

THE PARTITION VIOLENCE IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S *TRAIN TO PAKISTAN*: A NEW HISTORICIST STUDY

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Abstract

*This research paper presents a broad New Historicist analysis of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), critically examining the novel in the context of the socio-political, ideological, and historical discourses of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The paper claims that *Train to Pakistan* functions as a counter-history, foregrounding marginalized voices, partition trauma, and communal violence, which otherwise are absent from official records. The paper uses Stephen Greenblatt's idea of history as a constructed discourse shaped by power relations as a theoretical framework to critically analyse how *Train to Pakistan* reconstructs the Partition as not merely a political achievement but a catastrophic intrusion into the lives of the common people. Through the extensive and comprehensive critical analysis of *Mano Majra*, the village as a micro-historical site, the symbolism of trains, the decaying and collapsing colonial power, and the construction of communal violence, the paper underscores the literature's central role in challenging prevailing historical narratives and stabilising suppressed histories.*

Keywords: *Communal Harmony, Counter-History, Khushwant Singh, Mano Majra, Micro History, New Historicism, Partition, Violence*

Introduction

The partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 is widely regarded as one of the most traumatic events of the twentieth century. It was accompanied by unprecedented communal violence and a mass forced exodus that resulted in physical, emotional and psychological trauma. The partition, consequently, resulted in the dislocation and displacement of about fourteen to fifteen million people, including a death toll of over a million (Talbot, 2003). Despite enormous human and material cost, the dominant and official histories have either taken the partition as the only and inevitable political option for the solution or the indispensable sacrifices for tasting the fruits of independence. Such narratives prioritise constitutional dialogues and debates, elite leadership and state formation, while excluding the terrible experiences of the common and ordinary people, irrespective of their religious identities (Jan et al., 2022). The dominant and official histories stress independence more than the partition (Parveen & Akram, 2021; Ramzan & Khan, 2024). Independence is celebrated while the partition with its terrible

consequences is erased from official records.

The literary texts have played a very important role in challenging such prevailing historical demonstrations (Ahmad et al., 2022; Amjad et al., 2021). In this regard, Urvashi Butalia (1998) examines, literature and oral narratives that remember the silences, reminiscences, and emotional truths erased from official historiography. *Train to Pakistan* holds a very important position in the Partition literature produced in the English language. It is written in the backdrop of the partition and was published in 1956. It struggles heroic nationalist narratives by highlighting and stressing the fear, moral collapse, and human suffering experienced during the partition of the Indian subcontinent at the very basic and primary level.

This study employs New Historicism as a theoretical framework to critically analyse *Train to Pakistan*. After a comprehensive reading of the novel in the context of historical discourses prevailing during the Partition, the research study claims that *Train to Pakistan* reconstructs history as lived experience rather than political abstraction. The imaginary village of Mano Majra turns out to be a microcosm that exposes the ideological operations of history, power, violence, and communalism. The novel presents a counter-historical text that cross-examines the authority of leading narratives and stresses the significance of human cost in the understanding of history.

Research Objective

To analyse micro-history for understanding the macro-political event of the partition of the Indian subcontinent represented in *Train to Pakistan* from the New Historical theoretical perspective.

Research Questions

How does *Train to Pakistan* reconstruct the historical reality of the partition of the Indian subcontinent through a micro-historical lens?

Literature Review

Counter-Histories and Partition Literature

Partition literature has been widely studied as a corrective to official histories (Ramzan et al., 2025, 2023; Khan et al., 2017). Butalia (1998) accentuates that the common people who suffered at the micro level are excluded from the political discourses; however, literary texts and oral narratives recover the voices of such people. Likewise, Pandey (2001) maintains that violence holds a main yet repressed position in Partition historiography, making literature a fundamental site of historical recovery.

Talbot (2003) maintains that *Train to Pakistan* presents the moments of the partition and its dynamics, which official records failed to maintain. By representing fear, silence, and communal breach, the text reveals the lived reality of the violence and the partition trauma. *Train to Pakistan* has been praised by the early critics for its realism and humanism, keeping in view that Khushwant Singh refuses to hold any single community responsible. However, later studies place the novel within Partition historiography, stressing its challenge to nationalist narratives.

Pandey (2001) finds Singh's novel to be a narrative that disrupts linear history, highlighting chaos and ethical ambiguity. Zamindar (2007) positions the novel within the extended

repercussions of the partition, claiming that its stress on displacement reflects the ongoing nature of the historical trauma of the partition.

Research Methodology

This research study adopts a qualitative and text-based interpretive research methodology grounded in textual analysis and historical contextualization, because the fundamental objective of the research is to analyse the novel through the lens of New Historicism. The research is based on the close reading of the literary text in context with the historical discourse focussing the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

The New Historicism theoretical framework, particularly discussed and propounded by Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher, guides this study. The theoretical framework takes the literary texts as the products of social and cultural conditions and claims that literary texts and history are mutually constitutive discourses. Therefore, this research does not consider the novel merely a fictional representation of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, but it is a cultural text written in the context of history, responding to the historical power dynamics. Thus, the study attempts to reconstruct how the undertaken novel contributes to the circulation of the social and historical context, and it equally attempts to find how it challenges the dominant historical narratives.

Therefore, for the support and investigation of the contextual analysis, the secondary sources, including historical and critical texts, have been analysed to supplement the study. The historical sources and works of the scholars, including Pandey (2001), Butalia (1998), Talbot (2003) and Zamindar (2007), provide substantial historical grounds. These sources help the researchers to place the novel within the broader perspectives of the memory, violence, nationalism, politics and historiography. Nevertheless, the study focusses the literary interpretation rather than the historical records and archives.

Three major stages of analysis are used to draw findings. The first stage includes the contextual review of the partition of the Indian subcontinent to identify the dominant narratives and areas. The second stage analyses the novel using the close reading technique to identify the moments in which these narratives are represented and reflected. The third stage interprets the findings through New Historicist concepts, including power circulation, discourse, micro-history and ideological production.

The methodology adopts the micro-historical approach by focusing on a small village, Mano Majra, considering it a local site where macro-historical forces are found working. Instead of analysing the partition of the Indian subcontinent as a national political event alone, this study attempts to investigate how historical power manifests and dominates in everyday life to generate a broader perspective of findings. Thus, this research does not claim the definitive and final historical conclusion but rather aims to offer a theoretically informed reading of the text of the novel under study.

In short, the study combines the close textual analysis, historical contextualization and theoretical interpretation to establish how the undertaken novel works as a counter-historical narrative.

New Historicism: The Theoretical Framework

In the late 20th century, New Historicism emerged as a critical reaction against formalist approaches that isolated literary texts from their historical contexts. Primarily associated with Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism challenges and rejects the traditional concept of history

as a stable or objective record. On the contrary, it takes history as a discursive construction shaped by power relations, ideology, and institutional authority (Greenblatt, 1980).

Greenblatt believes that literary texts and historical documents are produced within the same cultural milieu and are equally implicated in the circulation of power. Consequently, literature not only reflects history but, at the same time, it also actively partakes in its construction. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2001) define this interaction as a circulation of “social energies” where texts expose suppressed tensions and contradictions within dominant discourse.

According to Gallagher and Greenblatt (2001), “history is not a stable background against which literature is set; it is itself a text that must be interpreted”. Similarly, Greenblatt (1980) maintains that “literary and non-literary texts circulate inseparably within the same cultural system”. These statements of New Historicists claim that historical narratives and literary texts are part of the same ideological frame. Thus, the research paper has applied the New Historicism as a theoretical framework, which is deemed appropriate for analysing Partition literature because the partition itself is a very famous and terrible historical event characterised by ideological manipulation, discriminatory memory, and institutional failure. By concentrating on marginalised voices, customs, and moments of separation and partition, New Historicism allows researchers to analyse how texts like *Train to Pakistan* represent the violence embedded within nationalist historiography.

Historical Context: Partition and the Crisis of Historiography

The Partition of the Indian subcontinent was not only a political incident but a deep social rift that restructured identities, geographies, and communal relations. The historians like Pandey (2001) believe that violence committed during the partition of the Indian subcontinent cannot be wholly understood through official records and archives, as such records mostly hide or remove the sufferings faced and experienced by the people at the micro level. In fact, partition history lives and survives in fragments, such as recollections, rumours, silences, and literary representations.

Zamindar (2007) presents the concept of the “long Partition,” accentuating that the consequences of the partition of 1947 are very extensive and stretched even beyond the moment of independence. The borders of the countries proved unstable, identities cracked and fissured, and violence continued. This historical instability is represented in *Train to Pakistan*, where the consequence of the partition continues to haunt Mano Majra, the village, even after the official announcement of the partition and independence.

From a New Historicist standpoint, this instability focuses on the ideological nature of historical narratives. The states fail to control violence and protect common people; the situation presents the fragility of power structures during transitional moments. *Train to Pakistan* records this collapse, everyday terror and moral confusion, not through policy debates.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The Village Mano Majra: Representation of a Micro-Historical Ordinary Site

One of the main concerns of the New Historicism is its shift from major historical narratives to available microhistories in everyday life, which become the primary sites for understanding history. *Train to Pakistan* presents an imaginary small village, Mano Majra, which functions as a micro-historical place. The village does not stand as a legislative chamber of the elite negotiating partition, but rather represents and reflects the common people busy in their

everyday life, including agriculture, religious customs and communal routines. Thus, the history is primarily anchored in the commonplace routines of the common people, presenting a microhistory of everyday life.

Long before the partition talks and subsequent violence, the village of Mano Majra represents and holds communal harmony. The Sikhs and the Muslims share the same village spaces, partake in similar economic activities, and depend on one another for their survival and prevalence. They are more concerned with the challenges of their own lives than with the ambitions of the ruling class. The villagers “were more concerned with the time of the train than with who ruled Delhi” (Singh, p. 3). This establishes the villagers' indifference to national politics. The political sovereignty, detached from the reality and challenges of their daily life, remains irrelevant to them. There is complete communal harmony before the religious and political intrusion into the village. This opinion of the common people is fundamental from the New Historicist perspective, as it exposes the detachment between elite political discourse and reality at the grassroots level. Hence, the independence and nationhood, celebrated in nationalist historiographies, primarily hold little importance for ordinary people.

New Historicism maintains that history is experienced unevenly across social sections (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2001). Mano Majra symbolises this unevenness. For the villagers of Mano Majra, history is not an abstract narrative of freedom but a sudden, violent disruption of familiar life. By highlighting this locality, Singh challenges leading historical representations that universalise nationalist experience while erasing regional and communal specificity.

Communal Harmony and Its Commotion: History as Intrusion

The presentation of communal harmony as a historical condition rather than a myth adds a significant New Historicist aspect to the understanding of *Train to Pakistan*. Opposing communalist historiography that considers Hindu-Muslim or Sikh-Muslim resentment and rivalry as unavoidable, the novel portrays amicable coexistence as the primary and mutual state of Mano Majra. A very important representation of mutual coexistence among the diversified community members is depicted as “Meet Singh and Imam Baksh were friends” (Singh, p.10). It shows their interfaith harmony. The Sikh granthi and village mullah live peacefully; hence, their respective religions are depicted as spiritual but not political.

Singh unequivocally records that religious identity does not primarily function as an indicator of enmity. The Muslims and the Sikhs duly share wells, fields, and festivals. Their religious differences remain secondary to shared village life. “The Sikhs and the Muslims in Mano Majra were so mixed that it was impossible to tell who was who. They had lived together for generations and were all Punjabis” (Singh, p.2). This demonstration aligns with Pandey’s (2001) argument that communal identities were historically soft before Partition politics hardened them.

The disharmony ensues from external historical forces, rumours, and administrative decisions, but not from within the village. Similarly, the violence also gets inflicted by outside sources. Considering the New Historicist premise, this moment demonstrates how history interrupts the everyday, reconfiguring social relations through ideological density. The village people start interpreting each other through the lens of religious difference when the violence becomes rampant and historically normalised.

This shift establishes Greenblatt’s (1980) claim that power operates through discourse. Communal animosity in *Train to Pakistan* is not spontaneous, but it was mechanically shaped

by historical circumstances. Fear substitutes familiarity, and suspicion kills the trust. Hence, Singh's depictions of communal violence become a historical construction rather than a natural or unavoidable phenomenon.

The Train: A Potential Symbol of History

Train to Pakistan presents the train as the most important symbol in the text. It presents varied versions of routine, time, order and continuity. Equally, it operates as a composite historical signifier. However, its punctual appearance and arrival construct and run the village life. It functions as regulating everyday rhythms and symbolising stability. "The village had no clock. The only thing that showed the time was the arrival and departure of trains" (Singh, p.3). Moreover, "The arrival of the mail train was the signal for the villagers to begin their daily work" (Singh, p.4). From a New Historicist viewpoint, this early symbolism represents the illusion of historical continuity maintained by colonial infrastructure.

Nevertheless, the train undergoes a thorough symbolic change when the partition draws near. The train arrives and brings a change, marking the turning point. "A ghost train arrived at Mano Majra station... everyone in it was dead" (Singh, p.81). Singh designates the arrival of a "ghost train" filled with dead bodies (Singh, p. 81). This moment points to the breakdown of historical order and the appearance of mechanised violence. The train physically brings the national violence to the village; thus, history is literally brought to the village by the train. It becomes a transporter of death, transporting mutilated dead bodies across borders.

New Historicism accentuates the materiality of historical power. The train, a colonial technological object, contains the impersonal nature of historical violence, where political pronouncements are translated into the death toll. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2001) claim that material symbols expose how power circulates through institutions and technologies. Similarly, the train associates distant political decisions with local destruction, disintegrating the distance between state-level history and physical misery. The frequent arrival of trains full of dead bodies strengthens the recurring nature of violence and the dehumanisation essential in historical processes. Singh depicts history as harsh and indifferent, operating through systems that obliterate individual identity.

Violence: A Historical Constructed Phenomenon

One of the major contributions of *Train to Pakistan* to the partition discourse is its rejection of the primary notion of violence. It is generally believed that violence was committed in the name of religion and religious hatred; however, the New Historicist perspective represented in the novel stresses that violence was not the product of religious hatred and enmity but rather of the historical conditions.

Primarily, the residents of Mano Majra display moral hesitation and confusion regarding the violence. The very idea of slaughtering their neighbours is strange to them; however, the recurrent experience and exposure to the dead bodies, rumours of carnages and killings, and administrative silence slowly normalise the violence. Khuswant Singh believes that religion becomes "a badge of hatred instead of faith" (Singh, p. 134), historically transforming the role and meaning of religion in the social context.

According to Pandey (2001), the partition violence must be understood as a product of political uncertainty and state failure rather than primordial animosity and detestation. Violence erupts in the village Mano Majra as a historical force, restructuring consciousness and moral

boundaries; thus, Singh's narrative is closely aligned with the argument. It validates how ideology functions at the level of ordinary life. The villagers' moral universe is reshaped by historical discourse, presenting how history disciplines emotions, loyalties, and actions. Therefore, violence erupts as a consequence of historical power rather than a deviation from it.

Fear, Silence, and the Normalisation of Violence

The portrayal of fear and silence as historical phenomena in *Train to Pakistan* equally needs New Historicist considerations. After the eruption of the violence, silence replaces speech in Mano Majra. The residents of Mano Majra stop sharing their sorrows and suppressing their anguish, and they become the victims of suspicion. "The village was stilled in a deathly silence" (Singh, p. 86). The fear induces collective paralysis, and silence shadows peace, and obliterates the solace system; in fact, it shows a shock. While representing the atmosphere, Singh writes, "the air was heavy with fear" (Singh, p.120). This metaphor, by re-historicising the text, shows that fear becomes material and a physical thing.

When rumours spread far and wide, "No one asked a question. No one wanted to know too much" (Singh, p. 118). This is a very significant moment because violence becomes normalised as inquiry stops. Hence, silence protects survival. This shocking and sudden silence is not merely psychological but historical. According to Butalia (1998), silence is an essential feature of the partition memory, produced by partition trauma and social pressure. Singh anticipates this aspect by demonstrating silence as a communal response to an irresistible historical rift. According to the New Historicist lens, silence works as a discursive absence which the national history dully refuses to communicate. The novel focuses and emphasises the absence by foregrounding atmosphere rather than explicit narration, strengthening the idea that history often operates through what is unstated as much as what is documented.

Power, Authority, and Administrative Collapse

Train to Pakistan strikingly depicts the collapse of authority and power during the partition of the Indian subcontinent. It depicts that historical power is unevenly circulated, but it often fails when it is needed the most (Greenblatt, 1980). The collapse of power and authority can be viewed as the colonial officers, magistrates, and police officials are depicted as either absent, ineffective, inattentive or morally compromised. According to Singh, "The police were no longer a law; they were afraid of lawless men who could kill and escape. Authority had vanished" (Singh, p. 112).

The disintegration of colonial authority demonstrates that history is not just chronological but contingent and discursively produced. The withdrawal of British governance from such matters did not consequently allow independence to be a stabilising force; instead, it produced a power vacuum that permitted violence to erupt and flare up. According to Pandey (2001), the partition violence was worsened and aggravated by governmental administrative failures, delayed communication, and power struggles at the local level. Singh's account focusses the instability on the micro-historical level of the village Mano Majra, making it evident the moments and results of macro-political instability.

The novel also analyses the moral/ ethical failure of the people holding the power and authority. Instead of intercepting the conflict, the local leaders and magistrates often exploit fear and stand aside.

The novel also analyses the ethical failure of the people holding the power and authority. Local

leaders and magistrates, instead of mediating conflict, exploit fear or stand aside. By focusing on these failures, Singh establishes how historical authority is ideologically structured. It is legitimised through institutions but susceptible to failure when its social and ethical moral foundations deteriorate. This aspect of the novel is consistent with Greenblatt's affirmation that both history and literature are intertwined in circulating systems of power (Greenblatt, 1980).

Marginalised Voices and the Construction of Counter-History

New Historicism emphasises the marginalised voices which are excluded and ignored in the dominant historical narratives. *Train to Pakistan* focuses on ordinary villagers, refugees, and social outcasts rather than politicians or nationalist leaders at the top. This is very clear in depicting Juggat Singh, a notorious criminal, who dominates the novel and finally defines and justifies the ethical climax of the Singh's narrative.

The depiction of characters from the marginalised segment of society, such as Juggut Singh, Iqbal Singh, and the village women, symbolise the moral and social dilemmas imposed by historical circumstances. In this regard, Singh says, "He was a thief, a criminal, yet he knew more of humanity than all the leaders put together" (Singh, p.156).

By uplifting characters from the marginalised stratum of society, Singh attempts to construct a counter-history narrative recording what dominant histories do not focus on and highlight. New Historicism accentuates that literary texts expose the contradictions and blind spots of official records (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2001). In this instance, the lived experiences of ordinary people disclose the social, political, and ethical failures of the governance during the partition period.

In *Mano Majra*, the marginalised voices expose the slow socialisation of fear and complicity. At the very beginning, the villagers feel fear to partake in violence but are progressively pressured by circumstance, rumours, and institutional silence. Singh's emphasis on the personal lives of the characters underscores how history works shape ethics, fear, and loyalty not only outwardly but also psychologically.

Juggut Singh and Ethical Agency

Juggut Singh plays the role of the moral pivot of the novel. However, he is socially marginalised and categorised as a criminal; he displays unexpected and strange ethical bravery in the moments of historical violence. His eventual and decisive sacrifice averts the bloodbath of innocent Muslims in *Mano Majra*. This establishes the capacity for individual agency even under irresistible historical pressure. "He had given his life for them all, knowing that no one else could stop the train" (Singh, p.190).

From a New Historicist stance, Juggut exemplifies ethical deed within the limitations of historical determinism. It is generally observed that history produces chaos, but literature can exhibit moments of human moral intervention. Greenblatt (1980) emphasises that texts represent both the powerful structures of history and the possibilities for ethical resistance. Juggut's action demonstrates this tension: he cannot avoid history itself, but he can diminish its effects locally.

This presentation also challenges conventional historiography that privileges leaders, treaties, and political events. Singh conveys the focus to ordinary people whose decisions substantially form the course of events. While depicting this aspect, the novel constructs a micro-historical ethics, accentuating human responsibility in the context of structural violence.

Women and the Silenced Perspective

Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* sufficiently foregrounds the experiences of women characters who represent the form of marginalised voices, whereas the male characters dominate the narrative. In the village Mano Majra, the women experience both physical helplessness and social silence. Their experiences of suffering, including rape, displacement, and fear on the part of males, reflect the historical silencing of their voices during the partition. New Historicism draws attention to such absences, observing them as discursive gaps that disclose ideological priorities (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2001). By presenting what is not said and exposed, Singh discloses the gendered dimensions of historical violence. This aspect of the novel treats and highlights the careful record of history: official records hardly keep the record of their sufferings, but on the other hand, literature records and recovers such repressed experiences.

Intersections of Historical, Ethical, and Moral Forces

Train to Pakistan offers the intersection of ethics, morality, and historical forces, which is a frequent New Historicist theme. The characters exchange between self-interest, communal loyalty, and ethical obligation, often under great pressure. Singh has attempted to present morality as historically constructed and conditioned, formed by fear, power, and circumstance. The ethical complexity of the novel determines that history is not merely a chronological record of events; it is an experienced and morally charged phenomenon. The sacrifice of Juggut Singh, the intellectual deliberations of Iqbal Singh, and the hesitant compliance of the villagers jointly demonstrate how ethical judgements are inseparable from historical context.

This aspect of the novel aligns with Greenblatt's claim that literature focuses and holds the human dimensions of historical processes, representing both the structures of power and the capacity for resistance (Greenblatt, 1980). In *Train to Pakistan*, the strain between ethical choice and structural limitation represents the essential New Historicist concern: the interpenetration of human agency and historical forces.

Conclusion

Train to Pakistan establishes that history is not only a chronological record, but rather it is a living human experience. Singh constructs a counter-historical narrative that critically challenges dominant nationalist discourses by presenting micro-history, material symbols and marginalised voices. It is found that the communal violence is historically produced, authority collapses under structural pressure and ethical agency persists even in disastrous and catastrophic circumstances during the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

In response to the research question, it is found that *Train to Pakistan* reconstructs the partition by shifting focus from the national leader and political negotiations to a small imaginary village, Mano Majra, in order to represent the partition, violence and its effects at the very basic level. Instead of presenting, stressing, focussing and narrating national constitutional and national records and their development, which culminated in the creation of the nation, Singh presents the common and ordinary life of the village, interrupted by the political forces. Using this micro-historical approach, the novel establishes that the partition was not only a political decision disastrous catastrophe affecting the common ordinary people. The imaginary village Mano Majra turns out to be a localised site which turns out to be macro-history embodying

fear, displacement, rumour, violence and disturbance. The villagers' primary indifference to the political change shows the distance between the elite discourse and the lived experience and reality. Thus, the novel duly reconstructs the history from the micro level, stressing the lived experiences and the official archives.

Official archives and historiography usually take the partition as a political inevitability or the transition of power of administration. However, Singh's narrative challenges this by foregrounding moral ambiguity, chaos and human suffering. Singh does not stress the heroic national rhetoric, but presents fractured communities, administrative failure and collapse, and emotional and physical trauma. The novel focuses on the marginalised people rather than the political progression.

The novel complexly presents material and symbolic elements, such as the train, to reveal the mechanisation of the violence and the association between decisions at the state level and sufferings endured at the local level. Ethical agency, most clearly demonstrated by Juggut Singh, highlights the interplay between individual choice and structural limitations, emphasising the moral possibilities that continue even in the midst of the historical chaos. The viewpoints of the women's silence further accentuate the gendered dimensions of the violence, which duly shows the nature of the historical memory and the significance of literary texts in recovering these suppressed narratives.

Eventually, *Train to Pakistan* has challenged leading historical discourses by presenting history as a lived and morally charged experience. The novel works as a counter-historical document that not only archives events but also cross-examines power, discloses human susceptibility, and mirrors the ethical tensions inherent in the partition era. By assimilating micro-histories, symbolic depiction, and the voices of the marginalised people, the novel asserts the very important role of literature in constructing historical understanding, giving the readers both a vivid picture of the tragedies and horrors of the partition. It equally presents an enduring consideration on human morality, agency, and resilience at the time of the structural violence. *Train to Pakistan* establishes that literature is a constituent of historical understanding, as it is not simply a reflective phenomenon. The New Historicist reading of the novel constructs a counter-historical discourse that foregrounds the lived experiences of common ordinary people, marginalised characters, and especially women, while evaluating the failure of authority and the discursive production of communal violence.

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