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## **The Semiotic Analysis of film Pinjar in Relation to Multiculturalism in Indian Subcontinent's Society as Depicted in Cinema**

### **Abstract:**

A real portrayal of any society or geographic location at any point in time is what is meant when we talk about "culture." The Indo-Pakistani Subcontinent is home to a diverse collection of religious sects, linguistic subgroups, cultural practices, and ethnic communities. As a result of this, the Indo-Pak region is often referred to as having a multicultural society and the entire Indian subcontinent is founded on the principle that diversity should be celebrated. The film Pinjar serves as a representation of today's multicultural society because it shows people from a number of different ethnic groups and demonstrates their various cultures. This film or book has served as the primary source for the fundamental material that was compiled for this research article. The researcher came to the conclusion that the best way to do this data analysis was to make use of the Pierce model of semiotics. This was done in order to acquire credible results and locate the multiculturalism-related components that were present in the specific text and film in question. The appendix of the research report, which can be found at the very end, will direct you to the precise remnants of this particular term that can be found in the film that was picked and will provide them to you in the form of pictures.

**KeyWords:** Multiculturalism, Semiotics, Film Studies, Partition Of Indian Sub-continent, South Asian Cinema

### **1. Multiculturalism**

The concept of multiculturalism refers to the practice of preserving and promoting multiple distinct cultures within a single geographical area, nationality, or region. It is possible for it to be found even on a more localized scale, such as inside a single school, college, or organization; in certain cases, it may even be found within a single city. Because it represents both the group of people and the person as a foreigner, it has helped to enhance the connection that exists between an individual and the community that he or she belongs to on a cultural, religious, social, and moral level. It encourages people of a community to develop not only their capabilities to make a contribution to society, but also their lives and their statuses on economic, racial, and cultural fronts. This is done in order for the organization to make a contribution to society. A broad and varied range of meanings can be attributed to the concept of multiculturalism. Ranging from the rights of a single individual to the rights of groups of people and even the rights of races of people, multiculturalism upholds the principle that all people should have equal rights regardless of their religious beliefs, cultural backgrounds, or ethnic origins.

The fact that people of different races, ethnicities, and religions are afforded equal rights enables those individuals to tackle the problem of recognition in a manner that is tailored to their own tastes and aspirations. As a result, we can draw the conclusion that the state is involved in efforts to both promote and define diversity (Heywood, 2000). Each culture, whether it is eastern

or western, has its own interpretation of what multiculturalism means, which results in two unique and, in practice, incompatible strategies. In addition to placing an emphasis on diversity and the cultural singularity of each culture, it also places an emphasis on links and dialogue between different civilizations. In France, the General Agreement from 1993 included a provision that anticipated the establishment of a "Cultural exception." It was a stance that was taken in order to defend the local cultures that predominates among minorities or in small social groups (Kawar, 2012).

At the same time, Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz came up with the concept that would later be known as "transculturation" in the year 1940 (quoted in Duno- Gottenberg, 2011). Although Mary Louise Pratt (1991) used the word "the contact zone" to characterize cultural clashes and activities, this phrase actually reflects the relationship that exists between two different cultures. Both of these methods can be utilized to generate new cultural forms that incorporate a number of different cultural aspects into their expression. Another way to characterize it is as a dynamic and diverse perspective on intercultural interaction, social exclusion, transculturation, and the contact zone (Pratt, 1991).

Said (1979) asserts that after World War II, the term "multiculturalism" also came to be used to describe developments in the western hemisphere as a result of the numerous colonized countries on other continents beginning their liberation efforts. This was due to the fact that after the war, the term "multiculturalism" came to be used to describe developments in the western colonized countries fought for their freedom in order to bring about the downfall of the colonial system. As a direct consequence of these armed efforts for freedom, the idea of multiculturalism came into being, while at the same time, individuals developed racism based on colonialism. The notion that multiculturalism lies at the heart of the problem of racism is one that is often repeated. Those who were unable to assimilate into the relevant area or culture were initially cut off from one another, and later on, they were taught to harbor resentment towards one another on both an individual and a collective level.

In the meantime, tensions emerged in the classrooms as a result of the introduction of multicultural discipline programs, which gave minority groups with inferiority complexes a new topic to discuss. In the history of the globe, multiculturalism played an essential role in preserving the rights of other populations and acting as a driving force behind the growth of intercultural understanding. As a consequence of this, multicultural societies have continually become a reason for peace and tolerance among the public in contrast to those cultures that are devoid of diversity, as stated by Trotman (2002):

"As it "uses several disciplines to emphasize overlooked aspects of our social history, particularly the histories of women and minorities [and] encourages respect for the dignity of the lives and voices of the forgotten," multiculturalism is beneficial. This is because it "uses several disciplines to emphasize overlooked aspects of our social history, specifically the histories of women and minorities" (Trotman, 2002)."

The concept of multiculturalism can be interpreted in a dualistic manner; it works to reestablish the individualistic logic that underlies human life and intellect. The totality exists on the level of a more extensive cultural framework, in which all of the more specific cultural entities join together and contribute to an intelligent multicultural society. The term "multiculturalism" is a term that is used to describe the various practices that were implemented in numerous cultures during the 18th and 19th centuries in order to attain a de facto unified national identity. Multiculturalism is a term that is used to describe the various practices that were implemented in numerous cultures during the time period. All three of these countries have

a robust appreciation for cultural diversity and multi-culturalism, particularly Australia, India, and Canada.

## **2. The Summary of the film Pinjar**

Amrita Pritam is one of the most well-known authors to write in the Punjabi language. She is the author of a book called *Pinjar*, which is a portrayal of many different cultures and customs due to the fundamental premise of the book, which is the partition of the Indian Subcontinent. This book/film is a wonderful example of a multicultural society and of the contrasts that exist between religions. This is because the people in the book/film come from such a broad variety of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. As a result of the existence of three of the world's major religions—Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism—as well as Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, and other minorities—in the Indian Subcontinent, the society there is universally understood to be a multicultural one. The Indian subcontinent is home to a civilization that is multi-cultural because it is comprised of hundreds of various cultures; as a result, this research is being conducted to determine the features of this society with the use of the film *Pinjar* as a case study.

The story of a young Hindu girl who lived in the town of Amritsar and went by the name Puro is told in the book *Pinjar*. This takes place before the partition of the Indian Subcontinent. These were the days of the partition, and a few months later were when it was planned that the declaration of the partition of the Indian Subcontinent would take place. Her parents took the decision to go back to their home village in Pakistan in the hopes of meeting prospective husbands who would be suitable for their daughters. The neighboring community of Rattoval was home to a handsome and well-off young man by the name of Ramchand. Puro was engaged to marry him. It wasn't her goal to see Ramchand when she went to the pastures with her friends, but she ended up there anyhow. On these travels, Rashid, a Muslim man, developed feelings for her as their relationship progressed. Because one of Rashid's aunts had been kidnapped in the past by one of Puro's uncles, Rashid's family was out for revenge on Puro's relatives. Rashid selected Puro as the target of the kidnapping with the complete approval of his family because, in addition to seeking vengeance, he was already in love with Puro. The kidnapping was carried out with the full consent of Rashid's family. Puro, who had never been content with Rashid, was kidnapped by him one day when Rashid believed it would be a good opportunity because he thought it would be a good opportunity. In spite of Puro's pleas with Rashid for him to forgive her and set her go, he locked her up in a house all by herself and never came back. She was eventually able to escape, and she went to her parents' house, but they would not let her in because she had "dishonour" on her record. In addition to this, the fact that they resided in an area where the majority of the population was composed of Muslims caused them to be extremely fearful of being assaulted by Muslims. As a direct consequence of this, they were unable to do anything but turn their backs on their daughter. She was compelled to leave, and upon her return, she found that she had nothing to show for her time away. She was adamant about ending her life by jumping into the well, but when she arrived there, Rashid was already there. Despite her determination, she was unable to carry out her plan. He first showed her kindness by touching her arm, and then he brought her back to his house, where the two of them eventually got married. The next year, she became a mother by giving birth to a child. Rashid treasured her as his life partner and adapted to her presence in his life as they went through this time period. At the same time, Trilok and Ramchand had recently gotten married. During this time period, the Indian Subcontinent was finally granted its independence, which allowed for the subsequent creation of Pakistan and India. Puro and his family, along with the Ramchand family, were abandoned on the Pakistani side of the border; while Puro's other family members were

already well ensconced in Indian Territory. Tens of thousands of people were forced to cross the border as a result of the numerous violent incidents that occurred between Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus on both sides of the border. On their trip to India, Ramchand, his mother, and his sister Lajjo, who got married to Trilok, travelled in one of the caravans. Once the rioters attacked the caravan, the three of them were separated from one another, and Lajjo was taken as a hostage by the mob.

Puro remained a resident in the same community located in close proximity to the border throughout this time. It came to her attention that there was a caravan passing through the area of a community. She probably didn't even realize it, but she secretly hoped to see Ramchand again. She pretended to be a salesperson in order to approach the caravan and begin the search for Ramchand. Her goal was to locate him. After she had done searching him, he was aware that Lajjo had been kidnapped and that she was now married to her brother. She had informed him of this information before she had finished searching him. She was taken aback by the revelation and vowed to track down Lajjo in the next village as soon as she could. She put on a disguise and pretended to be a saleswoman so that she could travel around all of the nearby towns selling cloth. Eventually, she was able to locate her in one of the homes, at which point she made her way over to Lajjo to formally present herself. Lajjo was made aware of her plan, and she prepared her for it as best she could. She would leave after dark, and her spouse would pick her up at the destination. After coming to an agreement with Lajjo, she proceeded to persuade her husband to give her permission to remove Lajjo from this town and bring her to a more secure location. Lajjo was able to sneak out through the night and eventually located Puro's husband who was waiting for her by the well. After being transported to the other community by Puro, she eventually decided to become one of his followers. They engaged in lengthy conversations over their lives and devoted the entirety of the evening to discussing their respective families. The day before yesterday, Puro and her husband Rashid brought Lajjo to the Wagha border so that she might be taken care of by Ramchand and his family. It was there that she had her final interaction with Ramchand as well as her brother Trilok. She gently denied Trilok's invitation to accompany him on his trip to India and added, "Lajjo has come to you, so you should consider that you had also found Puro with her." Trilok's invitation to accompany him on his trip to India was graciously declined by her. She was able to adjust to her family and her children now that she was an adult and had reached this stage in her life. She resolved to herself that she would never again be the source of any sort of uproar. Due to the fact that she is a Muslim, she left Pakistan on this day, after spending her final moments with her family, in order to go to India with the rest of her family and other relatives (Pritam, 1950).

### **3. Semiotics**

According to Saussure, the field of study known as semiotics or semiology encompasses the investigation of signs and sign processes that deal with titles, resemblances, analogies, metaphors, symbolism, significations, and communication. This can also be referred to as the study of signs. Language is one of the sign systems that are occasionally mentioned in connection with other sign systems. Film also employs a sort of language that is made up of sounds and visuals, and given that it can be understood by everyone, this kind of language is universally accessible.

"Henry Stubbes introduced it to people who spoke English in 1670, using it in a very specific context to refer to the branch of medical study that focuses on the interpretation of signals. Both "semeiotike" and "semeiotics" were terms that John Locke used in his writings. By expanding the meaning of this third category and naming it "the philosophy of signs," he gave it a label that

was more precise to its nature. In addition, there is nothing else in the field of medicine upon which one may rely other than a precise understanding of medicinal physiology (which is based on observation rather than principles), semiotics, therapeutic procedures, and tried (as opposed to exaggerated or demanding) pharmaceuticals (Locke, 1714).

Ferdinand de Saussure was of the opinion that social psychology and general psychology may potentially be integrated into a single scientific discipline in order to investigate the role that signs play in social life. The study of signs and the rules that govern them is referred to as semiology, and it focuses on investigating both aspects of this topic (Chandler, 2007).

In the nineteenth century, famous logician Charles Sanders Pierce (1839–1914) utilized philosophical reason to explain the process of semiosis as a triadic process consisting of a sign, an object, and an interpretant. This description was written in the context of the nineteenth century (Bergman & Paavola, 2003). It is reasonable to assume that semiosis would wish to guard and preserve its own interests. The interpreter does not need to be physically adjacent to the sign in order to immediately communicate the normal meaning of the sign. The object, on the other hand, can be anything from a quality or truth to a rule or even something that has been made up. In addition to signs that were man-made, linguistic, and symbolic, his semiotic also included features and responses.

“The “founder” of contemporary linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), offered a dualistic understanding of signs. According to this interpretation, the signifier is the form of the word or phrase spoken, and the signified is the mental concept. This interpretation can be found in the works of semioticians. It is essential to keep in mind that Saussure believed that the meaning of a sign was entirely arbitrary, which means that there was no necessary link between the sign and the meaning. This association between the sign and the meaning was what he meant by the phrase “there was no necessary link between the sign and the meaning.” In this aspect, he diverges from past philosophers who held the view that a signifier and the thing that it referred to must have some kind of connection with one another (Semioticians and Their Work, 2012).”

The two constituents that make up a sign are known respectively as the signifier and the signified. The word “signed” refers to a collection of speech sounds, but the term “signified” refers to an idea or notion. According to Peter Berry, language does more than just record or name the world; rather, it actively shapes and forms it. It is essential to keep in mind that Saussure held the belief that the meaning of a sign was completely up to the interpreter's discretion, and that there was no obligation that a sign correspond to its meaning. Semiotics, according to the definition provided by the philosopher Charles Pierce, is a proper theology of signs and is closely tied to logic. On the other hand, semiology, according to the definition provided by the linguist Saussure, is the scientific field that investigates the function of signs as an element of social life. According to his belief, a sign can be found in every concept (Liszka, 1996).

#### **4. Multiculturalism in Novel/Film**

As a result of the fact that people who practice a wide variety of religions and come from a variety of cultural backgrounds can be found on the Indian subcontinent, the society that exists there is referred to as a multicultural and multi-religious society. The concept of multiculturalism is more than just a term; rather, it is a link that allows individuals from different backgrounds to communicate with one another and maintain a sense of community in a certain region of the world. According to Alexis de Tocqueville, even while it is highly vital for man as an individual that his religion should be true, this is not the case for society. There is nothing for society to be

afraid of or to look forward to in the next world; what is most important for society is not that its inhabitants should profess the one genuine religion, but rather that they should profess religion in general (Deneen, 2009).

The population of the Indian subcontinent was predominantly Hindu, with Muslims making up the second largest majority. After Muslims and Hindus came Sikhs, Christians, Jews, and followers of other religions; as a result, the landmass that made up the Indian subcontinent was considered to be home to a multi-national, multi-religious, and multi-cultural society. It is for this reason that the languages, faiths, arts, music, architecture, and practices that people adhere to differ from one region of the landmass to another across the entire continent. It was further segmented into a large number of subcultures, each of which had their own set of traditions that had been followed since ancient times. According to Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States of America and a socialist, we become not a melting pot but a magnificent mosaic of individuals with various beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, and different dreams. We are not a melting pot (Hurn, 2013).

The multicultural society is always a way of union among the people, belonging to different cultures and traditions within a society. However, sometimes these multi-cultural societies become a reason of anarchy among the people to make them think about the separation and the freedom from the dominant group. People who belonged to different cultures and religions demanded a separate homeland based on the fact that they are distinct from one another in terms of their identity, which was facilitated by the multiculturalism that existed on the Indian subcontinent at the time. This was another factor that contributed to the breakup of the country. There is a clear representation of such a cosmopolitan civilization in the film *Pinjar*, and one can draw inspiration from a wide variety of different religions and cultures while watching it. Before the partition, during the political possessions, demonstrations, and gatherings of the people, the signals of multiculturalism are able to be clearly drawn out of the film.



**Figure I**

It is quite easy to observe a multicultural society when we look at (Figure: I). On the very first row, there are two boys who identify as Sikhs, a Muslim boy in the middle, and then two boys who identify as Hindus on either side of him. In just this one picture, people representing all of the major religions that are practiced in the Indian subcontinent can be seen participating in a political march.





**Figure II**

It is clear from the (Figure: II) that Trilok, Puro's brother and a member of the Congress Party, is present. He is currently affixing some leaflets to the wall in favour of the Indo-Pak unity, which is not to split the Indian Subcontinent into two pieces as the primary objective of the Congress Party, but rather to maintain the Indo-Pak region as a single, contiguous territory.

The territory that comprises the Indian Subcontinent is frequently referred to as the "multi-religious" due to the large number of sacred Shrines and tombs containing the remains of many pious saints belonging to a variety of religious traditions. People from all walks of life, regardless of whether they adhere to Hinduism, Sikhism, or Islam, can be found paying respects at the shrines and tombs of their respective religion's most revered figures throughout the entire region. As a result, people have a strong desire to do so, and they do so regardless of whether or not they consider themselves to be particularly religious.



**Figure III**

Rashid may be seen in Figure III paying a visit to a shrine, while in the background, Sikhs can be heard reciting a religious hymn to themselves. The depiction of a multiethnic community that can be seen here is unmistakable.



**Figure IV**

A bus may be seen travelling through a community just before the period of partition in the very next picture, which is referred to as Figure: IV. It is possible to make assumptions about the identities of the passengers based on the clothing they are wearing. A representation of a society that is multi-cultural can be seen in the fact that people of different religions are riding together in the same vehicle.

In comparison to the film, there are not nearly as many instances of multiculturalism to be found in the text of the novel. In the beginning of the book, on page one, there are a few sentences that hint at diversity, but there is no information on any kind of meeting that includes Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus.

As she was out, she couldn't help but feel self-conscious about the possibility that her in-laws could recognize her. Nonetheless, at this time in this community, residents belonging to a wide variety of religious sects were living together peacefully (Zaman, 2009, pp. 788-872).

The multiculturalism of that particular community is exemplified in the previous example's final line; this states that members of a variety of religious sects were leading the procession.

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