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Bombay in Different Shades : Thoroughly Analysing Identity as well as Home Crisis  
in Suketu Mehta's Maximum City

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**Abstract**

A similar identity crisis and sense of belongingness are experienced by Suketu Mehta, a journalist and fiction writer who has recently returned from New York and is searching for a means to comprehend the place he left as a youth in the film "Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found." When Mehta realized that his lovely and elegant boyhood world no longer existed, he arrived with a simple question: can you go home again? This study examines the homelessness and identity dilemma that exists in the maximum city.

**Keywords:** Maximum City, Bombay Lost and Found, Community

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**1. Introduction**

Maximum City was a vision of India's most important metropolis created by someone who had grown up in India but had spent the majority of his life in the United States. Despite this, the book is so detailed and probing in the manner it presents the stories of Mumbai that it could have been written by someone who has spent his whole life in the city, if not more. Mehta never forgot his roots — he never forgot the language, and he was able to comprehend the complexity of cultural differences and make use of the community networks that had given him an advantage at the start of his work on the metropolis.

The author of *This Land is Our Land* emphasizes how his family and community managed to keep their traditions alive despite the fact that they were living in America (his older son, for instance, while raised mostly in the United States, was only taught by his parents to speak Gujarati until school age). Despite this, he writes in his new book: "I would return to America with

relief, because here I could once again identify as an American." In England, I couldn't pass as English, and when I got to India, I couldn't pass as completely "Indian." I was referred to as a 'NRI,' or a 'non-Resident Indian.'" While Mehta's account is comprehensive, it may be a little too comprehensive. The story weaves between themes and transitions from hope to sadness in an unpredictably chaotic manner. Contrary to expectations, I found the sections on Mehta's family's immigration to the United States to be the most engaging, while the sections on South Asia - the author's birthplace - were the least interesting. That portion is a narrative that rushes the reader through Indian history and crams all of its numerous threads into a single ball, despite the fact that some of them appear to have no connection with the book's central issue.

More crucially, in contrast to the brutally realistic *Maximum City*, the theme of *This Land is Our Land* is a little more idealistic. Mehta adds out that even a two- or threefold

increase in the population of the United States would not render the country uninhabitable, especially when contrasted to the demographic congestion that exists in certain other countries. Perhaps, but regardless of one's point of view on the matter, can we envision any government in Washington permitting something like this to happen? In his book, the author emphasizes that he is not advocating for open borders, but rather for open hearts. Although it is a wonderful idea, it is likely that it will only be partially realized in the form of effective policies. "America has been extremely generous to my family. And we've been good to our friends in the United States. Engineers, writers, surgeons, businesspeople, prosecutors, infrantymen, and teachers are among the members of Mehta's extended family, he points out. It is an excellent argument, and it accurately portrays the overall position of Indians who have settled in the United States of America. According to current stereotypes, a typical Indian professional in the United States is a doctor or an information technology specialist; in 2011, the annual average income of an Indian family located in the United States was double that of a white American family.

## 2. Review of the literature

"At some places, identity is referred to as a conscious sense of individual uniqueness,... and at other places, identity is referred to as a sense of solidarity with a group's ideal," writes R. S. Pathak (1999) in *Modern Indian Novel in English*, and it appears that this is the definition that is most relevant to the current discussion. The search for identity is divided into two categories: the representation of difference and the expression of a certain group of people or community.

Radhakrishnan(2003), While portraying love, longings, and losses, the characters and events in *Maximum City* move between national and international (transnational), local and global locales and

movements, resulting in an amalgamated type of culture, which is referred to as "Third culture." Despite the fact that this cultural hybridity leads to even more contentious relationships among the novel's protagonists, their longing is maybe the thing that the characters in this novel do the best in this novel.

Mehta (2004), in which Mehta's encounters with those various groups are depicted, is nothing short of captivating. Despite the fact that his writing is firmly rooted in Bombay, he is also beginning on a profound and abstract exploration of the nature of violence and the ways in which it connects with power and oppression. "Can you tell me how it feels to kill a man?" he asks over and over again of people on both sides of the criminal justice system. However, this never devolves into voyeurism — and he is sophisticated enough not to deny that he is drawn into these people's lives and intrigued by them in a way that is difficult to distinguish from awe — and it never does. His motivation is far more profound than mere titillation: "There is a chasm between the human heart and murder, and I was interested in seeing the bridges that men built for themselves across that chasm," he explains. "I was interested in seeing the bridges that men built for themselves across that chasm." In fact, his capacity to unearth complexity makes it all the more disheartening when he fails to do so; I couldn't help but be jolted by the way Pakistan - the country where I call home - is reduced to a cardboard cutout of the wicked neighbor. In terms of males who deal in violence, Ajay Lal, a police officer, is the most intriguing of the bunch. While living in a corrupt city, he stands out as the incorruptible one, determined to bring the murderers and gang members that govern Bombay to justice no matter what it costs him.

Bharatender Sheoran and Meenu Kumari are two of the most talented people in the world (2014), *The Diasporic Indian* is like the banyan tree, which is the traditional

symbol of Indian way of life; he spreads out his roots in different soils, drawing sustenance from one soil when the others become depleted of nutrients. He is far from being homeless; in fact, he has multiple houses, and it is only through this that he has learned to feel increasingly at ease in the world.

Dr. Deepkumar J. Trivedi and Rashmikant K. Ruparel are two of the most prominent scientists in the world (2018), In *Modern Indian Novel in English*, Sudhish Kakar quotes Sudhish Kakar as saying, "At some places identity is alluded to as a rational sense of individual uniqueness,...and at yet another places identity is referred to as a sense of solidarity with an ideal" (Pathak,52). This definition seems to be more appropriate with the conversation about the search for identity. As a result of both cultural difference and recognition with cultural tradition being absent in our identity, many Indians experience a sense of "loss" in their minds, leading to the development of a kind of superiority or inferiority complex in order to realize his dream of establishing a colonial mentality among Indians

V.Sathya (2020), Mehta returns to the United States and, at long last, finds what he was looking for: a beautiful, varied, warm human nest, a towering Tower of Babel whose inhabitants communicate in a dizzying mix of Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu, Tamil, and occasionally English; a beautiful, varied, warm human nest, a towering Tower of Babel whose inhabitants communicate in a dizzying mix of Hindi, Mehta's own story weaves its way through it all, telling of the range of feelings he has for Bombay: love, frustration, fascination, and profound identification, all of which he experiences as he attempts to make his way back home after twenty-one years away. Mehta follows him through his daily routine and the acute poverty that accompanies it. The poet's perspective on Bombay provides a sad conclusion to his

exploration of the metropolis. It is a city that is both filled with sadness and overflowing with optimism. Further supporting this point of view, he observes that being gone and returning to the city allows him to see the changes in the city more vividly.

### 3. Home and identity crisis in maximum city

Bombay native Suketu Mehta provides us an insider's view of his home city in "Maximum City: Bombay Lost And Found," a book that is both a memoir and a travel guide. It is through these unexpected perspectives that he approaches the city: we are taken into the criminal world of rival Muslim and Hindu gangs; we are followed through the life of a bar dancer who was raised in poverty and abuse; we are invited into the inner sanctums of Bollywood; and we are immersed in the stories of countless villagers who come to the city in search of a better life and end up living on the streets.

Suketu (2019), a colorful portrayal of Bombay, "the biggest, quickest, richest city in India," in which Bombay resident Mehta sprinkles his kaleidoscopic portrait with compelling moments of danger and dismay. Returning to Bombay (now known as Mumbai) from New York after a 21-year absence, Mehta is devastated by the transformation of his beloved city, which has grown to a population of 18 million and is choked with pollution. In the course of his investigation into the city's 1992-1993 riots, he meets Hindus who massacred Muslims, as well as their leader, the notorious Godfather-like founder of the Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena party, Bal Thackeray, whom he describes as "the one man most directly responsible for the ruination of the city I grew up in." Dauntingly venturing farther into the brutal world of warring Hindu and Muslim gangs, Mehta teams up with tough top officer Ajay Lal to journey into the city's labyrinthine criminal underbelly, where he becomes acquainted with hit men who show no

remorse for their atrocities. When Mehta investigates Bombay's sex market, he employs a harsh documentary technique, featuring an alluring, doomed dancing girl and a cross-dressing male dancer who leads a weird double life, among others. M.K. Mehta incorporates so-called "Bollywood" in his broad overview of Bombay's subcultures: he recalls, in comic diary form, his day-to-day existence on the set of the action film *Mission Kashmir* with the older male stars of the film. Mehta is a talented stylist who has won awards such as the Whiting Award and the O. Henry Prize. In a sophisticated voice, he communicates postmodern Bombay with a finely calibrated balance of comedy and fury, evoking the great Victorian urban chroniclers such as Dickens and Mayhew while also introducing the reader to much that is truly new and odd.

Nayar and Mandira are two of the most talented women in the world (2018), Suketu Mehta's book, "This Land Is Our Land: An Immigrant Manifesto," draws on his family's personal experience relocating from India to Britain and America, as well as years of reporting around the world, to critically examine the worldwide anti-immigrant backlash. He contends that it is not immigrants who are destroying the West, but rather the fear of foreigners that is destroying the West. His book juxtaposes the fabricated myths of populist ideologues with the everyday heroism of laborers, nannies, and others, from Dubai to New York, and explains why more people are on the move today than at any other time in human history. Due to the fact that civil war and climate change have reshaped significant portions of the earth, it is no wonder that boundaries have become increasingly porous. *This Land is Our Land* also draws attention to the terrible legacy of colonialism and global inequality, which have left their mark on vast swaths of the globe. Today's immigrants can legitimately respond to the question, "Why are you here?" with the statement, "We are here because you were there." And, as Mehta

explains, once they arrive, immigrants bring a wealth of benefits that allow countries and communities to prosper. *This Land Is Our Land* is an impassioned, rigorous, and fully populated collection of unforgettable stories and characters that serves as an urgent and important intervention as well as a literary polemic of the highest caliber. Immigration is one of the few topics in American life that generates as much debate and controversy as it does. But do we fully grasp what it means? Suketu Mehta, a well-known novelist, takes a direct approach to the topic in her book *This Land Is Our Land*.

Suketu Mehta is an Indian film director. Mehta examines the global anti-immigrant backlash from the perspective of his own experience as an Indian-born youngster growing up in New York City, as well as his years of reporting experience around the world. As he demonstrates, immigration are not destroying the West; rather, fear of immigrants is destroying the West. The author contrasts the fabricated myths of populist ideologues with the everyday heroism of laborers, nannies, and others from Dubai to Queens, and explains why more people are on the move today than at any previous time in modern history. Due to the fact that civil war and climate change have reshaped significant portions of the earth, it is no wonder that boundaries have become increasingly porous. The corrosive legacy of colonialism and global inequality, on the other hand, is emphasized by Mehta throughout a wide range of regions in the world: It is quite acceptable for today's immigrants to answer, "We are here because you were there," when asked why they came to the country. And, as Mehta explains, once they arrive, immigrants bring a wealth of benefits that allow countries and communities to prosper. *This Land Is Our Land* is an impassioned, rigorous, and fully populated collection of unforgettable stories and characters that serves as an urgent and important intervention as well as a literary polemic of the highest caliber.

The title of Mehta's work, "This Land is Our Land: An Immigrant's Manifesto," says it all. As a passionate defense of people's right to migrate and a hymn of appreciation for multiculturalism, it also serves as an effective indictment of the attitudes of the United States government regarding immigrants and refugees during President Donald Trump's administration. Traveling and collecting varied migration experiences took the author a great deal of effort, and he took these efforts fairly seriously, as a big portion of the book is a cataloging of sufferings that individuals shared with him. He focuses mostly on the United States as a destination country, and he gives statistics and case studies to demonstrate where and how migration policies are failing to achieve their goals. Despite the excessive worries of the "Other," Mehta is battling the illusion that the surge of migrants will completely devastate the country. In addition, he reminds us of the historical and moral connection that exists between migration and colonialism. "We are the creditors," Mehta's grandfather responded when a British man inquired as to what he was doing in the United Kingdom. "We are the creditors," the Indian man replied. You took away all of our money [during the colonial period], and now we have come to claim our inheritance." This is Mehta's point of view as well. Apart from believing that the West has a moral need to accept people from nations that it once ruled or controlled, he also believes that the West's current military interventions in countries such as Iraq contribute to this obligation. "Before you demand that others respect the borders of the West, ask yourself whether the West has ever respected the borders of anyone else," he says.

### Conclusion

Migrants are required by developed countries for a variety of demographic and economic reasons. Mehta is well-versed in the nuances of being on the cusp of a culture, not here nor there, but in the midst

of it all, with all of the pitfalls and benefits that come with being able to move freely between the two zones. He has encountered bigotry in the United States, while at the same time realizing the advantages of having an American passport when traveling abroad in other parts of the world.

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