
Multiculturalism In Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

Rinaldi Amalraj. S¹, Research scholar, Department of English, Government Arts College, (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University), Karur, Tamilnadu, India, Mail: rinaldiamalraj@gmail.com, Mob: +91-8870882011

Dr. S. Alexander², Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, Government Arts College, (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University), Karur, Tamilnadu, India, Mail: alexjense01@gmail.com

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Abstract:

The socio-cultural thought of diversity in society promotes multiplicity and its scope in politics, education, workstation, and social living. The multiplicity of culture and its diversification made people realize their identity in various forms through gender, religion, caste, and community. This paper expatriates on how multiculturalism supports keeping social harmony through love, tolerance, acceptance, recognition, and adjustment in various cultures. It is an attempt at a detailed review of an Indian novel in English within the strata of multiculturalism through the designated novel Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, social harmony, love and peace, tolerance, and Khushwant Singh.

Introduction

The multicultural school of thought is outlined as the belief that it is vital and sensible to incorporate folks or concepts from many alternative countries, races, or religions in step with 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 democratic country like India, the government is responsible for protecting the human rights of all communities and marginalized groups and their ethnic identities. The marginalized people struggle for their human identity with the dominating mainstream majority. We believe in unity in diversity, diversity of culture, race, caste, creed and language. As Sujata Patel

rightly observes:

The post-independence India experienced varied identity formation due to industrialization, urbanization, globalization, and expansion of information technology. The identities that emerged were based on discrete received categories such as religion, Caste (Jati), Class (Varna), gender, and sex. (Patel: 1995:235)

INDIAN MULTICULTURALIST LITERATURE

Indian writers cannot get the Indian surroundings out of their system. The place a writer lives in, the community he's up-to-date with, and the considerations that affect his country all at once confirm the attributes and temperament of the author. The reminiscences of the country of origin area unit are unforgettable. They are persistently troubled to look for associate degree identity that there is a combination of those migrant cultures with the thought of interference as a "melting pot." At the same time, the migrated individuals produce literature to articulate their expression and identity. Therefore, it has become a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural-cultural-spiritual society, and this has helped them maintain their unity in diversity. The concept of division through geo-political national entities has become ineluctable, the minorities worrying about his or her prospects below the larger ethnos. Gates remarked that the philosophical system worries with representations, not of intrinsic variations but of cultural identities.(Gate:1993:6)

The Partition of India in 1947 is the greatest occurrence in history, which challenged India's integrity and democracy. This has been a clash between Hindus and Muslims or Christians and Hindus.

MULTICULTURALISM IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S *TRAIN TO PAKISTAN*

In this novel, Khushwant Sing presents an image of the horror of killings, pillaging, and raping that followed the Partition of India. This novel aims to liberate individuals from their slender loyalties to caste, community, and politics and awaken their conscience to measure a truly human life upholding the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Mano Majra may be a little place on the banks of the Sutlej stream. There is a unit of three brick buildings: the house of money-lender Lala Ram Lal, the Sikh temple, and the house of worship. There are solely seventy families within the village. Lala Ram Lal is a solely Hindu family. The other in that area are either Sikhs or Muslims in equal numbers. In both communities, people had lived there in peace for years. Life in Mano Majra is peaceful, apart from the dogs barking at the trains that pass the night. Train to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan photos a touching description of the tragedy of Partition within the little Indian village of Mano Majra. The Sikhs are mostly landowners, the Muslims are their tenants, and also the district jurist may be a Hindu, namely, Hukam Chand. It is a model of peaceful life and interracial harmony. Into this peaceful location arrives a gang of dacoits who kill the native cash

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lender Lala Ram Lal. The police arrested the same old suspect, an area budmash, namely Juggat Singh. At the time of the incident, Juggat Singh was out of the village together with his Muslim beloved and made love with her. He has been thought to be the suspect because of his relationship with the dacoits. He was arrested along with Iqbal Sing, a political worker who wished to become a frontrunner in the village. They were taken to the station house at Chandunagar.

The easy lives of the individuals of Mano Majra were regulated by the trains. Partition and Independence did not affect them till the day they faced the dacoits and murder in its division. In Mano Majra, once a train from Lahore comes through, the bridge is found to be filled with dead bodies of Sikhs. However, the individuals of the village swear within themselves that this will not happen in their village, and they do not want to see their fellow friends and neighbors being the victims of hatred. After a few days, when the corpses were burnt in, another such train follows and enters the village. It is then that Mano Majra changes and the individuals are influenced by the outsiders and corrupted, so they show their true colors to their old friends and neighbors. Manjo Manra became a battlefield of conflicting fidelity, and with new refugees and mobs within the village, expatriate camps had come as a backup for the Muslims. Pak, Balochi, and Pathan troopers were evacuating them to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Mano Majra is suddenly frightened by the harsh reality of mass flight. The jurist wished to get rid of Muslims from the village. What had been a rumor is currently turned into a reality. Plots are hatched, rumors have been unfolded, and so death and destruction happened in different cities and villages near the village of Mano Majra.

The Train to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is of concern. Friends become foes, and equality of brotherhood and peaceful being disappear. In *Train to Pakistan*, the social environment reveals that Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims created the typical structures of Punjabi society in pre-partition India. Culture, language, and customs contributed to the more significant Punjabi identity, although at a definite level, faith divided them into communal identities. Another identity may be a tense emotional belongingness to the village that gave separate spiritual identities. Mano Manjra, the concentration of TrainTrains to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is typical of Punjabi agriculture. The Sikhs and the Muslims of the village lived peacefully until the day of Partition. They represent a communal harmony, identity, sense of belongingness, and sense of history that unites the people through many aspects of philosophical society. The writer, while portraying the tragedy of Partition, also looks to portray Punjabi attributes and identity. The Sikh people's trait towards their fellow beings precedes the rest.

"For them, truth, honor, and financial integrity are all placed lower down the scale of values than being true to one's salt, friends, and

fellow villagers. You could lie in court or cheat for friends, and no one would blame you."(38)

The central character of the novel is Juggut Singh, a Sikh martyr, and his sacrifice is driven to any or all community. Each community requires the Sikh Gurus and Muslim communities to live their lives for every alternative situation. Baksh is Mollah, additionally as Chacha of the village. Meet Singh, who could be a nonsecular head of the Sikhs. A mutual affection among the villagers maintains the sensation of friendliness, peace, and non-violence. Meet Singh failed to have any objection on the premise of faith. Muslims felt that India would be a haven of exile wherever there were no Sikhs and Hindus. The Sikhs successively were mad, and they perceived to trust folks that aforesaid Muslims had no loyalties. Mano Majra was currently not a peaceful place; however, this silence is suddenly disturbed:

The arrival of the ghost train, filled with corpses from Pakistan at Mano Majro, created a commotion. Sikhs and Muslims, who have lived together for centuries, are engulfed in Fratricidal conflicts. (Shahane: 1972:336).

The arrival of the ghost train brought a distinct change in the people's lives in Mano Majra; the entire village was divided. Muslims started talking about the atrocities committed by the Sikhs and Hindus in Patiala, Ambala etc. They thought that under the circumstances, it was better for Muslims to go to the refugee camps for their safety, and Sikhs would look after their properties till normalcy returned. It came as a big surprise to the Sikhs when they came to know that trucks had come to take the Muslims of Mano Majro to Pakistan, never to return. A sense of fear by the Muslims engrossed the Sikhs' minds. They say: We have looked upon the Muslims as our brothers and sisters. Why should they send somebody to spy on us? (105)

The news and rumors of Muslim atrocities on both sides of the border created deep unrest in both communities. Muslims are insecure about their future. The Muslims are determined to join the refugee camp. Some young Sikhs arrive in the village from Pakistan. They had a relatively safe journey, and the Muslims of Mano Majra were giving them food and shelter. Sikhs of the Village felt that the local Muslims had nothing to do with what Muslims of Pakistan did to Hindus and Sikhs there. Sikhs in Khaki dress challenge the villagers:

Never trust a Mussulman ... The last Guru had warned them that the Muslims had no loyalties. He was right. All through the Muslim period of Indian History, sons had imprisoned or killed their own fathers and brothers. (106)

The conflict between non secular groups doesn't let the Bharat society also; nearly every country only once or alternatively needs to face it. It's a belief of a social or non secular cluster that their faith is supreme. Sikhs attempt to assure the Muslims of their safety. Once the news of evacuation comes, it creates a lamentable

atmosphere. Their sense of belongingness and also the suffering of being uprooted from their land are mirrored through their words and tears. Hukum Chand is the judge and deputy commissioner of the district; he has a significant role in the dramatic stage of *Train to Pakistan*. Hukum Chand discusses the advanced things and the challenges before him; local departments are not able to manage communal violence. They plan to assign the duty to Juggut Singh and Iqbal Singh, whom they mended to be inactive on the charges of robbery and murder of Lala Ram Lal. The judge believes that these two persons are ready to influence the individuals and save the Muslims from being killed. As a result, Iqbal became a public servant, and Juggut Singh became infatuated with a Muslim woman known as Nooran. However, once they come back to understand the arrangement to attack the Train, Juggut, a zealous man of action, considers the security of Nooran. Once he is aware of the conspiracy that the Train is carrying his beloved Nooran, he prevents the accident by cutting the rope meant for killing the Muslims; however, he himself gets killed in this attempt. So, Juggut is criticized by the villagers; however, he succeeds in safeguarding the lives of Muslims. Therefore, he becomes a logo of affection for humanity. Juggat's act of affection and sacrifice silhouetted against the background of emotion and violence towers on the top of the communal variations and lends a desire to the overall purposelessness of life within the partition days. (Mukharjee: 1977:152). Khushwant Singh's close observations of two communities, Hindus and Muslims, towards their involvement in the Partition and riots. He portrays the truth of the case and the atrocious tragedy of both communities. Even though unity prevails within the village of Mano Majra, the outlook of communalism has descended on the village. Partition had led to division in the lives of individuals of a united Bharat. In spite of the peace of mind given by the Sikhs, the Muslims planned not to leave their village in India. Sikhs become aggressive once their pride is challenged. They say:

For each Hindu or Sikh, they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman, they abduct or rape, abduct two. For each home, they loot two. For each trainload of dead, they send over two across. For each road convoy that is attacked, attack two. That will stop the killings on the other side. It will teach them that we can also play this game of killing and looting. (129)

THE TRAIN AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN MULTICULTURALISM

The Train plays a central role in the lives of the Mano Majra people. The Train explores the time and dominant motifs within the novel. The Train keeps coming back in and going out throughout the novel. Trains regulate the time and lifetime of the village. Mano Majra wakes up once the Train runs through the bridge. The Train has alternative discourse relations, and it signifies that a group of individuals are united and headed for various objectives. During this regard, V.A. Shahane remarks: Religious diversities measure unity; therefore, it has been

overcome by the middle of supernatural and divine power and forces of division. Alternate life in Mano Majra is regulated by the passing of Trains across the bridge. (Shahane: 1972:78)

This novel is quite a strong story of crimes and horrors that followed Partition. The Train is an extremely suggestive image accentuating the importance of affection, peace, unity, discipline, and liberty. Therefore, in spite of the ethnic diversity, peace and unity exist in their lives till communal conflict and violence generated by Partition surround the minds of the villagers. Ethnic consciousness allows folks and harmony. Ethnic identity offers importance to justice and equality. An individual is aware of and doesn't believe in social discrimination on the premise of caste, race, religion, language, and so on. Ethnic consciousness expects folks of varied faiths and faiths to co-exist and board peace and harmony. Iqbal could be a welfare worker who found faith hollow and lacked ethnic values. He reflects: Take religion. For the Hindu, it means little besides caste and cow protection. For the Muslim, circumcision and Kosher meat. For the Sikh, long hair and hatred of the Muslim. For the Christian, Hinduism has a sola topee. For the Parsee, fire worship and feeding vultures. (149)

The religious leaders of all faiths can play a leading role in developing communal harmony. The religious leaders should meet regularly to discuss ways and means to ensure communal harmony. Religious leaders also need to preach regularly the merits of communal harmony. All the characters are rooted in Punjabi culture. Religion forms an integral part of their life. Religion may exercise social control over its members. The members must behave according to the norms or standards of the religion. Meet Singh expresses the Punjabi rules of religious ethics. He says to Juggut Singh:

It is just the Guru's word. If you are going to do something good, the Guru will help you; if you are going to do something bad, the Guru will stand in your way. If you persist in doing it, he will punish you till you repent and then forgive you. (151)

CONCLUSION

The end of the novel has become very poignant and dramatic. The Novelist has not highlighted any of his characters; he has narrated episodes and incidents that are plotted. At the time of the departure of Muslims, they went from house to house talking, crying, swearing love and friendship, assuring each other that this would soon be over. Another aspect of Partition is revealed as the Muslims were evacuated from the village. The leader talks of the atrocities caused to Sikhs by Muslims. Thus, the Novelist portrays the ethnic identity and harmony in Indian society as being interrupted by communal conflict.

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