



# HUMANISM IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL DIVIDE IN “SIKKA BADAL GAYA” (THE CURRENCY HAS CHANGED), BY KRISHNA SOBTI

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## ABSTRACT:

The story, “The currency has changed” is evocative and humanistic to the core and makes a profoundly simple point - the rulers divide, but are we divided really?

She does this in terms of her central character, her evocative style, and her unique narrative technique and all these blend into a short “slice of history”, but in a village and among ordinary people, driving home the lesson, the ageless query- are we really divided?

If not, why do we do that? By that very presentation of the absurd horror of partition times, in a short story, she drives home the point of humanism, simply and heartbreakingly.

In the following, we will focus on each of the aspects that make this story a masterpiece of literature, that shows an inescapable mirror to the world.

**KEYWORDS:** Purity of heart, political climate of divide, Humanism, humanistic.



## THE CENTRAL CHARACTER

The power of the story fully rests on the central character Shani. She has a sensitivity, a love and an ability to express her love and to feel it always. She is pure at heart, and yet she is not naïve. She is well aware of things, but she cannot but feel, as a human, and her purity of heart makes her feel things and her actions and her unwavering love never falters, even when all around her, people have forgotten that.

The setting, the partition of India into two, thus brings out her character simply, quietly, purely and with great humanism, so much so that all around her feel the shame of that partition, the senseless divide, and the “currency change”.

From the start of the story, Krishna Sobti presents her Shani as a person who feels things. At the start of the story, she writes evocatively of how Shani feels about the river, the fields and her surprise that nobody was there. We follow her as she feels inside, of her feelings for the “gold” that is her land, so fertile and she feels a gratefulness for that land, her land, her home.

Then we see her sharing her thoughts and feelings with the young Shera whom she had brought up and his wife Husaina, and the writer here reveals that Shera had actually wanted to kill her and loot her palace.

She is led to leave the land she loves, and she is shown to lose her energy and become a corpse like figure and by her very sensitivity, we see all realising the shame of this “currency change” and finally, we see that Shera bends and touches her feet, and the final scene when she has to leave, and the terrible question she asks - why?

Why do men divide? Is it for Currency?

By her very sensibility and openness of love, Shani drives home the point of the horror when men forget humanism and become beasts, and yet the humanism is there inside.

The story, like all great masterpieces of literature, does not preach but shows and by showing this way, sensitively and deeply, it becomes a profound lesson for life.



## THE STYLE

The language and the style Krishna Sobti uses is completely as spoken by the real life people around her and yet she gives her words, unashamedly, the full power of pure expressions of feelings and thoughts.

Her style blends with all her characters, and they all come alive and we can feel and experience them directly. The power of her style and expressions with simple everyday language doubles the impact of her theme of humanism in a political climate of divide.

She also is always describing nature and the connection of human beings to nature.

In this story, we see Shani 's feelings for the river, the sky and the sand beside the river. We also see and read and feel her expressions for her fertile fields that she loves too much. The words describe the surroundings fully, and the story is felt and experienced and obviously does not preach.

Her style too is profoundly humanistic.

## NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN THE STORY

The narrative technique of Krishna Sobti is simply brilliant. She is like a photographer, following with her lens, her central character, as she moves from the river in the morning, where nobody is there, and then her seeing the fields, and finally her meeting Shera and the rest who escort her away from her land. In one SHORT story she brings OUT all that can be said, like a laser that cuts through with sharp power and one marvels at HOW MUCH CAN BE HEARD AND SEEN IN ONE SCENE.

This is the power of the short story in the hands of the genius that is Krishna Sobti.

This story finally leaves an indelible impact and this is the humanism – **to see the world in every event, the “ONE in the MANY”.**

## CONCLUSION

So, as we can see, all these elements combine and fuse and rise to a level of humanism that touches any reader who reads it and like a song, it can be visited and revisited, as a guide to life, and her short story is a testament to how powerful and central is literature to bring about humanism.

A short story with the highest level of humanism is in itself an agent of humanistic improvement and change in any age, which has a mix of the good and bad, and such a mirror is needed to show us our own shame and bring about peace.

This short story is thus not only about that particular event or age but for today and forever, as human beings evolve into higher levels in the world.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sikka badal gaya (short story) by Krishna sobti.

