor (2017), in his much-acclaimed book *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*, argues that the British colonial administration used religion "as a useful means of divide and rule" to create animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims as a "deliberate strategy" to thwart any kind of united resistance against colonial rule (p. 111). Tharoor (2017) also maintains that the British rulers had "a particular talent for creating and exaggerating particularist identities and drawing ethnically-based administrative lines all their colonies" (p. 102). It is manifestly evident that the british rulers deliberately augmented communal division to weaken the unity among people as Sengupta (2016) argues that "even before the partition of 1947, the politics of communalism complicated the nationalist dream of freeing the country [India]" (p. 16). Farooqui (2015) is also in dialogue with Prasad and Tharoor as he claims that "colonial rule in India was based upon the strategy of divide and rule," and the partiton of india followed by unpresidented communal violence "demonstrate[s] the success of the strategy" (p. 49).

This Hindu-Muslim division provided sparks and tinder to violence and communalism which eventually led to a political crisis making the partition of India inevitable. However, many critics questioned whether or not dividing India on religious ground was a pragmatic solution as it was virtually impossible to divide India on the basis of religious majority because of the century-long legacy of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus living together, sharing a common territory. This issue is addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru (1994) in his famous work *The Discovery of India*. In this book, Nehru asserts that it is impossible to "separate the followers of these two principal religions [the Muslims and the Hindus] of India, for they are spread out all over the country" (p. 528). This is a phenomenon that both novels in discussion explore quite extensively. The novels show that since people of different religions used to live together in undivided India, and since there was no absolute territorial domination by the followers of any particular religion as such, the idea of dividing India based on religious majority was not pragmatic. This is the reason why as the partition approached, religious tension grew among people of different religions which eventually led to a series of violent communal riots that took the lives of millions, and forced

million more to migrate, giving rise to one of history's most tragic humanitarian crises ever.

Religious and Political Tension during the Partition

As religious tension started to heighten during partition, mistrust, agitation, and suspicion started to rise among the people of undivided India threatening religious and communal solidarity. Many who had always been for unity, became communal. *Train to Pakistan* vividly captures this tragic fact. The villagers in Mano Majra have never been communal, but many of them become so when the news of riots in nearby villages reaches Mano Majra. The entire villages descends into "a heavy brooding silence," as "everyone felt his neighbor's hand against him" (Singh, 2016: 124). Muslims, being the minority in this village, become vulnerable to retaliation as Sikhs and Hindus in Muslim-majority villages are being persecuted. Imam Baksh, "for the first time in the memory of Mano Majra," does not call for the evening prayer from the mosque. Many local Sikhs in Mano Majra become livid as they hear harrowing accounts of brutality against the Sikhs in Pakistan at the hands of Muslims. They become "sullen and angry," and start to agitate others by preaching hateful messages like "never trust a Muslim," and "Muslims [have] no loyalties" (Singh, 2016: 128). Many Sikhs bring up history to fan the flame and claim that "all through the Muslim period of Indian history," Sikhs have been persecuted by Muslims for "refusing to accept Islam" (Singh, 2016: 128). The angry Sikhs say: "What are we to do with all these pigs [Muslims] we have with us? They have been eating our salt for generations and see what they have done! We have treated them like our own brothers. They have behaved like snakes" (K. Singh 130). When a "trainload of Sikhs massacred by Muslims" (Singh, 2016: 128) appears in Mano Majra, many incensed local Sikhs vow to take revenge by attacking a Pakistan-bound train of Muslim refugees claiming that "a Muslim knows no argument but the sword" (Singh, 2016: 158). As a result, it appears to the Muslims that as if "every Sikh in Mano Majra" has become "a stranger with evil intent. His long hair and beard appeared barbarous, his kripan menacingly anti-Muslim" (Singh, 2016: 128). The narrator recalls that after such tragic turn of events, the Muslims who would say: "What have we to do with Pakistan?" (Singh, 2016, p. 133), found Pakistan to be "a refuge where there were no Sikhs" (Singh, 2016: 128).

Cracking India also captures a similar picture of communal and religious tension during partition quite vividly. Much like *Train to Pakistan*, *Cracking India*, too, holds a pellucid depiction of how hatred and sectarianism triumph over communal solidarity. The child narrator Lenny, despite being too young to understand the ongoing communal

tension, is able to realize that the Muslims, the Hindus, and the Sikhs in Lahore are not friendly with one another anymore. They no longer enjoy each other's company in the Queen's Garden anymore. The Sikhs in Pir Pindo village, angry and frustrated, declare that they will not "live with the Mussulmans [Muslims] if there is to be a Pakistan" (Sidhwa, 1991: 116). This sudden tension among the Sikhs and the Muslims emanating from the prospect of partition eventually turns into violence when India's partition becomes an ineluctable destiny. On one hand, the Sikhs vow to "fight to the last man" to make sure that "the Muslim swine" do not get the opportunity to curve out Pakistan (Sidhwa, 1991: 143); on the other hand, the Muslims double down on their demand of Pakistan and threaten that they will "play Holi with their [the Sikhs] blood" (Sidhwa, 1991: 144). Just like the way the Sikhs of Mano Majra village in *Train to Pakistan* bring up the history of Muslim violence against the Sikhs, in *Cracking India*, the Muslims of Lahore also recall the memories violence committed against the Muslims by the Sikhs. The Muslims of Lahore refer to the Sikh "tradition of violence", mentioning how they "butchered every single Mussulmans [Muslims] from Ambala to Amritsar" just a century ago during the final days of the Mughal empire (Sidhwa, 1991: 140). The Hindus of Lahore also become the victims of Muslim hatred as major Muslims characters including Masseur and Ice-candy-man are convinced that the Hindu leaders of the Congress will manipulate Viceroy Mountbatten's decisions in favor of the Hindus (Sidhwa, 1991: 99). They are also reluctant to put their trust on Gandhi's leadership, and call him a "non-violent violence monger" whose "business [is] to suit his tongue to the moment" (Sidhwa, 1991: 100). This is how Cracking India portrays the unexpected decline of communal harmony and the alarming rise of communalism among the inhabitants of Lahore just before the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

The characters in both novels show a great deal of political awareness. The Sikh and the Hindus support the Indian National Congress led by Nehru, while most of the Muslims rally behind Jinnah-led Muslim League. This is precisely why the rivalry between the Congress and the Muslim League affects the stability of communal harmony in these novels. *Cracking India* shows how the Muslims despise the Congress, and more specifically, the party's Hindu leaders. Being a Muslim, Ice-candy-man hates the Congress and believes that Nehru is a "sly" politician who will "walk off with the lion's share" for the Hindus by manipulating Viceroy Mountbatten's decision (Sidhwa, 1991: 141). The local gardener, who is also a Muslim, is convinced that the Congress "didn't like Muslim League's victory in the Punjab elections," and Masseur, "with histrionic fury," calls Gandhi, Nehru, and Vallabhbhai Patel "bastards" (Sidhwa, 1991: 99). *Train to Pakistan* portrays how the Sikhs in Mano Majra despise the Muslim League and

the idea of Pakistan. Even police officers, for whom it is imperative to be above communalism, show their biases. Iqbal – an atheist social worker – is arrested under the suspicion of being an undercover "Muslim League worker" after the sub-inspector finds out that Iqbal is circumcised (Singh, 2016: 69). The sub-inspector labels Iqbal as a "political agitator" and contemptuously says: "You are a Muslim. You go to Pakistan" (Singh, 2016: 77). Through the portrayal of characters who are politically aware, both Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa highlight the fact that during the tumultuous period of India's partition, people in India were clearly divided into two opposite camps: one group supported the Congress, and the other group rooted for the Muslim League. Many historians argue that the provincial election in 1937 rendered a fatal blow to the Congress-ML relationship, and subsequently to the Hindu-Muslim relationship in the Indian subcontinent as well. After the election, the Congress "offered a share of government to the Muslim League politicians in UP only if they ceased to function as a separate group" (Talbot & Singh, 2009: 32), and such "suicidal condition" given by the Congress to the Muslim League was a "blunder of the first order" because such decision forced the Muslims to think of the Congress as a "worse bogy than British raj had ever been" (Hodson, 1993: 67). "By the end of 1946, it was clear that there was no possibility of conciliation or agreement between the Congress and the League" (Panigrahi, 2004: 338).

Many critics believe that the Muslim League-Congress political conflict played a significant part in the partition of India. Ali (2009) points out that Jinnah joined Muslim League and left Congress because "he realized that Muslim interests would be difficult to protect under a Congress dominated by Conservative Hindus" (p. 84). Jinnah also believed that the Muslim League must be "turned into a mass movement" if it wanted to be "effective" as a "Muslim organization" (Ali, 2009: 84). Jawaharlal Nehru, On the other hand, "often labeled the [Muslim] League as a reactionary organization" (Ali, 2009: 82). Nehru maintained that the "alleged animosity between Hindus and Muslims" was a colonial ploy by the ruling British "to divide the Indian people to prevent them from uniting against the imperial power" (Embree, 1987: 49). Nehru also believed that "religious identity was irrelevant to the struggle of freedom" (Embree, 1987: 49). It is clear that Jinnah and Muslim League did not trust the Congress to protect the rights of the Muslims, while Nehru and the Congress thought the exact opposite. Such conflict of interest between these two parties, also among the Hindus and the Muslims in general, became a significant precursor of the partition. This phenomenon is captured by both novels in question, as they address this issue by portraying characters who have political awareness, and therefore, are influenced by politics.

Partition and Communal Violence

During India's partition, the entire subcontinent was ravaged by communal violence which was "unprecedented" both in terms of "scale and method" leading to one of history's biggest human migrations with disastrous consequences (Pandey, 2001: 2). The British rulers could do nothing as "unprecedented communal violence engulfed India" (Panigrahi, 2004: 339). Shashi Tharoor argues that Britain had to quite India because it could no longer afford to hold on to India due to the economic collapse Britain suffered after the Second World War. "Bled, bombed and battered for six years, Britain could divide but it could no longer rule" (Tharoor, 2017: 146). Britain "wanted to cut and run," and was "prepared to 'cut' the country [India] quite literally before running (Tharoor, 2017: 138). As Britain's first priority was to quite India by dividing the region on religious ground, the colonial administration hardly took into consideration the consequences of such forced, artificial segregation. Britain adopted the partition of India as its official policy to quite India, and this policy gave the British an escape route while the entire Indian subcontinent descended into communal violence of unforeseen magnitude. "Over a million people died in the savagery that bookended the freedom of India and Pakistan; some 17 million were displaced, and countless properties destroyed and looted" (Tharoor, 2017: 144). Communal violence started like wildfire and spread like chain reaction largely among the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs. The bordering areas between India and Pakistan were the sites of the most gruesome incidents of communal riots. Millions of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were displaced from their homeland during the partition of India leading to the largest human migration in history. "Out of ninety million Muslims, thirty-five million remained in India—making India the country with the biggest Muslim population outside Muslim states" (Daiya, 2008: 103). Yasmin Khan (2017) points out that Punjab was the province in the north-west of undivided India that was "most brutally sliced into two parts in 1947, and was the bloody battlefield of Partition where by far the greatest number of massacres of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims occurred" (p. 7). Jeff Hay (2006) mentions that around ten million people migrated across the border of Punjab, and these "migrations were accompanied by communal violence that left hundreds of thousands dead" (p. 84).

Both *Train to Pakistan* and *Cracking India* capture the horrors of communal riots, particularly in the vicinity of the province of Punjab. Even though the partition was done to curve out a separate country for the Muslims, the partition of Punjab in the process "presented a particular danger to the Sikhs" who made up "only 2 percent of India's population, but the Punjab was their traditional homeland and was where most Sikhs lived" (Hay, 2006: 76). *Train to Pakistan* portrays the

partition of India from the perspective of an Indian male author, whereas *Cracking India* captures the partition from the perspective of a Pakistani female author with vivid descriptions of riots among the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs during the partition. However, the most significant meeting point between these two highly acclaimed novels is that both of them give graphic description of communal violence, reveal the causes and effects of such atrocity, and investigate to what extent such violence was warranted.

In *Cracking India*, the British police officer Mr. Roger warns Mr. Singh of communal riots predicting that the people of India will "bloody fall at each other's throats" if the British quite (Sidhwa, 1991: 71). Unfortunately, this is exactly what happens as the novel progresses. The news of the riots in Bihar and Bengal unsettles the Punjabi village Pir Pindo. Lahore is no different as communal riots spread like wildfire throughout the city. The Sikhs and the Hindus are evacuated completely, and those who stay are brutally slaughtered by the Muslims. To the utter disbelief of the narrator, even Ice-candy-man rejoices when he watches the houses of the Hindus and the Sikhs burn. As a reaction against the killings of the Hindus, Muslims are attacked in Amritsar and Jullundur. Lahore is "suddenly emptied of" all the Sikhs and Hindus whose places are taken by "hordes of Muslim refugees" (Sidhwa, 1991: 187). A particularly harrowing account of the genocide of the Muslims at the hands of the Sikhs in at least five villages is given by the little boy Rana who survives the riot. He describes the rioting Sikhs as "swarm of locusts, moving in marauding bands of thirty and forty thousand" killing, looting, raping, and setting houses on fire (Sidhwa, 1991: 209). Ice-candy-man tells the narrator and Ayah another harrowing story of a trainload of mutilated dead bodies of Muslim refugees who were trying to escape from India. Marauding Sikhs and Hindus attacked the train carrying the Muslim refugees, slaughtered them all, and let the train carry the dead bodies to Pakistan. According to Ice-candy-man, "there are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny-bags full of women's breasts!" (Sidhwa, 1991: 159). Such atrocities against women prove that during the partition of India, women became the "primary symbolic and literal targets of communal violence" who suffered a "staggering range of sexual brutalities" (Misri, 2014: 55).

Train to Pakistan also gives a detailed and disturbing account of communal violence, and it starts with the arrival of a trainload of mutilated dead bodies of Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan – just like a trainload of dead bodies of Muslims arrive at Lahore from India in the novel *Cracking India*. Hukum Chand, the district magistrate, goes to the station of Mano Majra to cremate the dead bodies and watches "corpses of men and women and children being dragged out" from the train

(Singh, 2016: 89). The riots are so rampant, and the death toll is so high that mutilated dead bodies litter the Sunlit River near Mano Majra; "some were without limbs, some had their bellies torn open, many women's breasts were slashed" (Singh, 2016: 151). Several days later, another trainload of dead bodies of the Hindus and the Sikhs arrive at Mano Majra station; and this time the bodies were buried. Such brutalities against the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan evoke extreme outrage among the Sikhs and the Hindus in India, and Mano Majra is no different. As the refugees from Pakistan share their experience of Muslim brutality in Pakistan, the Sikhs in Mano Majra become vengeful. As a result, Mano Majra no more remains safe for the Muslims who soon evacuate from the village. Their properties are ransacked by some of the local Sikhs who are joined by the refugees from Pakistan. The local Sikhs and the refugees join together to undertake a mission to avenge the death of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan by slaughtering the Muslims in refugee camps and attacking trains and road convoys carrying Muslim refugees to Pakistan. Their slogan is, "for each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman they abduct or rape, abduct two. For each home they loot, loot two. For each trainload of dead they send over, send two across" (Singh, 2016: 157). According to the sub-inspector who is in charge of the Muslim refugee camp, "there are mobs of twenty to thirty thousand villagers thirsting for blood" who may attack the Muslim refugee camp at any moment (K. Singh: 167).

A comparative textual analysis of the pattern of communal violence portrayed in these two novels reveals the reactionary and retaliative nature of communal violence during the partition. In both India and Pakistan, communal riots between the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs took such severe form because people of each faith thought that they were being ruthlessly persecuted by the people of a rival faith, and the only way to seek vengeance was to hit back with more brutality and ruthlessness. A mass hysteria engulfed the entire region as communal violence spiraled out of control. Friends became foes, neighbors became aggressors, and even lovers became molesters. Perhaps, this is the biggest tragedy of India's partition, and both novels present an authentic portrayal of this tragedy. *Train to Pakistan* starts with the omniscient narrator's 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" (Singh, 2016: 1). *Cracking India* also captures a similar reality. Needless to say, nobody, not even the most avid advocates of India's partition, could ever envision such a heart-wrenching vivisection of the Indian subcontinent. However, in reality, this is exactly what transpired, and both novels capture this aspect of India's partition quite vividly and authentically.

Conclusion

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* are among the most famous South Asian English novels about the partition of India. Both novels tell the story of the partition and portray how it affected people's life. Even though the novels examine the partition from the perspectives of two different countries, both authors are in dialogue with each other when it comes to their treatment and portrayal of the partition of India. Both authors show that people of different religion had been living peacefully in undivided India until the partition brought about division and violence. Both authors provide authentic portrayal of the partition, and give genuine insight into the negative outcomes of the partition including mass migration, riots, plundering, manslaughter, and other crimes against humanity. Famous American historian and Indologist Stanley Wolpert believes that the tragedy of India's partition and the ensuing suffering of millions of people could have been avoided had the British colonial administration and the leading Indian politicians acted sensibly. In his book *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India*, Wolpert (2006) puts it:

I believe that the tragedy of Partition and its more than half century legacy of hatred, fear, and continued conflict – capped by the potential of nuclear war over South Asia – might well have been avoided, or at least mitigated, but for the arrogance and ignorance of a handful of British and Indian leaders (p. 4).

By vividly depicting the grim picture of the partition, both Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa question the success of such artificial segregation; and by questioning the success of the partition, the authors ultimately raise the question whether or not the partition of India was necessary at all.

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