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REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S *TRAIN TO*
PAKISTAN, DELHI AND
I SHALL NOT HEAR THE NIGHTINGALE

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Abstract

Khushwant Singh is a good journalist, novelist and columnist. Khushwant Singh came across many women in his life. His first novel *Train to Pakistan* has limited women characters. In the present paper I have observed a critical analysis of the women characters in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. The paper also attempts the virtuous and vicious portrayal of women in *Delhi* and *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale*. Nooran, the Muslim girl, beloved of Juggat Singh portrays as a lovable lady. Juggat's mother depicts as a lovable, concern mother. Hukum Chand's young lady love is a prostitute, Hasseena portrays as an amorous girl who made only for sex. Other women portray as passive characters. In *Delhi*, Bhagmati portrays as a romantic whore. Kamala in *Delhi* portrays as a clandestine character. Shabhrai in *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* portrays as a traditional, conventional woman. Champak in *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* portrays as a lascivious character.

In patriarchal society, women have been treated as an unequal manner. They considered as inferior sex. In India women are considered as goddesses or sexual objects. Men expected the women to play role of their want and need. Women are subordinate to men. Women are symbol of purity as well as scapegoat. Even in the Vedas, the Puranas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the women were supposed to be, made to be abided by the social rules and norms. Submission to men can be expected by this patriarchal society. Male domination takes place from the childhood of a child. For example, she has to depend her parents in her young age. After marriage she has to depend her husband. As an old woman she has to depend her son for her survival. So from birth to death she has to depend man. Khushwant Singh followed his predecessor in portraying his women characters in similar way. He has given two kinds of women characters who are either traditional, conventional, faithful or luscious, promiscuous, unfaithful. In *Train to Pakistan* Singh portrays three women characters majorly. Nooran, Juggat's lady love, Juggat's mother and Haseena, prostitute. As a lover Nooran herself admitted to Juggat before marriage. This pre-marital relationship shows the love affair with her lover. Nooran described by the dacoit gang as a bogus woman."Did you see that tight shirt showing off her breasts...she must give Jugga a good time...

large gazelle eyes and the little mango breasts" (7). Men look women as a bogus one. They expect the physical appearance of women will be romantic one. Juggat Singh also describes her lover as black buffalo. He likes white women than black women. It reveals in the following words of Juggat: "Wah, Babuji- great. You must have had lots of fun. The memsahibs are like hours from paradise- white and soft like silk. All we have here are black buffaloes" (113). Singh tells about the practical feelings about men through Jugga. Ultimately they need sex. Sexual intention made them mad. It gives them pleasure. Nooran says, "Always you wanting to sow your seed. Even if the world were going to hell you would want to do that" (16). After inter course Jugga shouts at Noorajn. He says, "will you shut up or I have to smack your face"(16). This changing mood of Jugga reveals the desire for sex.

Next, Juggat mother is so concerned about Nooran after knowing the truth that Nooran carries Juggat's child in her womb. Nooran has to move to refugee camp. Juggat's mother consoles Nooran and sends her with hope. " I cannot keep you here. I have enough trouble with the police already. When all this is over and Jugga comes back, he will go and get you from wherever you are... Nooran hugged the old woman passionately"(139). Nooran does not have the courage to reveal this truth to her father. So women were restricted by some rules of the society.

Hukum Chand, the Magistrate always needs the company of a young prostitute Haseena who is younger than his daughter. As a fourteen year old girl she portrays as a slave for Hukum Chand. Her pathetic condition told by Singh,

He kissed her nose. 'Let us get married too'... the girl suffered his pawing without protest. He picked her up from the table and laid her on the carpet amongst the litter of tumblers, plates and bottles. She covered her face with the loose end of her sari and turned it sideways to avoid his breath. Hukum Chand began fumbling with her dress.(33) Willingly or unwillingly women were made to obey men is depicted through this character Hasseena.

Ram Lal's wife told to the dacoits that, "I tell you Lalaji is not in. He has taken the keys with them. We have nothing in the house"(3). Here Singh gives the picture of male domination. The head has the power in the society. Other characters in *Train to Pakistan* are passive. They are obedient and dependent for all kinds of activities. All powerful works like farming, Mullah call, Gurudwara keeper, Magistrate, driver and sub inspectors are assigned to men. Whereas women are assigned to do household works like cooking, cleaning, washing, rubbing, kneading, embroidering. Power is significant for only men not for women. "women rub clarified butter into each other's hair, pick lice from their children's heads, and discuss births marriages and deaths"(5).

Singh portrays the Hindu women's purity through Hukum Chand's voice. Hindu women are ready to commit suicide rather than go in the hands of strangers. "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"(22-23).

In *Delhi: A Novel* gives the picture of both virtuous and vicious. Through Ram Dulari, wife of Hindh Kayasta Mussaddi Lal Singh portrays the real life of a Hindu woman. As a lovable young wife, she blindly follows her husband's words. She fulfils all the needs of her husband in an amicable manner. She does not have child for few years. But she does not need other man's company. She is faithful to her husband. On the contrary to Ram Dulari, Begum Sahiba, Qumarunnisa is an unfaithful, promiscuous wife of Nawab Rais. She is ready to deceive her husband for her sexual urge. She has illicit relationship with poet Parwana and Meer Taqi Meer. She betrays these poets and has sexual relationship with another man. "I wanted to run out screaming and tell everyone in Agra that this woman had not only been unfaithful to her husband but also to her lover. They would have stoned her to death not once but thrice" (201). Meer continues and tells that, "The only thing I noticed about her were her taut bosom and big rounded buttocks which almost burst out her tight fitting pyjamas" (202). Men portray women as a sexual object. They need a physically sexual figures rather than mind and heart.

Kamala, wife of Brigadier Gupta, a middle aged woman depicted as a sensual and sexual character. As a wife of an army officer she does not satisfy herself in her sexual life. She always needs some sexual partner. Even narrator also bedded with her. She tells "What kind of life does army wife lead? The husband is away for weeks and months." ((142). Alice Aldwell, wife of fifty one old aged Alec also unfaithful to her husband. She seeks another man

company for her sexual desire. She has illicit relationship with Alec's manager, George, who is younger than Alec. She named her third child as Gerogina, it indicates the child of George. She is unmoral to her husband.

Next the heroine Bhagmati, hijda whore, Singh's lady love. Both Delhi and Bhagmati liked by Singh in a same way. Both are barren in their state. As a hijada, Bhagmati could not produce any child. In the same way Delhi could not achieve its fruitful shape due to exploiters. Bhagmati's physical appearance is different from normal human being. It is openly portrayed by the narrator. Singh had sexual affair with her. Many times she pleased him with her tiny organs. " I have two passions in my life; my city Delhi and Bhagmati. They have two things in common: they are lots of fun. And they are sterile"(30). Singh asks, " Don't you think these Jat females are the most beddable women in Hindustan? Bhagmati replies, " Other men's wives and sisters are always more fukable than one's own. A home-bred chicken tastes no better than lentils"(87).

Next novel *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* tells about the conventional, traditional lady Sabhrai and notorious lady Champak. Sabhrai, wife of Buta Singh, mother of Sher Singh had a virtual thinking in her mind. As an uneducated woman she balanced her husband and son. She maintains good relationship between her husband and son. She is an ideal mother for her children Sher Singh and Beena. She escorts Sher in all situations. She helps Beena to understand the critical situation with Madan through her sixth sense. She shows motherly love towards her daughter-in- law, Champak. She sacrifices her life for her son. She made all to follow the Granth Sahib. On the contrary to Sabhrai, Champak portrays as a notorious woman. She does not get satisfy with her husband Sher Singh. She finds outside company for her sexual urge from Madan, Sher Singh's friend, famous cricketer. She has illicit affair with him in Wazir Chand's home and also in Simla. She cannot control her sexual intention, so she wants to abuse the servant Munno. As a naked, she appears in front of Munno. She made him to press her legs and thighs. From this she gets some pleasure. Next Shunno, a middle-aged maid servant who believes in Peer Sahib, a young priest. She abused by Peer Sahib. She wants to meet him often. As a widow, she finds happy with the company of Peer Sahib.

, Haseena, Begum Sahiba, Kamala, Champak and Shunno portrayed as a bogus, amorous, lascivious, clandestine, promiscuous characters. Nooran, Juggat mother, Ram Dulari and Sabhrai portrayed as traditional, conventional, religious, pious characters.

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