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Diasporic Diversion In Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance

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Abstract

The story takes place in the urban environment of Dina Dalal's little, claustrophobic apartment amid Bombay's teeming metropolis. An effort has been made to examine the various diversions that primarily occurred through diaspora such as residential diversion, professional diversion, political diversion and religious diversion in particular underprivileged people from the Parsi community especially in Bombay and the atrocities committed against two untouchables from a village. Mistry has used four major characters with different histories to explore various diversions in the novel A Fine Balance. .

Key Words: Diaspora, diversion, residential diversion, professional diversion.

INTRODUCTION

The origin of the word 'diaspora' is from the Greek 'dia' (through) and 'speirein' (scatter). As a result, it has created a feeling of dispersion in space. The word was first used to refer to the Jewish community, which had been homeless since the Biblical time and had been scattered over the globe and was subject to injustice and discrimination. Jews are referred to as being in the diaspora. Some European country began the colonisation phase, which eventually gave rise to the slave trade, in which people were enslaved and forced to work in far-off colonies like livestock. France and Holland also abolished slavery after it was outlawed by the British government in 1833–1844. The indentured labour system was introduced, and colonisers removed significant numbers of people from colonies and sent them to other locations where they were treated like slaves. Because of major political changes, the past century experienced considerable population dispersal and displacement. The movement of people, products, ideas, and cultures around the world has accelerated as a result of globalisation, which has been driven by free trade, greater money flows, and new communication, information, and travel technology. There was no forced immigration during the second wave. The so-called "trade diaspora" was developed when business-minded Gujarati citizens migrated to other African nations, like Kenya and South Africa, in order to build

businesses there. Recent years have seen a migration of professionals and businessmen to First World nations like the UK and the USA, as well as trained and semi-skilled labour. After a pause, this pattern has resumed in modern times as the third wave of top professionals migrating to wherever they could find greener pastures. The term "diasporic communities" refers to a group of people who have moved away from their native country for reasons such as seeking political or economic exile, seeking employment, or avoiding a war.

The word diversion can be used as a cover term in recent time particularly in the globalized world. The Cambridge Dictionary defined the term diversion as follows, the fact of something being sent somewhere different from where it was originally intended to go: According to Oxford Learners Dictionary the term diversion is defined as the act of changing the direction that somebody /something is following, or what something is used for. Mistry vividly depicts the term diasporic diversion in the novel *A Fine Balance* as the dislocation of an individual or group of people can be defined as diaspora, the dislocation of an individual or group had been experienced the geographical diversion, one who leave their homeland and went for seeking job in other place can come under residential diversion as well as professional diversion and due to internal emergency and war fare time people will migrate from one place to another in order to secure themselves from the political instability it is otherwise resulted in political diversion as well as economic diversion. The above mentioned diasporic diversions were pictured in Rohinton Mistry's monumental novel *A Fine Balance*.

The most significant characters in the novel *A Fine Balance* were Ishvar Darji and Omprakash, members of the Chamaar caste who were traditionally cured leather and were regarded as untouchable in their hamlet and these characters belong to Hindu community. Another major character in the novel *A Fine Balance* is Thakur Dharamsi, a member of an upper caste who oppresses those in lower castes, especially untouchables. Thakur Dharamsi's village is known for castism this cruel caste system resulted in racial diversion, Ishvar and Om eventually managed to escape Thakur Dharamsi's grasp by learning to sew. Despite these drawbacks, Ishvar's father has made the decision to end the stifling caste system. Despite the village's stringent caste structure, Ishvar's father apprenticed his sons Ishvar and Narayan to a Muslim tailor in a nearby town, Ashraf Chacha, and they eventually became tailors. Ishvar's father sent his son to work as an apprentice despite these social and cultural difficulties, particularly with Muslims which resulted in social diversion and cultural diversion. Mistry vividly portrays the racial diversion through Ishvar and Omprakash characters.

According to Luven (1995), "*A Fine Balance* is not just a family drama; it recounts the significant historical events of 20th-century India from the viewpoints of the Parsi as well as the Hindu Chammar community. Therefore, just as *Such a Long Journey*, *A Fine Balance* shows history from the periphery. (P.33) Luven eloquently argued that *A Fine Balance* is most likely not a family story but rather a portrayal of historical events that took place in India, notably those that were chronicled in the 20th century, from the perspectives of the Parsi and Hindu Chammar communities. The majority of Mistry's novels are set against the backdrop of India's Independence, the Indian Emergency, and its effects on the populace. Mistry focused on two historically significant events that took place in India, specifically India's Independence (1947) and the time of the Indian Emergency (1975–1977). According to Rothermun, "India is divided into two different nation states in the aftermath of 1947, following Jinnah's contention that India already consisted of "two nations," i.e. Hindus and Muslims." (p.114). Pakistan, a new nation state created as a result of India's independence, provides a home for the Muslim community, whilst India's popular nation-state is the Hindu one. *A Fine Balance* shed some insight on some of the

aspects of the conflict that should have arisen between India and Pakistan over the border that resulted in political diversion.

Farokh Kohlah, the father of Maneck, is a farmer who lives in the north of the nation. When he got impoverished, he was forced to give up a sizable portion of his estate, but a magic line on a map only left him with the modest shop. "A foreigner [Mountbatten] drew a magic line and named it the new border; it became a river of blood," the author writes (205). Farokh lost his land as a result of a magic line on a map, which made it difficult for him to live a happy life. However, he found comfort in the preservation of nature, which he views as the main source of meaning in life. Farokh Kohlah has lost his part of estate only because of magic line on a map, this loss has created psychological diversion.

One of the most significant individuals in the 20th century history is the Prime Minister of India. Due to a number of political factors between 1975 and 1977, the Prime Minister of India proclaimed a state of internal emergency. The press was suppressed, strikes were forbidden, and fundamental rights were violated during the internal emergency. A massive sterilizing program was started as a result of the domestic emergency in order to preserve a balance between population increase and the country's economic prosperity. All of the characters in the novel *A Fine Balance* experienced loss and annihilation due to an emergency, which caused them to struggle in their daily lives. Mistry portrays the political diversion as well as economic diversion that is caused through diaspora which torments the life of the innocent people from the Prime Minister.

One of the main causes of land loss, especially for those who lived along the border, is Mountbatten's borderline. It also causes cruelty and wildness, as demonstrated by the time "when communal slaughter at the brand-new border ignited riots everywhere, and sporting a fez in a Hindu neighborhood was as fatal as possessing a foreskin in a Muslim neighborhood" (87). This resulted in a bloodbath between Hindus and Muslims, particularly in Bengal and Punjab, which sparked a civil war (122). In *A Fine Balance*, Narayan and Ishvar encountered the conflict while they were learning the trade. The Muslim Ashraf Chacha provided these two innocent individuals with a new house, but it was destroyed during intercommunal warfare solely because racism was widely spread: "Better to drive out the Musclem danger before we are burned alive in our huts." They have invaded us for generations, destroyed our temples, and taken our wealth (123). Farokh lost his land as a result of the Mountbatten borderline map, and Hindus are now subject to prejudice and violence. Mistry depicted the religious diversion through the characters Narayan and Ishvar who learned the swing trade amidst war between Hindus and Muslims which resulted in Religious Diversion.

In this story, Rohinton Mistry masterfully captured how the caste system tormented the family with ruthless attacks. "To be untouchable is a sin. Being untouchable is wrong. Being untouchable is inhuman. Even educated people are too curious to voluntarily learn about other castes, which is a type of mentality that should be avoided among the populace even though we have read and heard that untouchability is a sin, crime, and inhuman. The most important thing is to get along with one another rather than trying to find out what caste they belong to; we are going to live with people, not their caste, whatever it may be. Let's not hold them back or restrict them with their various caste systems; that would be unfair. Instead, let them carry out their duties.

They were relocated: Maneck, Narayan, Ishvar, and Omprakash. Ishvar and Narayan migrated to the city where they have been apprenticed as tailors, despite the fact that Maneck wants to stay with his respective family members who work in the stock up, but his father compelled him to come there in order to get a higher education. Ishvar and Narayan moved to the city to train as apprentice tailors. Ishvar and Narayan are diametrically unlike people, particularly in their attitudes. His brother Narayan, who had

finished his tailoring apprenticeship and had returned to his village, battled for the untouchables, particularly during the election process. Despite these drawbacks, his father forewarned him that he was taking a life-threatening danger, but he believed that "life without dignity is meaningless" (144). Mistry pictured the relocation of the above mentioned characters resulted in geographical diversion, because these characters have been migrated from their home to another city it is called regional diaspora that resulted in geographical and professional diversion.

With the use of the caste system, the novel *A Fine Balance* explores two concepts. The narrative first describes the effects of untouchability on people. Maneck earned a degree and relocated abroad to work, where he struggled to find fulfillment in life. *A Fine Balance* characters past experiences frequently relate to the loss of meaning that occur during the action. Dina is used as an example for this point since she has experienced the loss of two lovable people: her father, who passed away when she was a little child, and her husband, who died when she was 24 years old and a young, attractive lady. These horrific events had a major impact on how she would behave as an adult. Mistry portray the cultural diversion and professional diversion through the Maneck character because though he earned a degree but their parents wish to move abroad for his earnings, when he was there where he experienced various struggles, he is not able to adopt himself for current scenario. So Mistry delineates the immigration of Maneck that resulted in professional and cultural diversion.

Therefore, *A Fine Balance* projected various diversions that are caused only because of diaspora such as geographical diversion, professional diversion, religious diversion and cultural diversion, Mistry dexterously delineates the above mentioned diasporic diversions in this article using various characters with different social background. If you want to achieve a balance, you will improve the attitude of acceptance: "Somethings cannot be changed; you just have to accept them" (82-3). Thus "loss is part and parcel of that necessary calamity called life" (565). Eventually all the characters in this novel struggle a lot but they wanted to live with their own identity especially they have given more importance to both identity as well as individuality. Caste system always ruins the innocent individuals which only remains discomfort and social discrimination, people have been fighting for the equality and they have been longing for their own identity and wish to live a peaceful life with one another so one should not distinguish with others from their caste, this kind of system has to be changed to live a harmonious life in the globalized world.

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