

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Identity Crisis in *Train to Pakistan*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English**

by

Dipendra Poudel

University Campus

Kirtipur

October 2007

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Central Department of English, Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

The thesis entitled “Identity Crisis in *Train to Pakistan*” submitted to the Central Department of English, T U, Kirtipur by Dipendra Poudel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

The present study owes much to the scholarly guidance and indispensable suggestion from my respected teacher, Mr. Devi Prasad Gautam, Lecturer at central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. The way he guided and encouraged me in every aspect of the work in hand indeed inspires in me a deep sense of gratitude to him.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur for granting me a chance to carry out this research work. Similarly, I am truly indebted to my respected teachers Prof. Dr. Abhi Subedi, Dr. Birendra Pandey, Mr. Tika Lamsal, Mr. Hem Sharma Paudel, Mr. Saroj Sharma Ghimire and Mr. Shankar Subedi for providing me valuable guidelines in course of my work.

I would, next, like to mention my special thanks to Mr. Rajendra Acharya, a very good friend of mine, for his proper help in efficiently carrying out this work. I would, then, like to express my gratitude to my brother Mr. Subhash Paudel and my friend Mr. Rabindra Lamsal for their proper help and support in course of my research. My thanks are also due to my intimate friends –Mr. Madhab Bastakoti, Mr. Ram Babu Paudel - for their encouragement and valuable guidelines in course of my work.

October 2007

Dipendra Poudel

Abstract

People undergo a crisis of values, priorities and identities while living through a turbulent time. In Khushwanta Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan*, the Indians are faced with the task of finding a new identity based entirely on their religious conviction, as India as a nation gets divided into Hindu-Sikh India and Muslim Pakistan. The older social order that consisted of a happy amalgamation of people from the three major religions added to other minor ones was radically disrupted and was in need of a totally new sort of polarization. The people's sense of being Indian now no longer satisfied their need for a more exact but a narrower sense of religious identity. As a result, two nations were born in the Indian subcontinent.

The novel recounts, in more or less objective terms, the brutalities inflicted by Hindu-Sikh's and Muslim's against each other, consequent to the unprepared and hasty partition of India into India and Pakistan. In the partition riot, human values come under erasure; identities of neighbors, friends, bosses and employees come under radical reshuffling, and a new religious social order is necessitated. In short, the sense of who they were, what their duties were and what their values were stand in need of a new definition. Their older sense of identity becomes nebulous in the wake of the communal violence unleashed during the partition chaos. *Train to Pakistan*, the first novel in English to treat this theme stands as a major novel on the subject of the partition of India and the human suffering it brought as its consequence. The then political leadership was largely to blame for the violence that erupted in the wake of the partition. The novel makes some poignant remarks about the divisive policy of the British government, and on shortsightedness and insensitivity of the Indian leaders.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I. Partition of a Nation: Partition of Identities **1-14**

The Novel: *Train to Pakistan* 4

Criticisms on *Train to Pakistan* 8

Outline of the Study 14

II. Shift from Political to Religious Identity **15-28**

Partition Literature: A Brief Survey 15

National versus Religious Identities 21

Communal Politics: A Nation Divided 24

III. Indians Forgo Human Self **29-52**

Mano Majra: A Vignette of Pre-partition India 29

Failed Politics: Costly Communalism 32

Jugga: Human Capacity for the Great 38

Politicizing Religion: A Downplay of Human Values 42

Questioning Oneself: Crisis of Identity 49

IV. Conclusion **53-56**

Works Cited