

# A STUDY ON THE DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN CONTEMPORARY OF ROHINTON MISTRY NOVELS

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## ABSTRACT

*Diaspora refers to a population that originated in a different area and has spread out over a large territory. The nature of the country where the diaspora is housed determines the characteristics of the diaspora. Despite coming from similar backgrounds, people from the same diaspora can behave very differently depending on the country they have moved to. At its essence, the diaspora story is a description of the life of the individual. Since the turn of the millennium, writing in all genres of literature has accelerated, but especially the Indian novel and the masters of Indian writing, and Indian English fiction has grown rapidly throughout this time. Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Vikram Seth, among a large number of others, are some of the modern and current times' crusaders. In Rohinton Mistry's case, it is also accurate. He made the choice to leave India behind on his own to pursue better possibilities in life. The recall of prior experiences is one of the means of expression used in diasporic writing. Mistry has overcome the difficulties associated with preserving positive interpersonal relationships between people of different cultural identities. He is able to successfully recreate his history in a distant country thanks to his ability to establish a balance between the fanciful and realistic styles of his work.*

**Keywords:** *Diaspora, diasporic consciousness, Cultural identity, Contemporary*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The intellectual foundations of post-colonial theory are the source of all discourses about diasporas, including the analytical discourse of diaspora fictional literature. The causes for this are simple to comprehend. In general, themes that deal with movement, displacement, crossing boundaries, multiple identities, cross-cultural encounters, homeland, and receptive land, as well as other related concerns, are prevalent in fiction about diasporas. It is patently obvious that the power to regulate and guide ties between cultures, governments, and social groups has grown.

In order to be sponsored, confirmed, and interpreted in many settings across boundaries, the diasporic story must be. Writers who adopt children from other nations, like Rohinton Mistry, can take advantage of the discursive traditions already in place in other nations. Mistry is free to pursue his intellectual and cultural interests as he pleases, in addition to acting in accordance with his economic inclinations. His action has made that possible. On the other hand, when someone crosses over, he becomes vulnerable to the pressures of both the sending culture and the receiving society. He is now seen as a multinational subject as a result. The goal of this study is to show how Rohinton Mistry, a significant figure among writers of the Indian Diaspora, has endeavoured to capture the lifelong experience of being a diaspora community in India through his English fiction work. India is the destination of this excursion. This is what his work accomplished, as he had predicted in an interview with Ali Lakhani, that it would

"preserve a record of how they lived, to some extent." 23–31 [1]. Indeed, the relationships between one's identity, the community in which one lives, and the environment in which one lives are depicted in his works.

The book "Literature of the Indian Diasporic" focuses mostly on the study of literary works and other texts from the Indian diaspora. Furthermore, it makes a substantial contribution to the field of diaspora theory in general. The term "migrant identity" refers to any ethnic enclave within a nation-state that defines itself, consciously or unconsciously, as a group that is in displacement. This anthology applies a theoretical framework based on trauma, mourning impossible, spectres, identity, travel, translation, and recognition [8]. The historical and economic phenomenon known as the "Indian diaspora" can be divided into four distinct expressions. The first one takes place when Indians were taken there as indentured servants to labour in the fields during the British colonies' era in Africa and the West Indies. The early postcolonial period, when many Indians came to Britain and Canada to help restock the labour supply in the western world after the war, can be used to understand the second phase. Students from India would move to Western universities, particularly those in the United States, during the third phase, and they would seldom, if ever, return.

In the canon of contemporary literature created in the Commonwealth, novelist Rohinton Mistry is highly acclaimed and occupies a significant place among writers from the Indian diaspora. The theatrical formulations that are being produced as a result of the critiques of his work as well as the rising interest in the study of culture are the main causes of his relatively prominent presence in the spotlight as an Indian diaspora writer over the past ten years. He is also a Parsi who practises Zoroastrianism. He and others of his kind are now living in the diaspora in the Indian subcontinent since his forefathers were driven into exile as a result of the Islamic invasion of Iran.

The Parsi community serves as the focal point of his story. His entire body of work is an expression of the Parsi culture, which includes, among other things, their customs, ceremonies, struggles, and dilemmas. All of these facets are skillfully depicted through the nuanced portrayal of Parsi people. Mistry had immigrated to Canada himself in search of better possibilities. The primary reasons of the confusing and complicated lifestyles that diasporic people lead are the identity crises and issues that they must contend with. A person who relocates to a new planet typically suffers from ignorance, which makes him a subservient creature in the new environment. This happens frequently. The struggle for one's identity is also illustrated by Rohinton Mistry, an author who focuses on the Indian diaspora. He discusses how the Parsis are experiencing the same difficulties.

Not to be forgotten is the petroleum diaspora, in which individuals from India relocated to nations that generate "petrodollars." These diasporas, which began about the middle of the previous century, have been around for roughly 150 years. Indians from almost every one of these diasporas have made an effort to document how they have adapted to their new environments and how they have felt a sense of both identification and estrangement from their former and present homes. The bonds created by culture, religion, literature, and language are particularly strong in diaspora situations. Although these linkages might help people develop a sense of ethnic identity and self, they can also make people feel alienated from the host society. The melancholy and longing that characterize diaspora writing are specifically a result of this displacement. This creates a divided view of the world for the reader, whether the authors are writing about their old or new countries of origin.

In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie claimed that people are forced to "deal with broken mirrors," some of whose components have been lost. Every aspect of the Indian way of life presents challenges. It is necessary for someone to feel a sense of stability, security, and belonging in order for them to be happy. He needs a location to call home where his parents, friends, and other members of his extended family love and take care of him. Man feels feelings of unease and a lack of confidence when this sense of harmony and belongingness is shattered, regardless of the cause. Thanks to Sasthi Brata's contribution, the uncomfortable condition of a person who experiences identity crises has been expressed in a way that is appropriate. He wonders how the concept of estrangement can be reduced to a few short phrases as he describes how intricate the situation is. The agonizing pain that results from not feeling like one belongs in the very place that one longs to call home is beyond description. He continues to compare timber, saying that doing so is like building a house out of exceedingly brittle lumber. When a person loses their identity, they degenerate into miserable creatures; their voice becomes an echo, their existence a quote, their soul their intellect, and their free spirit a slave to things. The search for identity has been one of the contemporary man's main preoccupations, and he has shown a large amount of concern for the spiritual malaise linked with modern living. The terms "identity" and "identity crisis," according to Dennis Wrong, who is correct in his judgement, have emerged as the "semantic beacons of our day" because they "linguistic symbols express our unhappiness with modern life and modern society."

## II. DIASPORA

The term "diaspora" was first used to describe this phenomenon in classical Greece and is derived from the Greek verb "diaspiero," which meaning "to scatter." A diaspora, as defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is either the movement of people to another country or the movement of Jews away from their country of origin in order to reside in other countries with the intention of obtaining employment or surviving. The term "diaspora," according to [9], refers to the connection between the histories of native land and the migrated land of people from different time periods and regions, embracing the past and the future as well (p. vii). There are many different reasons why people move away from their "homeland" [2] to another location, including employment, business, education, trade, and so forth. The Indian diaspora is acknowledged as one of "the largest" and "the most modern" diasporas in the world. According to [2], diaspora is the process through which individuals relocate from their "homeland" to another location [10]. The term "diaspora" is defined by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin as "the voluntary or violent migration of individuals from their home territory into new areas" (page 61 of their 2007 book). The diverse genres of Indian literature written in English are greatly influenced by authors from the diaspora. The primary topic that emerges from the works of these authors is the search for identity. The majority of diasporic authors made an effort to include autobiographical aspects in their works.

## III. DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the third state of consciousness is the condition of knowing and being aware of something. It is a phenomenon with a sense of selfhood that lives in numerous dimensions. Diasporic consciousness is the awareness of having been scattered as a result of migration. According to [5], the primary themes of diasporic literature include dislocation from one's country of origin, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, and the pursuit of identity. The first is grief for the motherland, which has been left behind, together with uncertainty in a distant country, according to her. The second stage occurs when one is so busy adjusting to their new environment that there is little time for creative creation. In order to shape their lives, diaspora individuals engage in third-stage activities that are related to their native cultures. The fourth stage is when they have arrived and is actively involved in politics and other national matters. Diasporic writers are authors who have relocated to other countries and established themselves there, particularly during the postcolonial era. There has been a rise in Indian diaspora-related writing in recent years. The success of their work was aided by the breadth of subjects these diasporic authors chose to write about, including reminiscence, cultural differences, displacement, the status quo in other "countries," and so forth.

## IV. DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S WORK

Rohinton Mistry made his acting debut in Mumbai in the year 1952. He graduated with a bachelor's in mathematics from the University of Bombay in 1974 (Mumbai). He and his wife came to Canada the next year and lived in Toronto, where he worked as a bank clerk and part-time studied for his second degree in English and philosophy at the University of Toronto. In 1982, he earned this degree [3]. He received his first degree in mathematics. Mistry's first short story, "One Sunday," which won First Prize in the Canadian Hart House Literary Contest, was written in 1983. The following year, he went on to win the same prize once more for the short tale he had written, "Auspicious Occasion." Following that, the Canadian Fiction Magazine presented him with the Annual Contributors' Award in 1985. Then, with the help of a Canada Council grant, he gave up his job to pursue writing full-time.

His early works were featured in several Canadian publications, and his collection of short stories, *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, was first published in Canada in 1987. (later published in the UK in 1992). He is the author of three books: *Such a Long Journey* (1991), which tells the tale of a bank teller in Bombay who unwittingly falls victim to a government fraud; *A Fine Balance* (1996), which takes place in India in the 1970s during the State of Emergency; and *Family Matters* (2002), which depicts the life of an elderly Parsi widower living in Bombay with his stepchildren. The Commonwealth Writers Prize was awarded by *Such a Long Journey* (Overall Winner). In the years prior to 2002, *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* were both on the Booker Prize for Fiction shortlist, while *Family Matters* was on the Man Booker Prize for Fiction shortlist in the same year.

Rohinton Mistry spoke on how the traditional cultures of India and Canada clash in his writings. What Mistry wants to achieve with the representation of trans-cultural space is pretty clear in his stories. Being both an Indian by birth

and a Canadian by domicile makes him happy to be able to make this claim. Towards the end of Mistry's writings, the old world's culture is ultimately transformed into the protagonist's understanding of the new world he lives in. The Parsi novelist Rohinton Mistry writes about his experiences as a migrant in Canada in his writings. He is overtaken with emotion for his native country because he has struggled to blend into Canadian culture. He feels a sense of loss of identity and estrangement in both his new country and the one he was born in.

In order to describe the element of diasporic study and nostalgia in a broader sense, as well as his efforts and methods of recasting the history of the Parsi community as well as the history of the country, the purpose of this paper is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the text of each of Rohinton Mistry's three novels. The purpose of this work is to describe these components. In addition to sentimental desire, the idea of grief incorporates a wide range of ideas, such as exile, displacement, dislocation, relocation, expatriation, and assimilation. These ideas cover a lot more ground than mere sentimental longing.

For their fiction writing, the bulk of South Asian Canadian authors frequently draw inspiration from India or the subcontinent. It will be some time before a great Canadian novel is published that might fully capture the diverse experience of Canadians because no one has yet written a large book set in that country. Some of the reviews assert that rather than having a nostalgic tone, *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* have an elegiac one [4]. This is true even though the author relocated from Canada to a location closer to either their homeland or India. The in-depth analysis of Mistry's writings shows how the tension between elegy and nostalgia, as well as between welcome and farewell, has led to the emergence of a double caring from the shards of the past and the present. Finding one's family history naturally leads to the emergence of a new type of diasporic storytelling.

The novels of Rohinton Mistry are excellently suitable for this kind of inquiry, not only because of his singular contribution to the craft of storytelling but also because, despite having a small body of work, he has established new standards in diasporic works. This is true both for this reason and because he made a special contribution to the craft of storytelling. Given the author's Parsi ancestry, it was judged crucial to go thoroughly into Zoroastrian history in order to explore the historical experience of the dual displacement that a Parsi writer underwent after immigrating to Canada. Because Mistry places less emphasis on quantity and more on the creative side of literature, this chapter also examines the works of his contemporaries who are South Asian Canadian writers. Mistry concentrates on literature's artistic component. He is allegedly a postcolonial writer who always strives to offer work that both expresses his ideology and his cultural commitments.

He migrated to Canada when he was 23 years old and decided to write in the language of the master, but it did not stop him from being affected by progressive realism. However, he has also made the decision to immerse himself in a paradoxical postcolonial complexity through nostalgia, and the romance/myth genre is most equipped to achieve this. By creating a balance between the celebration of myth and a more critical approach of reality, the incorporation of diasporic consciousness and nostalgic longing in this research served to resolve the problem. The chapter is concluded with the remark that Mistry, with the help of the genre-balancing technique, created a universe where people can achieve a peaceful balance between themselves and society and that he was able to give the Parsi community and its culture some value [6].

The partition of India and Pakistan, the Indo-China War in 1962, the failure of Nehru's dream of a secular India, the theft of 60 lakh rupees under Indira Gandhi, and the Indo-Pak War in 1971, which led to the creation of Bangladesh, are just a few of the historical events covered in *Such a Long Journey*. The story employs genuine historical events as its backdrop and setting, but it also primarily concentrates on the introspective journeys of its primary heroes. The story employs historical events as its backdrop and location, but it also concentrates more on the inner journey of its main protagonists, who all live in the Khodadad Building. In order to rebuild his recollections from the past, the author of this book uses imagery and symbols in a more overt manner.

There are a lot of contradicting events in the book *A Fine Balance*, which make the reader feel extremely depressed and even make them cry. However, with the aid of a separate reality, the author seems to go to great lengths to establish a balance between the crucial facets of each of his characters' lives. Mistry confronts, interrogates, and challenges the eminent voice of history. The most significant lesson to be learned from this book is that life is a struggle, and that anyone who is courageous enough to engage in it can triumph morally over the difficulties and problems associated with being alive. Throughout the text, the human mind is portrayed as possessing morality, integrity, and an unmatched might. A quick scan through the book makes it difficult to pinpoint any melancholy feelings, but a closer look reveals a delicate balance between nostalgia and longing, myth and reality, one's personal

experience and the outside world. In actuality, the narrative centres on an equilibrium crisis in which each character is comparable to the others in terms of willpower and endurance. They preserve a shared memory, vision, or myth of their oppressed group, complete with its traumas, sufferings, and challenges. They also work together to try to maintain balance in their lives, even though they do so in a variety of unconventional ways.

Family Matters by Rohinton Mistry depicts the lives and memories of one Parsi family as they struggle to resist decay on many different levels, including the decay of their own flesh into death, the decay of their family into death, the decay of their community's morality, and the decay of the world both now and in the future. The work features a tight-knit plot and is written in a flawless style. It has all the profundity, tenderness, subtle humour, and narrative sweep that have won Rohinton Mistry the greatest accolades and awards around the globe. He has once again created something that is just terribly wonderful, a bittersweet illustration of life in its most everyday and intimate context [7]. He has been succeeded in maintaining "a fine balance" between scepticism and affirmation, faith and bigotry, familial affection and control. The title's evident double entendre not only refers to the roles and responsibilities of family members as well as the business of running a family, but it also refers to how many members of our family are important to us.

## V. CONCLUSION

The brilliance and authenticity of Rohinton Mistry's writing still terrifies and severely impacts his audience in the same manner, even if Family Matters has a narrower focus than A Fine Balance. The image of a guy on the book's cover, facing away from the reader and gazing out across the ocean, makes the reader feel assimilation-related emotions like caution and tranquilly. A profound sense of sorrow permeates the entire book since it is a memory of looking back into the past. The situation of feeling uprooted and a loss of belonging is also highlighted by this. The now 79-year-old Nariman is torn between his two daughters, Coomy and Roxana, and learns that he is in a situation akin to King Lear's where he finally belongs to his family and where his family is also gradually accepting of him. Recalling prior experiences is one of the ways that diasporic literature expresses itself. In order to protect themselves from "cultural conundrums and from the encountered anger or unfriendliness in the new nation," the expatriate constructs a protective shell around themselves. Mistry has overcome the difficulties associated with preserving positive interpersonal relationships between people of different cultural identities.

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