

Multiculturalism in Vassanji's: No New Land And Rohinton Mistry's: A Fine Balance

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Abstract

In a internationally connected world, it is gradually more common for individuals to belong to and be influenced by more than one culture. Based on a critique of conceptualizations from psychology, management, marketing, anthropology, and sociology, we bring clarity and consistency to conceptualizing and measuring multiculturalism at the individual level. We propose has knowledge of, identification with, and internalization of more than one social culture, and recommend methods to measure each dimension. Finally, we suggest how individual-level multiculturalism influences, and is influenced by, social networks and power dynamics in international organizations.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, cross-cultural management, Culture, Identity, Post-colonial.

Introduction to M. G. Vassanji

M.G. Vassanji was born in Nairobi, Kenya on 30th May 1950 to Gulam Hussein Vassanji and Daulatkhanu Nanji. His family was a part of a community of Indians who had immigrated to Africa. One has to know that immigration from India did not cease after the abolition of the indenture and other systems of organized export of labor. Immigration to East African countries namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania during the late 19th century present a new pattern: 'free' or 'passage' immigration. Under this pattern trader, petty contractors, artisans, bankers, clerks, and professionals of India immigrated to East African countries. This is the pattern under which Vassanji's ancestors came to Kenya from the Gujarat region in Northeastern India

Introduction to Rohinton Mistry:

Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, on July 3, 1952. A member of the Parsi religious community in India, he completed an undergraduate degree in mathematics and economics at the University of Bombay. In 1975 he moved to Canada, where he lived in Toronto and worked for a bank. Mistry eventually returned to university, finishing a degree in English and philosophy in 1984 at the University of Toronto. It was while he was a university student in Canada that he began to write and publish fiction. The international literary scene has, in the last two decades, witnessed the emergence of strong sub continental literary voices. Rohinton Mistry is one Indian author who has received acclaim worldwide. His fiction interestingly subverts all the conscious/unconscious cultural categorizations associated with the form of the novel. Whereas many authors from the 'Third World' disrupt the very form of the novel as a means of reasserting the central relevance of their experience, Mistry chooses to

do otherwise. He does not challenge the classical form of the novel, but reasserts its predominance in the telling of tales. Realism is his preferred style.

Contexts of Multiculturalism

The aim of this research is to realize and evaluate the narrative produced by the immigrant Parsee writers of the Indian subcontinent; M.G.Vassanji and Rohinton Mistry. These writers of Indian origin immigrated to Canada in the late 20th century. It creates a fascinating study, from the multicultural context, to inspect the works of these diasporic writers, as they watch from a vantage point of distance, taking the insight of the situation of their own group of people, in the present as well as in the past. The displacement of the Parsees from Persia, their homeland and their migration to India has become a thing of the distant past, history. In fact, they are now so firmly embedded in their host country that they feel a sense of belonging to India, more or less their 'second home'.

The emigrant Parsees, repositioned to Canada, USA or any other country, for that matter, put in great effort to disembark like any Asian immigrants; in their 'third home' now. The Parsees who are more concentrated in the West India, mostly in Gujarat and Bombay and also in Pakistan, and are considered as Indians or Pakistanis or south Asians all over the world, have a very distinct history of their diaspora and generate keen interest in their cultural identity, especially, against the backdrop of the multicultural Indian social situation and also the global context of multiculturalism that emerged recently during the last three decades of the twentieth century.

No New Land is Vassanji's second novel. It is an emotional story of the immigrant experience. It fashions a rich portrait of a transplanted community. Here Vassanji emerges as a devoted witness of lives trapped and flanked by one world and another. There are rapidly increasing writers summing up the present-day anxiety over globalization, acculturation, Immigration and Multiculturalism. Writers like Michael Ondaatje, Bharati Mukherjee, Uma Parameshwaran, Hanif Kureishi, Rohinton Mistry and others present branched out ethnic phenomena of nations like America and Canada. Vassanji is one such writer of multiple cultures. M.G. Vassanji's "*No New Land*" is an imaginary documentary touching the fields of multi-cultural Canada rendering room for cultural incorporation. *No New Land* holds the particularly immigrated Indians who are enduring 'international' diaspora' and depicts Canada as a "Shangrila for international refugees".

The Shamsi community demarcated in the novel symbolizes the Indian community immigrated to Africa during colonial regime and later in the postcolonial time, relocated to Canada. The immigration to Canada establishes to be a jaunt into the asylum of optimism and existence. Chelva Kanaganayakam observes: "if you were to speak of what the novel is about, "It is about the emigrant population in Toronto, compelled to begin a new life in a bizarre and often unwell land, confronted with obstacles, prejudices and disillusionment ("Don Mills and Dares Salaam" *Flouting the Borders: New Contexts in Canadian criticism*, Chelva Kanaganayakam. P.200).

Vassanji's works are differentiated from that of other multicultural writers is its vivacious, loving depiction of the double migration of his South Asian characters? The Indian Shamsi community is the crux of Vassanji's fiction. The members of this community put together their first voyage to East Africa in the late 19th century as part of the labor mobility within the British Empire, operational functionaries. The immigrants started as shopkeepers and businessmen, inhabited on the coast of British East Africa and German East Africa. They had the needed linguistic and political inside knowledge to aid the colonial administration in ruling an unreachable and disorderly neighborhood. Their responsibility as

insignificant men provided them the suppleness to maneuver as cultural translators and function as "a buffer zone between the indigenous Africans and the colonial administration" (*Ambivalent Affiliations and the Post-Colonial Condition: The Fiction*, M.G. Vassanji, (P. 277).

Indian-born Canadian writer Rohinton Mistry's 1995 novel *A Fine Balance* is the story of four characters from diverse backgrounds whose paths converge in 1975 India. Maneck Kohleh, a college student, has rented a room in the city. On his way to inspect the apartment of Dina Dalal, he meets two tailors, Ishcar Darji and his nephew Omprakash (Om) Darji, also on their way to Dina's to find sewing jobs.

Dina hires the tailors to work from patterns provided by Au Revoir Exports even though she isn't supposed to run a business from her rent-controlled apartment.(P.256). Dina, a widow, wants to maintain her financial independence so that she won't have to move back in with her brother, Nusswan Shroff who treats her like an unpaid servant. Meanwhile, the landlord is looking for an excuse to evict her and get a higher paying tenant.

The Darjis belong to the "untouchable" caste. By learning the sewing trade, they have escaped their village, where the upper castes oppress the lower ones, and where a local landholder named Thalur Dharamji killed the rest of the Darji family because Ishvar's brother got above his station. Ishvar and Om hope for a fresh start in the big city and are glad to find employment with Dina.

Maneck is taking a certificate program in refrigeration and air-conditioning at the city college. He's disgusted with the filthy student housing and wants to go home. Instead, his parents arrange for him to rent a room from Dina, who was his mother's school friend. Even though Dina's flat is shabby, Maneck finds it a better alternative than the student hostel.

Conclusion:

While Vassanji castigates castism and socio-religious bias in Indian sociopolitical history, Mistry has deliberately ignored the positive aspects of India's political and social life. Rohinton Mistry nearly obscures the other side of Indian reality in his novels. If it is not a counter-narrative, it should include, for instance, the certain ideal of Indian social situations that cannot be found anywhere in the world. The sense of sacrifice, ideal human relationship, love for culture and traditions are some of the merits of India's people. Mistry disregards all these aspects when he plans the thematic concerns in his novels. He might be criticized for this narration.

However, his narrative can be read as the novelist's idea of counter-history. To answer questions of critics who criticize his works that they all are located in India and none in Canada, the place of his experience and living, Mistry affirms that he recounts to his people his familiar stories.

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