

STRUGGLES AND PROCUREMENT OF THE CHARACTERS

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Abstract

In this research report, I have mentioned the comparison between the characters and their sacrifices and the problems they have faced in their lives. There is a complete comparison and the types of the lives they all have lived in this kind of community. In both the novels the characters have played a very crucial role and have showed that not everybody's life is perfect or not everybody gets to get all the things they have wished for in their lives. In these two novels, "The fine balance" and "An equal music", the characters have suffered a lot and got so much hatred and pain from all types of people, whether its their loved ones or the outsiders.

We conclude our book with a summary of our arguments, a discussion of the implications of our results, and some ideas for future research. We emphasize that the benefits of decentralizing the state are contingent on the structure of the other primary conduit of information and influence across tiers the political party. The presence of integrated parties in a country can serve to tie national, regional, and local levels of the state together in beneficial ways. The key is to strike a fine balance between decentralization and integration. Striking this balance implicates all aspects of state and party design, from the vertical and horizontal fiscal systems to administrative structures, from electoral institutions to policy responsibilities. The key question to be asked is how institutional structures, both of the state and parties, incentivize local, regional, and national officials to provide public goods and to govern well.

Brooke Allen, writing for the Atlantic in 2002, noted that this was the first book by Mistry which went out of his familiar circle of Parsi characters and aimed at describing the whole Indian society. Whereas the main characters suffer a lot in the book, and all of them in the end lose, throughout the book they continue laughing, and the book is not perceived as tragic. She also mentions that Mistry's use of big metaphors makes the novel reminiscent of great 19th-century authors.

On the other hand, Shankar Vedanta, writing in 1996 for the Chicago Tribune, while praising Mistry's storytelling and love for detail, criticized his broad vision of the Indian society as too negative and complained that Mistry shows too much despair in the novel.

An Equal Music (1999), a novel by international-bestselling author Vikram Seth, tells the story of a violinist who begins an affair with an old lover and learns a devastating secret. The book received the 1999 Crossword Book Award for Fiction and has been well received by both critics and general readers. Seth is known for making barely-veiled references to himself and his friends and family in his published works, which adds depth and authenticity to his narratives. A prolific novelist and poet, he has won numerous literary awards.

Keywords: Struggle, novel, protagonist, tragedy, circumstances, sufferings, hardships, success, optimistic

Introduction

The protagonist, Michael Holme, is a violinist with the highly successful Maggiore Quartet. A gifted musician, he plays the second violin. However, he can't forget the woman he used to love, Julia McNichol. She moved away many years ago and married someone else. She now has a small child. Michael can't meet anyone else because it's a very insular world and he already knows everyone in the music scene. He concentrates now on his music.

- Michael studied at a music school in Vienna, where he first met Julia. There, he embarrassed himself by failing at a performance onstage, leading him to abandon Julia in his humiliation. He's always regretted letting her go.
- At the end of *An Equal Music*, Michael discovers Julia scheduled a performance of the same song they rehearsed together. He goes to hear her play at Wigmore Hall. At this point, he lets Julia and the past go; he leaves during the interval. We last see him walking away in the rain.
- *A Fine Balance* is the story of four people who meet, live and work in a large, overcrowded city and desperately struggle to survive in the face of intense hardships. Most of *A Fine Balance* takes place in 1975, but the novel also offers a brief glimpse of the mid-1980s in the epilogue, and earlier parts of the twentieth century, as it explores the histories of modern India and of each major character.
- The prologue presents all the main characters for the first time; afterwards each character is given more focused attention in the novel's sixteen chapters. Between the biographical chapters, Mistry intersperses chapters where the main characters are working and living together. Although the action jumps in time from 1975 to the past and back again, the novel is far from chaotic. The blending of characters and politics, past and present, is a fair representation of the many ethnicities, religions, cultures, politics and languages that make India one of the most diverse nations on earth.

In the prologue, the three male characters are on a train and heading to a crowded city by the sea. The first is eighteen-year-old Maneck Kohlah, son of a wealthy soft drink manufacturer, who is returning to college. When the train comes to a sudden stop, Maneck drops an armful of textbooks into the lap of Ishvar Darji who, along with his nephew Omprakash, is going to the city to work. The cause of the sudden stop, the discovery of a dead body on the tracks, is important, as that dead young man is an important part of the thread of tragedy which runs through the entire novel.

Literature Review

The first chapter presents the life history of Dina, and through her, examines the plight of women in Indian society. Dina is an intense personality and she worries about her future. She is in financial trouble because she is slowly going blind. Ever since her husband's early death, she has supported herself by sewing dresses for a clothing manufacturer in an illegal home business. As she loses her sight, she has to hire others to do the sewing. Ishvar and Om have heard about her and want the work.

Even with the helpers, Dina's position is difficult. A strong woman, Dina finds herself stuck between two distasteful alternatives: either taking in a boarder (which is prohibited by her lease, and which would involve surrendering her privacy and autonomy), or moving in with her brother and his family. She opts for the first alternative only because Maneck is the son of an old school friend. Dina's older brother Nusswan is a hidebound male chauvinist; after their parents died, he withdrew the twelve-year-old Dina from school and put her to work as an unpaid maid and babysitter in his household. One of the few positives was that Dina learned to sew and was able to support herself.

Rohinton Mistry's 1995 novel *A Fine Balance* is set in 1970s India and follows four characters who come to interact with each other over a period of around 15 years. There is Dina, the struggling landlady whose husband was run over and killed whilst cycling to buy ice cream for a family gathering; Ishvar and Omprakash, tailors whose families had been brutalised by the destructive legacy of the caste system; and

Maneck, a refrigeration and air conditioning student whose best friend is tortured and killed by the government.

Central to the plotline is The Emergency of 1975-1977, in which the Prime Minister was given the power to rule by decree, creating an effective dictatorship in response to threats of 'internal disturbance'. This Emergency, under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, proved to be one of the most intensely controversial moments of independent India's history. Forced mass-sterilisation, censorship of the press, mass political arrests, and a 'national beautification' program in which thousands of slums were destroyed, created an atmosphere of political and social upheaval which the four characters are forced to navigate (and experience first-hand) throughout the course of the novel.

To try to explain the characters' individual stories in one short paragraph is an injustice to the unimaginable picture of pain and suffering that Mistry paints. However, the curious beauty of the book is that in a story so saturated with pain, fear, torture, death and castration, there emerges unmistakable moments of joy. Mistry makes it abundantly clear that even the darkest horrors cannot suffocate the fundamental faculty of the human condition – to laugh in the face of adversity. This in itself, however, is by no means part of a neat and contrived narrative in which good trumps evil, and to settle with that would be a disservice to Mistry's far more nuanced depiction of life and hardship.

In fact, by the end of the book, one begins to question the title. The overwhelming impression is that there seems to be no 'Fine Balance' whatsoever, and it would be understandable to conclude that all the joy and desire of the characters in the novel, all their intermittent yet powerful glimmers of hope, are quashed with a disturbing, catastrophic finality in its closing pages. It is certainly a sobering narrative. Without giving anything away, a future reader should not expect a happy ending

Findings

The total findings of the two stories is just that the characters have been in a very crucial lives and have seen so much in their lives. they have suffered and have had so many situations in their lives.

The title of A Fine Balance plays on the idea of finding a middle ground between despair and hope. Vasantrao tells Maneck that the secret to life lies in finding that balance. All of the main characters confront the fact that the demoralizing nature of life in India in 1975 makes hope difficult to come by, but necessary for survival.

Ishvar and Om find balance by being counterpoints of hope and despair. Ishvar is optimistic even at the worst of times. He's jovial and appears better fed than his nephew, who has a lean and hungry look. On the other hand, Om is perpetually dissatisfied. He frets that Dina is cheating him, so he wants to cut her out of the sewing operation. The two men counterbalance one another until time and adversity mellow the extreme outlook of each. Over time, Ishvar becomes a little more realistic and Om a little less judgmental.

Dina offsets her natural distrust with her loneliness. At the beginning of the book, Dina is overly cautious and suspicious of both her boarder and the tailors. By the end of the year they spend together, she regards them as family. This transformation suggests that she has found her own personal balance.

Conclusions

But more than any character in An Equal Music perhaps the centre stage is the Music itself. Vikram Seth has researched, perhaps over-researched, his novel, so that every instrument, every note, every chord, and every musical progression is described in detail. Because the book is long, and because Seth has done very little to help the reader along the way to grasp the sound of the music, much is lost in translation if you don't know Schubert, Bach or Mozart, or cannot tell why playing something in a minor chord is different from a major chord, and how switching up an arrangement with two violas instead of two violins, then you might need a lot of help to get through the book, let alone enjoy it. While Seth's writing aims for the meditative, it comes across as too technical.

I heard a lot of chamber music while I was reading the book, to help me imagine and bring alive what was on paper. It helped somewhat but failed to evoke the powerful emotions that music and words otherwise do separately. It's not easy to take an art form and use it to evoke emotions out of another, and Seth tries but does not quite succeed.

Books and stories don't have to be universal in their style, and if we absolve Seth of doing nothing to help a non-musical reader along, this is a good one-time read, if nothing else then for the rich descriptions of London, the superb use of descriptive words that do bring the world, if not the music, alive. To those with even a semblance of appreciation of instruments and their sounds and/or Western Classical Music, it will be an entirely different book than the one I have read.

We conclude our book with a summary of our arguments, a discussion of the implications of our results, and some ideas for future research. We emphasize that the benefits of decentralizing the state are contingent on the structure of the other primary conduit of information and influence across tiers the political party. The presence of integrated parties in a country can serve to tie national, regional, and local levels of the state together in beneficial ways. The key is to strike a fine balance between decentralization and integration. Striking this balance implicates all aspects of state and party design, from the vertical and horizontal fiscal systems to administrative structures, from electoral institutions to policy responsibilities. The key question to be asked is how institutional structures, both of the state and parties, incentivize local, regional, and national officials to provide public goods and to govern well.

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