

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**Train Massacre as a Metaphor for Genocidal Partition Violence: Reading Bhisam
Sahni's "The Train Has Reached Amritsar" and Khuswant Singh's *Train to Pakistan***

By

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “**Train Massacre as a Metaphor for the Genocidal Partition Violence: Reading Bhisam Sahni’s ‘The Train has Reached Amritsar’ and Khuswant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan***” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Hemant Kumar Thakur, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

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Abstract

Violence, which has been elided in the textbook history, receives central attention in revisionist historiography. The textbook history, besides overlooking violence, boosts up modern India's image as a secular, modern and democratic nation. The historiographic sanitizing of Partition violence has crept into much of the fiction on the Partition of 1947. Khushwant Singh and Bhisham Sahni have also endeavoured to strengthen the same serene image of India, but the sanitized image comes at the cost of contemptuous and barbarous image of the Muslims and the Pakistanis. This work seeks to show how their fictitious 'trains' are instrumental in depicting the Muslims and Pakistanis as fiends, who torture the simple-minded Indians. The obstreperous behaviour of the Muslims might seem real to credulous Indians, but to the incredulous few, especially those who are aware of the politics of the aesthetics of violence, the biased representation of the Muslims in the fictional works of Singh (*Train to Pakistan*) and Sahni ("The Train has Reached Amritsar") stick to their gizzard. When reviewed from the viewpoint of the revisionist historiography, which brings to the fore the politics of the representation of violence, both these canonized works merely participate in partisan politics: Indian emerge as civilized whereas the Pakistani Muslims get valorised as barbarians.

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