

Multiculturalism in Kushwanth Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

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Abstract

Train to Pakistan presents the tragic tale of the partition period in Indian history. It has devaluated humanistic values and principles and created a sense of hatred, antagonism and hostility among different communities and cultures. This is an analysis of *Train to Pakistan* from the socio-political perspective of multiculturalism. The decision of imprudent and selfish politicians to divide the country on religious grounds had far reaching consequences on the inhabitants of India. The partition was an outcome of communal politics, the seeds of which were sown in the late nineteenth century. Some political leaders were very much eager to see the division of the country because they wanted to satisfy their political thirst to be a first Prime Minister of the nations formed.

Keywords: ethnically, multilingual, pedagogic, hybridization, escalation, prejudice, imprudent.

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Multiculturalism can be defined as outlook of thought in political philosophy about the correct way to respond to cultural and religious diversity. It encompasses same respect to the different cultures in a society, promotion of the maintenance of cultural diversity and is characterized by preservation of the distinctiveness of multiple cultures that co-exist in the same society.

Culturally, linguistically, religiously and ethnically India is the most diverse countries in the world.

Translation plays a prominent role explicit or implicit intentional or spontaneous in more language, differentcultural communication between the people of India, as well in the construction of using several languages, ethnic groups in Indian literature.

Multiculturalism appears to be in gradual crisis. It has been blamed for lessen the effectiveness of national identity, diluting social unity, creating ethnic ghettos and cultural fragmentation.

Multiculturalism has two implications. First it presents cultural as a sight of disputing or arguing and attempting, in which the outer limit is engaged in a serious disagreement with the centre, setting off the free play of different elements.

The term multiculturalism is prevalently utilized as a descriptive word in the phrases like multicultural training, multicultural curriculum and multicultural society.

Bhikhu Parekh says in his book *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*,

It is neither political doctrine nor a philosophical issues but actually a perspective on as a way of viewing human life. Increasing cultural diversity focuses on the promotion of rights for different religions and cultural groups. The rights of cultural groups form basis for Multiculturalism.(Houndmills:Macmillan, 2000.)

Multiculturalism is a late twentieth century artistic, pedagogic and socio-political development. It is a belief of the system that considers all societies commendable and issues of study. The issues of multiculturalism has been comprehensively talked about on both logical and open level.

Rohinton Mistry's novels through his views on people with different nationalities, languages, religious and a place of minorities in it. Set in Bombay in 1971 against the background of the Indo- Pakistan war and the birth of Bangladesh as a nation. Suffering is the remarkable multicultural perspectives presented in *Family Matters* by Rohinton Mistry. *Family Matter* is the platform of ethnocentric and minority discourse aspects. He tries to focus dimensions of multiculturalism through Yezad's sufferings in life, worries, alienation, and insecurity in the novel.

Multiculturalism conceives cultures as its own affairs it opens up a space for constant "discussion" between them and even ease the process of hybridization. Between cultural forms there is the clearing in which interpretation takes place. It is based on realism and its subject matter centers around issues related to race, class and gender. It share some ordinary themes in the writings of authors from many different cultures like finding personal identity in the society

which symbolize multiculturalism, forming individual and cultural values, family relationships, childhood games, folklore of the culture, social pressures: recompense and punishments, religious background, environmental adaptations that resulted from historical factors, socio economic changes, contact with others.

Multiculturalism has acquired a broad multiplicity and scope in the areas of politics, sociology and humanity. It realizes the cultural diversity and respects the views of various identities at individual, cultural, ethnic, religious and national levels. In Kushwanth Singh's works multiculturalism supports in keeping social harmony through love, tolerance, acceptance, recognition and adjustment of different culture. It attempts a close review of Indian novel in English in the light of both support and violation of the ideology of multiculturalism in Kushwanth Singh's novels.

According to new historicism,

Some advocates of cultural studies orient their writings and
Teaching towards the explicit political end of reforming the existing
Power- relations which they claim, are dominated by a privileged
gender, race, class or ethnic group. (Abrams: 1993:254)

In a sense, all communities and cultures were quite accommodative and open to accept the fact of social diversity, one of the principles of multiculturalism.

A culture of content turns to a culture of discontent, hatred and violence.

Anger alternates affection. Love alternates with hate and desire
alternates with greed. The traditional, social and religious
stratification is overridden by the communal feelings. (P.K. Singh 2005:40)

Multiculturalism admits the freedom of all members of society which helps them to conserve, increase and share their religious and cultural heritage. It does not differentiate between the majority and the minority on the basis of numerical strength. Religion shapes a culture's system of belief and practices, whereas culture transmits religious values and beliefs from one age to future generation for the escalation of social health.

After all, every religion preaches universal values of equality, love, respect, devotion and peace. Here unity in religious diversity is considered to be a positive step towards promoting the principles of multiculturalism, which support nature's basic law of equality.

In Kushwanth Singh's *Train to Pakistan* points up how partition gives birth to miseries, sufferings and develops a sense of cultural rootlessness among the people. Until the partition, both communities had adopted a slogan of multiculturalism. He wants to advocate the significance and strength of the communal identity, a collective social strength.

Multiculturalism recognizes values of communal identity which is to be protected and respected for maintaining social peace and integrity. It always promotes the value of identity may be communal, religious or cultural. In his novel intercommunity love affair is sign of social change. In a sense, Jugga and Nooran have cherished the values of multiculturalism.

Therefore, Kushwanth Singh ends his narrative with the noteworthy act of Jugga's saving the lives of thousands of Muslims. Multiculturalism, an accommodative social policy, encourages the principle of unity in diversity in multicultural societies and discourages hatred and violence based on ethnicity and religion.

The novel *Train to Pakistan* opens with a depiction of the multicultural setting of Mano Majra. Mano Majra is a tiny place. It has only three brick buildings, one of which is the home of

money lender Lala Ram Lai. The other two are the Sikh temple and the mosque. The socio-cultural diversity encourages a healthy competition between them. Khushwant Singh depicts this kind of socio-religious unity of diversity. It seems to promote the values of an egalitarian society, one of the ideals of multiculturalism.

In some multiculturalism societies, religious diversity and cultural plurality often lead to communal clashes, but in Mano Majra, especially Sikhs and Muslims consider each other as brothers. Thus multiculturalism is not only an ideological theory, but it has concrete expressions in social life. The openness and the readiness to acknowledge and accept the 'other' is a character trait of most of inhabitants of Mano Majra. The multiculturalism reflected in the opening part of the novel is a positive step towards fostering the value of social integrity and peace.

In a multireligious and multicultural India, 'monotheism' is not a proper step to envelop all social problems related to caste, culture, gender, equality and human rights. It values dialogues between communities and cultures.

Multiculturalism recognize the values of communal identity which is to be protected for maintaining social peace and integrity. In *Train to Pakistan* the final part, tolerance and respect to communal differences and identities are replaced by hatred, intolerance, prejudice and antipathy only because of a single divisive called partition. Perhaps Khushwant Singh wants to point up the value of multiculturalism, so he ends up his narrative with an elaborate description of Jugga's sacrifice for non-violence, love, humanism and respect to all. He also presents the disfigured socio-religious face of India.

Conclusion

To sum up , the second line of analysis shows how the ideology of multiculturalism gets disrupted and destroyed and destroyed after partition. Partition not only spoils the peaceful life of the messes but also dislocates them from the soil where they were born and bred. Therefore, multiculturalism grew weaker and diluted in post- partition period.

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