

(Open Elective)

Unit-II Sadat Hassan Manto

About the author

Saadat Hassan Manto was born in a Kashmiri Sunni Muslim family on 11 May 1912 in Paproudi, a small village of the Samrala area of Punjab. Not much is known about his life and family except that his father was a judge in British India. In his lifetime, he published 22 short story collections and other writings. He wrote about social issues, especially he happenings during and after the partition of the newly-independent subcontinent into India and Pakistan. His stories were so daring that he was charged for obscenity six times in India and Pakistan. Manto was a prolific reader and writer. In 1934, he attended Aligarh Muslim University where he studied writing and literature. He became friends with an Urdu writer of great repute, Ali Sardar Jafri. It was during his college days that he started writing short stories. Between 1941 and 1943, he published short stories like 'Dhuan' (smoke) and 'Kaali Shalwar' (black trousers) that made him quite famous. With the partition of the subcontinent, Manto moved to Lahore, where he came across many literary groups which would often meet at the Pak 'Tea House, From 1950 to 1955, Manto wrote numerous short stories, plays, screenplays and personal essays that talked about undesirable social habits and practices in his society, political corruption and the negative approach of the government in Pakistan. Manto died of liver cancer on 8 January 1955. Manto was torn between two counties –India and Pakistan—and died a dejected man. His stories have been translated into English and many other languages.

Text of the Story

The two sides had not budged from their positions for several days now. Occasional bursts of fire-about ten or twelve rounds in a day-were to be heard, but never the sound of human shrieks. The weather was pleasant; the wind wafted across, spreading the scent of wildflowers. Oblivious to the battle on the peaks and slopes, nature was immersed in its necessary work-the birds chirped as before, the flowers continued to bloom, and lazy honey-bearing bees sleepily sipped nectar in the old, time-honoured way. Each time a shot echoed in the hills, the chirping birds would cry out in alarm and fly up, as though someone had struck a wrong note on an instrument and shocked their hearing. September-end was meeting the beginning of October in roseate hue. It seemed that winter and summer were negotiating peace with one another.

Thin, light clouds like fluffed-up cotton sailed in the blue sky, as if out on an excursion in their white shikaras. For several days now, the soldiers on both sides of the mountain had been restless, as no decisive action was taking place. Lying in their positions, they would get bored and then attempt to recite sheers to one another. If no one listened, they would hum to themselves. They remained lying on their stomachs or back on the rocky ground, and when the order came, let off a round or two. The two sides were entrenched in rather safe positions. The high-velocity bullets crashed against the shields of stone and fell to the ground. The two mountains on which the forces were ranged were of about the same height. Between them was a green valley-a rivulet wriggling like a fat snake on its chest. There was no danger of air raids. Neither side possessed artillery. Therefore, fires would be lit without fear or danger, and smoke from fires on each side would rise and mingle in the air.

At night, it was absolutely quiet. The soldiers on each side could hear bursts of laughter from the other. Once in a while, entering into this spirit, a soldier would begin to sing, and his voice would awaken the silence of the night. The echoes would then reverberate, and it would seem that the mountains were repeating what they had just heard. One round of tea had just been taken. The pine coals in the stone chul has had grown cold. The sky was clear. There was a chill in the air. The wind had ceased to carry the scent of flowers, as though they had shut up their vial of perfume for the night. However, the sweat of the pines, their resin, left an odor in the air that was not wholly unpleasant. The soldiers slept wrapped in their blankets, but in such a way that in a single movement they could arise, ready for battle. Jamadar Harnam Singh was on guard. When his Rascope watch showed that it was two o'clock, he woke Ganda Singh and told him to take station. He wanted to sleep, but when he lay down, he found sleep a distant proposition, as distant as the stars in the sky.

Jamadar Harnam Singh lay on his back and, gazing up at the stars, began to hum: Bring me a pair of shoes, studded with stars Studded with stars O Harnam Singh O Yaara Even if you have to sell your buffalo. Harnam Singh saw star-studded shoes scattered all over the sky, all a-twinkle. I will bring you shoes, studded with stars Studded with stars O Harnam Kaur O Lady, even if I have to sell my buffalo. He smiled as the song came to an end, and realizing that he

would not be able to sleep, he rose and woke up everybody else. The thought of his beloved had made him restless. He wished for some nonsensical chatter that would recreate the mood of the beloved in the song. The soldiers did begin to talk, but in a desultory fashion. Banta Singh, the youngest and the one with the best voice, went and sat on one side.

The rest, though yawning all the while, kept gossiping about trivial but entertaining matters. After a while, Banta Singh suddenly began singing "Heer" in a melancholic voice. Heer said the jogi lied; no one placates a hurt lover. I have found no one-grown weary, looking for the one who calls back the departed lover. A falcon has lost the crane to the crow-see, does it remain silent or weep? Happy talk and stories to entertain the world are not for the suffering one. Manto . Dog of Tetwal After a pause, he began singing Ranjha's reply to Heer's words: The falcon that lost the crane to the crow has, thank God, been annihilated. His condition is like the fakir who gave away his all, and was left with nothing.

Be contented, feel the pain less and God will be your witness. Renouncing the world and donning the garb of sorrow, Saiyed Waris has become Waris Shah. Just as abruptly as Banta Singh had begun to sing, he fell silent. It appeared as if the soil-tinted mountains also had taken on the mantle of grief. After a while, Jamadar Harnam Singh let out a mighty oath at an imaginary object, then lay down. Suddenly, in the melancholy stillness of the last quarter of the night, the barking of a dog began to resound. Everyone was startled. The sound did not come from too far off. Jamadar Harnam Singh sat up and said, "From where has this barking one come?" The dog barked again. Now the sound was much closer.

After a few moments, there was a rustling in the bushes. Banta Singh rose and moved towards the bushes. When he returned, he had with him a stray dog, its tail wagging. He smiled. "Jamadar sahib, when I asked him, he said, I am Chapad Jhunjhun." Everyone laughed. Jamadar Harnam Singh addressed the dog affectionately. "Come here, Chapad Jhunjhun." The dog approached Harnam Singh, wagging its tail. It began sniffing the stones on the ground in the belief that some food had been thrown there. Jamadar Harnam Singh reached into his bag, took out a biscuit, and threw it in the dog's direction. The dog sniffed at the biscuit and opened its mouth. But Harnam Singh leapt at it and picked it up. "Wait ... He could be a Pakistani." Everybody laughed at this. Banta Singh came forward, stroked the dog on its back, and said to Jamadar Harnam Singh, "No, Jamadar sahib, Chapad Jhunjhun is a Hindustani." Jamadar Harnam Singh laughed and, looking at the dog, said, "Oye, show me the identification!" The dog wagged its tail.

Harnam Singh laughed heartily. "This is no identification.. .All dogs wag their tails." Banta Singh caught the dog by its trembling tail. "The poor thing is a refugee!" Jamadar Harnam Singh threw down the biscuit, and the dog immediately pounced on it. Digging up the ground with the heel of his boot, one of the soldiers said, "Now, even dogs will have to be either Hindustani or Pakistani!" The Jamadar took out another biscuit from his bag and threw it towards the dog. "Like the Pakistanis, Pakistani dogs will be shot." "Hindustan Zindabad!" Another soldier loudly raised the slogan. The dog, which had just begun to move forward to pick up the biscuit,

suddenly grew frightened and backed off with its tail between its legs. Harnam Singh laughed. "Why do you fear our slogan, Chapad Jhun- jhun?... Eat... Here, take another biscuit!" And so saying, he took another biscuit out and threw it.

The soldiers talked on, and soon it was morning. In the blink of an eye, just as when one presses a button and the electricity generates light, the sun's rays flooded the mountainous region of Tetwal. The battle had been raging in that area for some time. Dozens of lives of soldiers would be lost for each mountain, and even then the hold of either side was tenuous. If they held the area today, tomorrow their enemies did; the following day, they recaptured it, and the day after that, their enemies did so. Jamadar Harnam Singh picked up his binoculars and surveyed the surrounding area. Smoke was rising from the mountain in front.

This meant that a fire was being stoked there too, tea was being readied, and the thought of breakfast was on the mind; undoubtedly, the other side could see smoke rising from Jamadar Harnam Singh's camp. At breakfast, each soldier gave a little to the dog, which ate it with gusto. Everyone was taking a keen interest in the dog, as if all wanted to make it a friend. Its arrival had brought with it an element of cheerfulness. From time to time, each one would affectionately address it as Chapad Jhunjhun and cuddle it. On the other side, in the Pakistani camp, Subedar Himmat Khan was twirling his impressive moustache-which had many a story in its past and was carefully studying the map of Tetwal. With him sat the wireless operator, who was taking orders from the Platoon Commander for Subedar Himmat Khan.

At some distance, Bashir, leaning against a rock, was holding his gun and softly humming: Where did you spend the night, my love. Where did you spend... As Bashir swung into the mood and raised his pitch, he heard Subedar Himmat Khan's stern admonition. "Oye, where were you last night?" When Bashir's inquiring gaze shifted towards Himmat Khan, he saw him looking elsewhere. "Tell me, oye!..." Manto. Dog of Tetwal Bashir turned to see what Himmat was looking at. The same stray dog, which, a few days earlier, had come to their camp like an uninvited guest and stayed on, was back, sitting a little distance away. Bashir smiled and, turning to the dog, began: Where did you spend the night, my love. Where did you... The dog began wagging its tail vigorously, sweeping the rocky ground around him. Subedar Himmat Khan picked up a pebble and threw it at the dog.

"Saala knows nothing except how to wag his tail." All of a sudden Bashir looked carefully at the dog. "What's this around his neck?" He started walking towards the dog, but even before he reached it, another soldier took off the rope tied around its neck. A piece of cardboard with something written on it was strung to it. Subedar Himmat Khan took the piece of cardboard and asked the soldiers, "Does any one of you know how to read this?" Bashir came forward, picked up the cardboard piece, and said, "Yes, I can read a bit." With great difficulty he spelled out "Cha-p-Chapad-Jhun- Jhun... Chapad Jhunjhun.. .What's this?" Subedar Himmat Khan twirled his legendary long moustache vigorously. "It must be some word, some..." Then he asked, "Bashir, is there anything else written there?" Bashir, immersed in deciphering the writing,

replied, "Yes, there is. This is a Hindustani dog." Subedar Himmat Khan began thinking aloud. "What does this mean? What was it you read? ... Chapad?... " Bashir then answered, "Chapad Jhunjhun!" One soldier said as if with great knowledge, "Whatever the matter is, it lies here." Subedar Himmat Khan thought this appropriate. "Yes, it does seem so!" Bashir read the text inscribed on the cardboard once more. "Chapad Jhunjhun. This is a Hindustani dog." Subedar Himmat Khan took up the wireless set and, placing the head- phones firmly over his ears, personally spoke to the Platoon Commander about the dog-that it had first come to them and stayed for several days, and then one night, it disappeared from their midst. Now that it had returned, there was a rope tied around its neck with a cardboard piece strung on it, on which was written-and this message he repeated three or four times to the Platoon Commander-"Chapad Jhunjhun. This is a Hindustani dog." But they too could not come to any conclusion.

Bashir sat on one side with the dog, speaking lovingly and harshly by turns, and asked it where it had disappeared for the night and who had tied the rope and the cardboard around its neck. But he did not get the answer he desired. When questioned, the dog would just wag its tail in response. Finally, in anger, Bashir caught it and gave it a violent shake. The dog whined in pain. Having spoken on the wireless set, Subedar Himmat Khan contemplated the map of Tetwal for some time. He then rose in a decisive manner. Tearing off the top of a cigarette packet, he handed it to Bashir. "Here, Bashir, scribble on this in the same creepy-crawly Gurumukhi as they have." Bashir took the piece of the cigarette packet and asked, "What should I write, Subedar sahib?"

Subedar Himmat Khan twirled his moustache and reflected. "Write... Just write." He took out a pencil from his pocket. Giving it to Bashir, he asked, "What should we write?" Bashir passed the pencil tip between his lips and began thinking. Suddenly, in a contemplative, questioning tone he asked, "Sapar Sunsun?..." Then, satisfied, he said in a determined way, "OK, the answer to 'Chapad Jhunjhun' can only be 'Sapar Sunsun.' They will remember their mothers, these Sikhras!" Bashir put the pencil to the top of the cigarette pack. "Sapar Sunsun." "One hundred percent... Write Sa-pa-r-Sunsun!" Subedar Khan laughed loudly. "And write further, 'This is a Pakistani dog!'" Subedar Himmat Khan took the cardboard piece from Bashir's hand, made a hole in it with the pencil, and, after stringing the rope through it, moved towards the dog. "Take this to your offspring!" All the soldiers laughed at this. Subedar Himmat Khan tied the rope around the dog's neck. The dog kept wagging its tail all the while.

The Subedar then gave it something to eat and, in a didactic manner, said, "Look, friend, don't commit treachery.. . Remember, the punishment for a traitor is death." The dog kept wagging its tail.. .After it had eaten its fill, Subedar Him- mat Khan picked up the rope, led it towards the sole trail on the hill, and said, "Go, deliver our letter to our enemies... But make sure you come back. This is the command of your officer, understand?" The dog, still wagging its tail, began walking ever so slowly along the trail that took a winding route into the lap of the mountains. Subedar Himmat Khan took up his gun and fired once into the air. The shot and its echo were heard on the other side, at the Hindustani camp, but they could not fathom its meaning. For some

reason, Jamadar Harnam Singh had been grumpy that day, and the sound of the shot made him even more irritable. He gave the order to fire. Consequently, for the next half hour a futile rain of bullets poured Manto. From each side.

Eventually sated by the diversion, Jamadar Harnam Singh called a halt to the firing and began combing his beard with greater ferocity. Having done that, he methodically bundled his hair into a net and asked Banta Singh, "Oye, Banta Singh, tell me: where has Chapad Jhun- jhun gone? The ghee didn't go down well with the dog." Banta Singh missed the implication of the idiom and said, "But we didn't feed him any ghee." Jamadar Harnam Singh laughed boisterously. "Oye, ill-read lout, there is no use talking to you." Meanwhile, the soldier on watch, who was scanning the horizon with his binoculars, suddenly shouted, "There, he's coming!" Everybody looked up. Jamadar Harnam Singh asked, "What was the name again?"

The soldier on duty said, "Chapad Jhunjhun....Who else!" "Chapad Jhunjhun?" Jamadar Harnam Singh got up. "What is he doing?" The soldier answered, "He's coming." Jamadar Harnam Singh took the binoculars from the soldier and began looking around. "He's coming our way. The rope is tied around his neck... but he's coming from there... .the enemy camp..." He let out a great oath at the dog's mother, raised the gun, aimed, and fired. The shot was off its mark. The bullet hit a short distance away from the dog, causing stones to fly up, and buried itself in the ground. The dog, fearful, stopped. On the other side, Subedar Himmat Khan saw through the binoculars that the dog was standing on the path. Another shot, and the dog started running the opposite way. It ran with its tail between its legs towards Subedar Himmat Khan's camp. Himmat Khan called out loudly, "The brave are never afraid... Go back!"

And he fired a shot to scare the dog. The dog stopped again. From the other side, Jamadar Harnam Singh fired his gun. The bullet whizzed by, past the dog's ear. The dog jumped and flapped its ears violently. From his position, Subedar Himmat Khan fired his second shot, which buried itself near the front paws of the dog. Frightened out of its wits, it ran about-sometimes in one direction, sometimes the other. Its fear gave both Subedar Himmat Khan and Jamadar Harnam Singh a great deal of pleasure, and they began guffawing. When the dog began running in his direction, Jamadar Harnam Singh, in a state of great fury, uttered a terrible oath, took careful aim, and fired. The bullet struck the dog in the leg, and its cry pierced the sky. The dog changed its direction and, limping, began running towards Subedar Himmat Khan's camp. Now the shot came from this side-just to scare it. While firing, Himmat Khan shouted, "The brave pay no attention to wounds! Put your life on the line ... Go back!" Terrified, the dog turned the other way. One of its legs had become use- less. On three legs it had just about managed to drag itself a few steps in the other direction when Jamadar Harnam Singh aimed and fired. The dog fell dead on the spot. Subedar Himmat Khan expressed regret. "Tch tch... the poor thing became a martyr!" Jamadar Harnam Singh took the warm barrel of the gun in his hand and said, "He died a dog's death."

“The Dog of Tithwal”

Summary

Begins with Indian and Pakistani soldiers entrenched in their positions along the nations’ border in a mountainous area. Neither side has the advantage in the war; no air forces are involved, and heavy artillery is not in their armaments. It is more a standoff than a battle. The peace of the mountains pervades in spite of the tension. Flowers are in bloom, birds are singing, and clouds are scudding lazily through the skies. Manto compares nature to a symphony that plays beautifully and the men with their guns to discordant notes.

The action begins in the Indian camp, with Jamadar Harnam Singh on night watch. At two O’clock, he wakes Ganda Singh to take over the watch and lies down to sing a romantic song about a pair of shoes with stars on them. Banta Singh joins in with a song about love and tragedy. The soldiers feel sadness creeping over them; perhaps they are reminded that life should be about love rather than about war.

The barking of a dog interrupts this pensive scene. Banta Singh finds the dog in the bushes and announces that his name is Jhun Jhun. The soldiers are in a good humor and pleased to see the dog, until Harnam Singh decides that the dog cannot eat if it is a Pakistani dog. The other soldiers think he is joking, but he then declares that all Pakistanis will be shot, even Pakistani dogs. The dog recognizes something in his tone and reacts with fear, which seems to please Harnam Singh. Another soldier responds by leading the men in a declaration of “India Zindabad!” (an expression of nationalistic fervor). Banta Singh makes a sign with the dog’s name on it, along with the information that it is an Indian dog, and hangs it around the dog’s neck.

Pakistani Camp

The next morning the dog appears in the Pakistani camp. It turns out that it had spent a few days with the Pakistani soldiers before it went to the Indian camp. Like the Indian soldiers, the Pakistanis are tired of the war that has been dragging on for months. As Subedar Himmat Khan twirls his moustache and studies a map of the Tithwal sector of India, Bashir begins to sing a song about where a lover spent the night. When the dog appears, Subedar Himmat Khan turns the lines of the song into an accusation against Jhun Jhun. “Where did you spend the night?” he screams. Bashir takes this as a joke and sings his song to the dog, but Subedar Himmat Khan throws a pebble at Jhun Jhun.

Bashir discovers the sign around the dog's neck. The soldiers ponder the sign to see if it could be in code; Subedar Himmat Khan reports the incident to his platoon commander, who ignores the report because he finds it meaningless. While the commander is correct that the report is not of tactical significance, it is implied that his failure to investigate indicates a lack of discipline in the ranks. The soldiers are bored and seem to feel that their presence here is meaningless.

The Pakistani soldiers rename Jhun Jhun and put a sign around his neck saying that he is Shun Shun, a Pakistani dog. Subedar Himmat Khan then sends Jhun Jhun back to his "family," urging him to take the message to the enemy. The dog trots off, and Subedar Himmat Khan fires in the air. Feeling bored, he decides to fire at the Indians. For half an hour, the two sides exchange fire, after which Subedar Himmat Khan orders a halt. As he combs his hair, he wonders where the dog has gone.

Death

When Jhun Jhun comes around the hill where the Pakistani are entrenched, it seems to infuriate Subedar Himmat Khan. He shoots at the dog, hitting some stones. Jhun Jhun continues to run toward him, and Subedar Himmat Khan continues to shoot at the dog. Meanwhile, Harnam Singh fires. The two opposing soldiers enjoy scaring the terrified dog until Harnam Singh wounds the dog. Still, Subedar Himmat Khan will not let Jhun Jhun return to the Pakistani camp. Khan tells the dog it is his duty to continue going toward the enemy camp. It is clear that, in Subedar Himmat Khan's mind, fanaticism has overcome any rationality.

When the wounded dog drags himself toward Harnam Singh, Jamadar Harnam Singh shoots and kills him. While the Pakistani Subedar Himmat Khan compares the killing to martyrdom, Harnam Singh says that Jhun Jhun "died a dog's death."

Characters

Bashir

A soldier in the Pakistani army, Bashir sings the song, “Where did you spend the night, my love, my moon?” Subedar Himmat Khan, fellow soldier, turns the song into an accusation of treachery against Jhun Jhun. Bashir is the soldier who reads the sign around Jhun Jhun’s neck that gives the dog’s name as written by the Indian army. Bashir is also called Bashirey.

Jhun Jhun

Jhun Jhun is a dog, trusting and very friendly. Unable to grasp the hatred between the Pakistani and Indian soldiers, Jhun Jhun greets both with equal enthusiasm. Jhun Jhun, perhaps demonstrating more wisdom than the men, treats them not as Indian and Pakistani, but as humans. Since the men have decided, however, that they are different, they expect the dog to choose sides. In his innocence, Jhun Jhun represents the refugees and other victims of the partition of India. His death is a reflection of their deaths; even though his death is in reality senseless, the soldiers treat it as if it belongs to a cause. Subedar Himmat Khan of the Pakistani army says that Jhun Jhun has been “martyred” because he was killed by a member of the Indian army.

Subedar Himmat Khan

As a member of the Pakistani army, Subedar Himmat Khan watches over the Tithwal sector in India in an almost possessive way. He has a large mustache that he twirls, perhaps demonstrating his vanity. With his fixation on what is Pakistani and what is Indian, Subedar Himmat Khan represents unreasoning divisiveness and hatred. He sends Jhun Jhun into the enemy camp, refusing to let him come back. By firing at the dog, Subedar Himmat Khan means to scare him. He thinks that Jhun Jhun’s terror is amusing and does not allow him to return even when the dog is injured. Subedar Himmat Khan demonstrates the disregard for life that comes with blindly following a cause.

Banta Singh

The youngest of the Indian soldiers, Banta Singh has a sweet voice. He sings a lovelorn verse that inspires sadness in the others. Banta Singh is also the soldier who finds Jhun Jhun in the bushes and gives him a name. He does not see the dog as an enemy, nor does he wish to make the dog take sides; he sees the dog as a “poor refugee.” He represents a viewpoint that is more

rational than that of his fellow soldier, Jamadar Harnam Singh, who wants to make the dog a point of contention between the two armies.

Ganda Singh

A member of the Indian army, Ganda Singh is the first to be awakened by Jamadar Harnam Singh, who is on night watch. He, along with the other soldiers, is affected by the melancholy words of Jamadar Harnam Singh's song.

Jamadar Harnam Singh

A member of the Indian army, Jamadar Harnam Singh is the first character introduced in the story. He is on night watch and wakes the others. As he lies down, he sings a sentimental song. In some ways, he serves as a counterpoint to Bashir, the soldier in the Pakistani army who also sings a song. With his Punjabi folk song, Jamadar Harnam Singh underscores the similarities between the groups and the futility of their fight. But he also represents fanaticism when, before feeding Jhun Jhun a cracker, he demands to know if the dog is an Indian. Jamadar Harnam Singh seems to lack compassion. He is the one who, for sport, shoots and injures Jhun Jhun. He is also the one who kills Jhun Jhun and then says that Jhun Jhun has "died a dog's death."

Themes in the Story

Darkness and Light

Manto uses images of darkness and light to demonstrate the difference between the men and the natural world around them. Darkness represents the men, blindness, and what is negative, and light represents nature, sight, and what is positive. During the night, the soldiers light huge fires in an attempt to ward off darkness. Yet they are able to overcome neither the darkness of night nor their own blindness. The biggest fires they can build can only illuminate a small patch of ground and do not enable them to see their enemies or to see within themselves. By contrast, Manto writes, “The morning broke ... as if someone had switched on a light in a dark room. It spread across the hills and valleys.” Nature is capable of producing an all-illuminating brightness that the men do not have.

Unity and Disunity

The Pakistanis and the Indians see themselves as separate from each other. There is no common human feeling between them, even though they both sing songs of romance and long for better days. The stream zigzagging down in the valley is like a literal line in the sand that emphasizes the division that the men are maintaining. Unlike the other elements of nature in the mountains, which move lazily, the stream moves furiously, like a snake? This

Important Questions

- Q. 1. Write either an alternate ending for the story or an epilogue that tells what happens next.
- Q.2. Compare and contrast the characters of Subedar Himmat Khan of the Pakistani army and Jamadar Harnam Singh of the Indian army. What do you think the author meant to convey through their similarities and differences?
- Q.3. Why did he draw these characters as he did?
- Q.4. Both songs in “The Dog of Tithwal” are about love. Why do you think the author chose to use songs in this story, and why do you think he chose songs about love?

Q.5. Research current relations between India and Pakistan. Prepare a report on your findings and include your thoughts about how the partition of India in 1947 continues to influence the relationship between the two countries.

The story seems to represent the energy the soldiers dedicate to lashing out at each other. They prefer disunity to unity. Other landmarks in nature also seem to draw attention to this disunity, such as the valley that separates the two hills behind which the opposing forces sit.

While the soldiers exhibit signs of common humanity, such as singing and cooking breakfast at the same time, they do not see or acknowledge these signs of underlying unity. Jhun Jhun, the one creature that ignores the fact that they are adversarial groups and points out their sameness, is put to death.

Warlike Humans versus Peaceful Nature

The mountains of Tithwal are calm and cheerful, but the soldiers are determined to kill. While it would be natural for them to adapt to their peaceful surroundings, the soldiers remain combative. At the time that Jhun Jhun enters the story, the soldiers have been inactive for some weeks, with no progress having been made on either side. The mood is one of dangerous idleness, a harbinger of the death to come. Though there is nothing to gain from exchanging fire, the opposing sides let off ritual shots daily. Unable to destroy each other, the soldiers destroy a harmless dog that is an element of nature. Because he is the only victim available, Jhun Jhun becomes a casualty of the soldiers' need to satisfy their bloodlust. Humankind's brutality is visited upon nature. It is not enough merely to scare the dog and make him run in terror; they need to destroy him. Though Subedar Himmat Khan first wounds Jhun Jhun, to him the dog's death proves that the Indian forces are killers. Jamadar Harnam Singh, whose shot kills the dog, seems, even so, to blame the Pakistani forces. The two sides do not recognize that both have acted cruelly and absurdly. There is no regret for the killing, as there might be in peacetime, because it is seen as an act of war.

The difference between nature and humankind is underscored by the fact that the seasons are changing as the story takes place. The change is occurring gently; the days and nights are mild. While some literature depicts the seasons in conflict, Manto's story shows that in nature even opposites such as summer and winter flow peacefully into each other. "It seemed as if summer and winter had made their peace," Manto writes. The men, on the other hand, although they are very much alike, cannot accept each other.

Style of the Story

Pastoral Setting

Pastoral literature portrays nature as being idyllic, peaceful, and free of the constraints and struggles of human society. Pastoral settings often allow human characters to find solace and peace that are not possible in a human-made setting.

The story is set in the mountains of Tithwal during temperate and pleasant days in late September. There is peace in the mountains, but, instead of escaping to the innocence of nature, the soldiers bring war with them. The men cannot enjoy the pleasant surroundings because they are not there to enjoy life but to kill.

Journalistic Style

Manto uses a direct, succinct style, almost like an unbiased reporter writing of an actual incident. There is no diatribe; Manto does not tell his readers what to think but lets the facts speak for themselves. His use of dialogue to tell the story further contributes to the journalistic style.

Tension and Foreshadowing

The contrast between the pleasant natural surroundings and the camouflaged soldiers creates tension and a mood of suspense that subtly foreshadow the tragedy to come. Tension builds as Manto describes the soldiers' boredom and melancholy. When the dog enters the Indian camp, Jamadar Harnam Singh does not greet him in a friendly manner, even though the other soldiers seem amused by his arrival. Jamadar Harnam Singh's mean treatment of the dog as a potential enemy is further foreshadowing. Subedar Himmat Khan repeats the harsh treatment in the Pakistani camp. As the story builds, the soldiers treat Jhun Jhun both as a potential enemy and as an informant being sent to the enemy camp—neither of which bodes well for the dog. The doom that has been hinted at throughout the story culminates when the dog, scrambling from one side to the other, can find no safe haven. Jhun Jhun's pitiful end is foreshadowed by the increasingly irrational and brutal behavior of the soldiers, which is emphasized by its contrast to their peaceful setting.

Historical Context

Partition of India

The historical context for “The Dog of Tithwal” is the Indian-Pakistani conflict that arose after the partition of India in 1947. The partition came after India won its independence from British rule on August 14, 1947. India was divided into two countries formed on the basis of religion, with Pakistan as a Muslim state and India as a secular nation ruled by the Hindu majority. Boundary issues and religious disputes brought about terrorism, war, and continuing disharmony between India and Pakistan. Even the imposition of official boundaries did not cause the conflict to cease.

The decision to partition India resulted in barbaric treatment of citizens who happened to be living in the “wrong” nation after the boundaries were drawn. By law, people were required to live in the new nation that “matched” their religion— Muslims in Pakistan, Hindus and Sikhs in India— regardless of where they lived before the partition. Sixteen million refugees streamed across the borders, hoping to make homes in regions entirely foreign to them. The entire region dissolved into disarray.

Since there was no experienced government to effectively deal with the chaos and violence, it fed on itself. In addition to more than half a million deaths, looting and rape were commonplaces. In particular, the Hindus and the Muslims used women to intimidate each other: “ghost trains” filled with severed breasts of women were sent from each country to the other.

Decades after the partition, Indian and Pakistan are still in conflict, and individuals and families are still affected by the material, psychological, and financial losses of partition and its aftermath.

British Rule

To understand the reasons for the partition, it is necessary to look at the history of India. Starting in the late thirteenth century and continuing for more than three hundred years, Muslims ruled the subcontinent under the Mughal Empire. Then India became part of the British Empire under Queen Elizabeth I. Over a period of three hundred and fifty years, the British consolidated their power in India. The British treated the Muslims and Hindus almost as if they were residents of two different nations and ruled them separately. Even in the census, the British categorized Indians according to religion.

As the British Empire expanded, so too did the land it held in India. By World War II, the British held a large area that was subject to Hindu and Muslim conflicts. The Muslims, who were not interested in learning English, were at a disadvantage to Hindus when it came to holding positions in government. The Muslims resented the fact that Hindus held better jobs, especially since, formerly, Muslims had been in power. Meanwhile, the Hindus had not forgotten Muslim rule. They tried to replace Urdu, a Muslim language, with Hindi as the official national language.

In an attempt to reduce conflict, British and Indian leaders decided to divide the subcontinent of India so that Muslims would have their own nation. The resulting partition, in 1947, carved Pakistan out of India.