

**Tribhuvan University**

**Cultural Alienation in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Approval**

The Thesis entitled “Cultural Alienation in Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey*,” submitted to the Central Department of English, by Mr. Bhagavan Dhungana, has been approved by the undersigned research committee.

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## **Abstract**

Rohinton Mistry's novel, *Such a Long Journey* captures the inconsistencies of Indian cultural identity not only at home but also abroad. In doing so, the text turns out to be an expression of minority culture in India showing how the major culture create a crisis in the survival of the minority. In light of the issues central to the discourse of cultural alienation with displacement and crisis, the research has traced out cultural alienation of minority culture in Mistry's novel *Such a Long Journey*.

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## I. Introduction

The present research work is a critical study of Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*, from the perspective of cultural displacement and cultural crisis of Parsi community because of the encroachment of Shiv Sena culture. Mistry, through the mouth piece character Gustad Noble, tries to shed light on the socio-political and cultural scenario of Bombay during 1970. He shows how the people from the minority community are treated by the so called main stream culture, especially the right wing Hindu extremist, Shiv Sena culture. Because of the encroachment of Shiv Sena, the people of Parsi community are pushed into a stake, culturally socially and politically. This research tries to analyze how their culture is in the crisis and the main problems of their communal identity crisis.

Gustad Noble, the protagonist from Parsi community, feels cultural displacement because his culture is in crisis from the enforcement and domination of Shiv Sena culture. They try to challenge minority group of people by raising the issue of job security and the struggle for language identity. The protagonist feels culturally displaced and alienated as a cause of series of social, cultural and political problems in his life span. Some problems which pushes him into cultural displacement and alienation are: his father's bankruptcy, his son's refusal to go to Indian Institute of Technology, the post-effect of Indo-Chinese war that can be seen in the apartment building of Gustad Noble symbolized by the black out paper and how the central government is corrupt and giving the shelter to the political intrigue which directly affects the Parsi community's people like Gustad Noble, Jimmy Bilimoria and others.

Gustad Noble's response and worry about his son has got the past significance of his own past days where he has to suffer a lot, not getting chance to read though he has great enthusiasm. Gustad Noble's worry about future reflects on the community's

precarious status, which can best be seen in the following expressions: “What kind of life was Sohrab going to look forward too? No future for minorities, with all these fascist Shiv Sena politics and Marathi language nonsense. It was going to be like the black people in America-twice as good as the Whiteman to get half as much” (55). This assessment is problematic, as it patronizes and distorts the scope of Gustad’s foreboding. If the Shiv Sena manages to achieve its goals and puts its plans into practice, Sohrab’s future in Bombay will become insecure indeed. A closer look reveals that Sohrab’s situation is characterized by a dilemma and that his position might become dangerous if he remains in Bombay. Therefore given the racist attitude of the Party, Gustad seems to imply that the only way out for Sohrab is emigration. However, pointing out the condition of others who have to be “twice as good as the white man to get half as much. It was going to be like the black people in America” (Mistry 55). Migration and Diaspora are at the same time rejected as viable opportunities for a ‘good life’.

The post-effect of Indo-Chinese war can best be observed in black out paper taped over the glass panes of the windows and ventilators, in the apartment building of Gustad Noble. Gustad had put it up nine years ago, the year of the war with China. This event retrospects about the terrible situation for the people of Parsi as well as the personal crisis of the protagonist when he got an accident. It was also the dreadful situation of 1962. It also clarifies that they are not only getting troubled by the Shiv Sena but also the great fear and anxiety of their secure life in Bombay. This shows that the characters are in great fear and anxieties of their life by the event happened in the past.

While talking about the Indian political scenario, we can see many difficulties and drawbacks appeared. 1971, the year in which the novel is set, saw India’s Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in political trouble. Ved Prakash Malhotra, then cashier of

India's State Bank, claimed to have had a phone call from Indira Gandhi instructing him to pay six million rupees for the Bangladeshi freedom movement to a courier who would identify himself as 'Bangladesh Ka Babu' (Gentleman from Bangladesh). The man turned out to be Rustom Sohrab Nagarwala, a Parsi and former Army Captain, who had worked for Indian Intelligence. The Cashier complied but went to the Police later on. Nagarwala was caught shortly afterwards and later claimed to have mimicked India's voice. After a hasty trial of three days, he was sentenced to four years imprisonment and died in jail in 1972 under mysterious circumstances. The aforementioned expression shows that the people of Parsi community are not only suppressed by the Shiv Sena but also suffered from then Central Government.

Mistry's debut sheds a different light on the so-called Nagarwala affair, and that in a particular way. Instead of reproducing mainstream history, suggesting a reading from the margin, Mistry's secret history finds Indira Gandhi guilty of corruption and murder in the novel, *Jimmy Bilimoria, alias Major Uncle*, is the factional rendering of Sohrab Nagarwala. The text thus narrates the events of 1971 from the perspective of a member of a Parsi community. Regarding the issue, Mukherjee opines that, Mistry "attempts to make sense of actual historical events by narrativizing them by extending them beyond the curtain of silence in which the official discourses have tried to enshroud them" (41). On the one hand, Mistry's inscription of oral sources makes a claim for the value of indigenous cultural practices. The preservation of the community's cultural memory, on the other hand, allows the Parsis a point of identification because it works as a counter-discursive strategy challenging the hegemonic discourse of postcolonial Hindu Historiography. By laying bare the exclusions of the construction of postcolonial Indian national Identity, Mistry makes a stance against the Hindu majority's affirmation against one kind of difference (a Parsi

one). While the Parsi community is threatened by the exclusionist politics of Hindu nationalism, writing against the mainstream seems to be an option for a minority faced with extinction and marginalization.

While dealing with the methodology of this research, there is a probability to apply many theoretical perspectives. Among them present research work tries to analyze it through the point of view of cultural criticism because the title of this dissertation is also related with cultural issues and struggle for the sake of creating personal identity of the protagonist as well as his community. Gustad Noble is struggling in favor of his culture i.e. Parsi culture mainly against the encroachment of Shiv Sena and its issue of identity and language struggle. 1971's Indian scenario is also not in order because the country itself is involved in the war with Pakistan and at the same time different religious groups were in great tussle in order to fulfill their demand of job and comfortable life. Mainly the right wing Hindu extremist Shiv Sena raises its voice of job and in its name it started to change the name of road kept by British elites. They try to establish Maratha Raj in Bombay. In that critical situation the member of Parsi community feels culturally displaced because of the activities of changing the name of road creates identity crisis in the life of Parsi people.

This theory seems more appropriate because, the novel's main issues are mingled with different cultural aspects like identity crisis, cultural displacement, struggle for existence, loss of meaning and struggle for language. It will be more fruitful to deal with those aspects which are the relevant issues as the plot of novel carries through out the text. It also makes the analytical work more easier and believable keeping in regards with the valuable cultural perspective of different cultural theorists like; Homi K. Bhabha, Arun Prabha Mukherjee, Dodiya Jaydipsingh, Salman Rushdie,

and their critical sensibilities in course of forwarding the research work. These all cultural Critics try to analyze this text in different cultural point of view.

*Such a Long Journey* has immensely contributed to establish Mistry, an Indian Canadian novelist, a member of Parsi community, as an extraordinary figure in English literature. Since its publication it has drawn attention of many critics. As many critics and reviewers are pouring their critical sensibilities on it, the criticisms and reviews on text are also varied owing to different perspectives. Regarding the structure and plotting of the novel, Glenn O Carey in his review on *Such a Long Journey* comments this novel as:

Both microscopic and macrocosmic in its portrait of the various lives of Gustad Noble- his family life, his work as a bank clerk, and ultimately, his innocent participation in national intrigue. India's overall decay and corruption is evident everywhere, from the petty behavior of Noble's neighbors and friends to the double dealing of Indira Gandhi's regime , yet at the end, Gustad Noble, with much of his arduous journey of survival. (384)

The above mentioned review shed light that the novel has unique kinds of representation in terms of cultural modality. Furthermore, it encompasses the vast area of cultural, political and literary ideas. As Carey takes it as a family novel which is both microscopic and macrocosmic in its portrait of the various lives of the protagonist; it can be seen in the vast socio-political scenario of modern day Bombay of 1971.

Nevertheless, it has the political turmoil which affects the domestic life of the protagonist, a Parsi bank clerk whose fragmented life in modern era is alienated with in self. Talking about the text, Lucasta Miller, in the article "Heartland", analyses it in this way:

A novel about people. Although it evokes a sense of place, it has nothing of the travel writer's superficial "sights, sounds and smells of subcontinent" about it. And although it attempts to illuminate a particular political and religious culture. Place and politics are refracted through the experiences of one family [...] is both utterly unpretentious and brilliantly perceptive. (46)

Thus, Miller's comment categorizes the text both utterly unpretentious and brilliantly perceptive. It not only covers the personal traumas but also talks the issue of Parsi community as well as the political and religious culture of the protagonist. It encompasses through the personal life experience of Mistry but it says more than that. The 20<sup>th</sup> century world scenario is worried about such a grand issue. It shows that any literary text cannot go beyond the context. The supporting ideas can further represented that, "the book is fascinating [. . .] Mistry manages to convey a vivid picture of India through sharp affectionate sketches of Indian family life and a gift for erotic satire. While talking about the main issue and the setting of this book is remarkable [. . .] this is such an engrossing book that you don't want to miss a word" (Cover Page). The ideas further represents that the novel is set in Bombay against the backdrop of the Indian subcontinent and the birth of Bangladesh, telling the story of the peculiar way in which the conflict impinges on the lives of Gustad Noble, an ordinary man and his family.

The above mentioned lines clarify that an ordinary man, who represents his personal domestic life is victimized by the political conflict. Ultimately, the protagonist has been pushed towards personal depression and alienation. Giving more emphasis on the text, David Townsend, in his book *Multiple Pleasures in Mistry's Journey*, writes:

Rohinton Mistry's first novel creates a vivid picture of Indian family life and culture and tells a story rich in subject matter, characterization and symbolism. It is set in Bombay, when India went to war over what was later to become Bangladesh. This is the political context for the unfortunate events that disturbs the personal life of the kindhearted Parsiman, Gustad Noble and his family and friends. (62)

This review emphasizes on the main stream political scenario rather than the personal suffering of the characters and their family life. Furthermore the reviewer tries to focus on the simplicity and narrative style. The aforementioned reviews have given emphasis either one or the other aspects of the text. But basically, the present research work tries to analyze it through the point of view of the struggle one culture to the other culture in order to establish their existence meaningful. It tries to shed light in the cultural aspects basically in relation of the struggle of the main character Mr. Noble and his cultural crisis. How that cultural struggle brings loss and meaninglessness in the life of the protagonist? How his culture is in crisis? Why does the protagonist feel alienated? It tries to find out the main cause of the protagonist and his struggle for the sake of himself and his own culture that is Parsi. The review of literature shows that the main ideas mentioned above cannot meet its essence of the loss and cultural alienation of the protagonist Gustad Noble. So the cultural alienation in *Such a Long Journey* remains a virgin territory for the analysis of the text through cultural perspectives.

In order to prove the hypothesis at hand, the present research work has been categorized into four successive chapters. They include; introduction, which deals with the brief survey regarding its proposal and its respective process with new cultural modality. Methodology; deals with the study of the introduction and the origin of Parsi and Shiv Sena culture as far as practicable. It also tries to analyze it through the point of

view of cultural theory which is the main tool of this dissertation. Textual analysis; deals with the textual analysis in order to reach its essence of cultural criticism and the protagonist's struggle for existence in then political scenario of Bombay of 1971.

Conclusion; tries to conclude the ideas mentioned in above three chapters.

## **II. Methodology**

### **Cultural Theory and issues of Cultural Crisis**

The term culture has by now acquired a certain aura of ill-repute in social anthropological circles because of the multiplicity of its referents and the studied vagueness with which it has often been invoked. In any case, the culture concept to which this thesis will refer to has neither multiple referents nor any unusual ambiguity. Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their actions. Such actions then take the forms of social structure, the actually existing network of social relations. The idea of culture as people's whole way of life first arose in the late 18th century. Regarding culture E. B. Taylor defined culture in an ethnographic way. Taylor was more original in his definition of culture. For Taylor, "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society" (15). He further argues:

Culture is an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behavior that is both a result of and integral to human kind's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. Culture thus consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, and works of art, rituals, ceremonies and symbols. (25)

By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century such an ethnographic definition of culture has undergone massive change. There are at least two everyday common sense meanings of culture. The first is the 'best' achievements and products in art, literature, and music. The second is the artificial growth or development of microscopic organisms or species of

plants, a meaning deriving from a much older usage of the verb 'to cultivate'. It shows that culture as the study of 'collective representations' and their symbolic meaning as central to a sociological understanding of the social. In a very different tradition, culture can be known in sociology as one of the cultural sciences; concerned with values and meaning, developing concepts and interpretations relevant to the society in which they take shape.

Culture in the modern sense is taken in different way in different field of study. To distinguish society from biological or organic, the American anthropologist Kroeber has talked about culture as "the super organic, stressing that there was nothing about the varied cultures of the world which was biologically inherited. He made the important point that culture is learned and transmitted through groups and individuals in societies" (135). Culture is 'species specific' although other species can communicate through symbols, language being the most important symbol system. Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality to give alienating everyday aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure. As Bhabha rightly observes:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are deeply rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement [ . . . ] It is translational because such spatial histories of displacement [ . . . ] make the question how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. (172-173)

The transnational dimension of cultural transformation, migration, Diaspora, displacement, relocation, makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. It is from this hybrid location of cultural value- the transnational as the

translational-that the postcolonial intellectual attempts to elaborate a historical and literary project.

If we have to see the origin of culture; it is derived from the Latin word *cultura* which means the act of cultivation of the soil. Slowly and gradually, the term has been used in broader aspects such as the study of all aspects of human life, past and present. Anthropologists commonly use the term to refer to a society or group in which many or all people live and think in the same way. Likewise, any group of people who share a common culture- and in particular, common rules of behavior and a basic form of social organization- constitutes a society. Thus, the term culture and society are some what interchangeable. Saraswathi in her celebrated book *Post Coloniality: Reading Literature* defines that “the Culture, thus, belongs to the broader human consciousness that is both developed and shaped by society, religion, history and geography” (223). In this respect, the term culture refers to the people in the society who share common behaviors and ways of thinking through the feeling of oneness. Frederic Jameson defines culture as a vehicle that defines the relationship between groups. He writes that “no group has a culture all by itself. Culture is the nimbus perceived by one group when it comes into contact with and observes another one [ . . . ] then a culture is the objectification of everything alien and strange about the contact group” (271).

Considering Jameson’s observation it can be concluded that all people of a society collectively create and maintain culture. It is preserved in the forms knowledge, such as works of art, and traditions. Culture thus, is the pattern of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. A people’s culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, and

political and economic systems and in general their identity . Therefore, self-identity usually depends on culture, which is a source of identity.

Culture itself is so difficult to pin down, cultural studies is hard to define. Cultural study is not so much a discrete approach at all, but rather a set of practices. As Patrick Brantlinger has pointed out, a cultural study is not “a tightly coherent, unified movement with a fixed agenda but a loosely coherent group of tendencies, issues and questions” (276). This idea shows that culture cannot be confined within the narrow space of system and tradition led by any particular cultural group.

So arising amidst the turmoil of 1960s, cultural studies is composed of the elements of Marxism, Post structuralism, Post-modernism, Feminism, New historicism, Gender studies, Anthropological studies of race and ethnicity, Popular culture studies and postcolonial studies. Those fields that concentrate on social and cultural forces that either create community or cause division and alienation. This idea further represented as the aim of cultural criticism is something more than preserving, transmitting and interpreting culture or cultures. Rather, the aim is to bring together, in a common democratic space of discussion, diversities that had remained unequal largely because they had remained apart. As Lawrence Grossberg and others emphasized that the intellectual promise of cultural studies lies on its attempt to “cut across diverse social and political interests and address many of the struggles within the current scene” (1-3).

The cultural study transcends the confines of a particular discipline such as literary criticism. It is rather politically engaged and at the same time rejects the separation of ‘high’ and ‘low’ or elite and popular culture. In this regard *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Encyclopedia* defines cultural studies as:

an interdisciplinary field concerned with the role of social institutions in the shaping of culture. Today cultural study is recognized as a discipline or area of concentration in many academic institutions and has had broad influence in sociology, anthropology, history, literary criticism and philosophy. (665)

Like texts, cultures are seen as indeterminate sites of conflict that cannot be pinned to a single totalized meaning. So, the cultural study is a multi or post disciplinary field of inquiry which blurs the boundaries between itself and other different fields of study. These observations can perhaps be reduced to a single proposition that cultural studies refers to a multi stranded intellectual movement that places cultural analysis in the context of social formations. The ideas which this theoretical modality tries to pin down is to show the conflict between multicultural aspects rather than bi-cultural in that sense Shiv Sena as a multi layered culture where as a Parsi as a monocultured base.

In this regard it is more praiseworthy to discuss in brief about what is cultural alienation. The term alienation is taken as the separation from the contact of friends and creates a sort of alienated condition. In this sense the main character of this dissertation, Mr. Noble, is alienated because of the death of all friends, Jimmy, Dinshawji and Tehmul Lungra. On the other hand it is related to his cultural practices of Parsi also is in great challenge when the municipality breaks down the wall of Khodadad Building as a process of road widening scheme of the local government. In this sense there comes the matter of identity of the individual.

It is more praiseworthy to discuss in short about what is cultural identity before entering into other different aspects. The issue of identity that is related to the quest for origins is central to cultural studies. Cultural studies draws heavily on those approaches to the problem of identity that question what may be called orthodox

accounts of identity. Cultural studies draws on those approaches that hold the identity in response to something external and different from it.

Identity, which has become the central area of concern in cultural studies during ourselves to each other. Cultural studies explores how we come to the kinds of people we are; how we are produced as subjects; how we identify with descriptions of ourselves as male or female, black or white, young or old, Asian or Europeans. Thus, in this sense, identities, which are constituted or made, work as guarantee against a threat of annihilations. Identity is not transparent or unproblematic for critics like Stuart Hall, identity is a production, which is never complete always in process, and always constituted within representation. There are, according to Hall, at least two different ways of thinking about cultural identity, the first position defines cultural identity in terms of one shared cultures, a sort of collective on true self which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common Hall further comments:

within the terms of this definition our cultural identities reflects the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes, which provides us as 'one people' with stable unchanging and continuous frames of references and meaning. (111)

In the above quote, Hall says that a conception of cultural identity has played a critical role in all the post colonial struggles that have so profoundly reshaped our world. In the post-colonial situation, identity is shot through and through with difference and yet identity is directly needed. Cultural identity, which follows along the many points of similarity, has critical points of deep and significant difference that constitute what we really are, or rather what we have become. Hall writes about this notion of cultural identity:

Cultural identity... is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, Transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything, which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. (112)

In this sense, identity is subject to continuous play of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, waiting to be found, identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of past.

Reading the issue of cultural difference, Homi Bhabha, in the essay "The Commitment to Theory", employs the term as an opposition to draw a distinction between two ways of representing culture. Bhabha argues that it is insufficient to record signifiers of cultural diversity that merely acknowledges a range of separate and distinct systems of behaviors, attitudes and values. Such a framework may even continue to suggest that such differences are merely aberrant or exotic, as was implicit in imperialistic ethnographic. References to cultural diversity based on an assumption of pre-given cultural contents and customs give rise to anyone liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange or the culture of humanity.

Furthermore, the idea of cultural difference multiculturalism represents an attempt both to respond and control the dynamic process of the articulation of cultural difference. It administers a consensus based on a norm that propagates cultural diversity. Cultural diversity refers to the exchange of variety of culture .cultural diversity is a kind of acceptance and promotion of the variety of human culture and their different value system in a given society. Cultural diversity recognizes the importance of native languages, dress, traditions, and beliefs that govern self identity.

The loss of cultural identity through assimilation and pluralism is the main concern among the outlook of cultural diversities that see globalization and cultural imperialism as significant hindrance. When different cultures inhabit and conflict over differences in customs and learned behaviors particularly when one culture is at odds with the dominant or mainstream cultures. The difference in culture takes such critical condition where neither can they live happily nor are they able to come back to their own motherland. It creates the situation of memory and reminiscence in immigrants. In this regard the methodology of this research also deals the cultural alienation of minority culture because of the multiple referents and the conflict of the Shiv Sena and its cultural and political practices.

Cultural diversity means a kind of cultural performance of the immigrants in the dual world. The result of this dual culture requires another means where two cultures can be assimilated. The unknown and unconscious relationship between two cultures is in the need of interpretation. The intervention in the mind of new-settled people destroy the value of representation, this type of mental struggle challenges the past and the original sense of historical identity. At that time, the cultural signs become new to them. This situation creates cultural crisis in minority or marginal group.

### **Parsi Heritage and Community**

The Parsi is a small religious community in India. They are devoted to Zoroastrianism .Their ancestors fled from Islamic persecution in Iran (ancient Persia) during the eight century. The Parsis, named after the Persian province of Pars (or Fars), settled near Gujarat in North-West India. Now, about 125,000 people follow the faith originality propagated by the prophet Zoroaster between 1500 and 600 B.C.

*Encarta Reference Library* 2003 introduces Zoroastrianism as “a religion founded in

ancient Persia by the prophet Zoroaster .The doctrines preached by Zoroaster is preserved in his metrical Gathas (Psalms), which form part of the sacred scripture known as the Avesta” (1225).

The history of Parsi goes to the Vedic Aryan immigrants of India. Zoroaster racially was of the Indo-European Stock. It has been divided into two great sections. One group spread at Western direction to settle in Europe. Historians called this group, Celum group. The next group of Aryans moved east and further divided itself into two groups. Historians called this group, the Shatem. The word ‘Shatem’ is coined by Sanskrit word meaning also a hundred. This east bound Aryan’s one group settled in what is now India. Next group went to the land, which we now call Iran.

While language and history play an important part for the construction of the community’s self image, the novel also pays close attention to another pillar of Parsi identity, i.e. religion .The Parsis have been described as an ‘ethno-religious minority’, an assessment which testifies to the fact that within Zoroastrianism religion and ethnicity as markers of difference intermingle and eventually become indistinguishable. It is repeatedly emphasized that Zoroastrianism is a matter of birth; not of affiliation .It is not acquired by way of socialization but considered an integral part of one’s genetic heritage. Among the adherents of the Zoroastrian religion, the teaching of Zoroaster occupy an exceptional position .Zoroaster is the author of the five Gathas (chants) which are an integral part of Zoroastrianism’s sacred scriptures, the Avesta. In the Gathas, Zoroaster proclaimed a sole, omnipotent, and eternal God by the name of Ahura Mazda or Ormuzd he is later called, created the world and will preside over a final judgment on doomsday. He represents the good principle and rules over the Spenta Mainyu (good spirits). Ahura Mazda and the Spenta Mainyu are opposed by the Angra Mainyu (evil spirits).

The Zoroastrian world view is binarist. It distinguishes between the present world and eternity as well as between heaven and hell and the spiritual and the material world. Life according to Zoroastrian doctrine presents itself as a clash between the principle of good and evil that is acted out in this world; The Gathas distinguish between two kinds of people, those following the God of order (asha) and those following the principle of disorder, wickedness or the lie (druj). Everyone is called upon to position himself in relation to this dichotomy. The human individual, according to Luhrmann;

Participates in a battle between good and evil in which his or her own freely chosen actions determine the battle's outcome. It is usually accepted that God will ultimately win the war, but only through human initiative. (69)

Recommended human initiatives, support of the principle of 'Asha', consist first of all, in a commitment to purity. Further Luhrmann put forward his views that "in some sense Zoroastrianism is no more than a ritualistic commentary upon purity and pollution" (101). Whatever opinion one shares, for a Zoroastrian dead matter, like corpses, or any substance leaving the body (breath, spit, excrement, sperm and blood) are contaminated. The elements, especially water, earth and fire, are divine emanations, and kept pure from defilement. The so-called 'powers of silence' erected in order to grant the purity of these elements on top of these buildings the Parsis have their deceased eaten by vultures.

Zoroastrianism, a dominant religion and its religious beliefs influenced Judaism, Christianity, and later Islam. These people follow the prophet Zoroaster. Their rituals pay formal respect to Hindu Customs and rituals while articulating their own religious and ethnic identity. In a sense, they are hybridized community. Parsis

negotiated cultural identity with Hindu religion. Drawing similarity between Parsi and Hindu, Donald Eugen Smith, Writes:

The Parsi rituals invocation of the fire is called yasna, which corresponds to the Hindu rituals of Yagna. The Parsis wear Kusti (a holy thread around their waist), which corresponds to the Hindu Yagnopavit or Janai worn around the shoulder and the wrist. There are many other similarities in their cuisine, manners and mannerisms, attitudes etc; some of which are due to their common Indo-Aryan origin and some others due to a cultural interchange due to the residence of the Parsis in India for 1300 years. (140)

Their identity does not come from a multitudinous community. They, moreover, align with specific religious ideals. In Parsi community the identity negotiated and performed in the context of cultural anxiety. So, they are united and have communal feelings. In an interview with W.J.T. Mitchell about Parsi, Homi Bhabha says:

Parsi came together most communally over the dining table. Their Cuisine is important to them. Certain type of secular, liberal ideas of honor, civility professions expertise, and professional integrity is important communal ideas. (12)

Parsis, in this way have intercultural tolerance .Basically as Bhabha says Parsis worship in fire temples. In addition, they wear ‘Sarda’ or sacred shirt and a ‘Kasti’ or sacred thread like Hindu. The largest Parsi community is in Bombay, yet there are also Parsis in other cities like Karachi in Pakistan and Banglore in India. However, the population of Parsi community is diminishing. Rahmann, Maseeh says that: “the population of Parsi community is diminishing due to its unwillingness to accept

conversion to the faith; the Parsis maintain the importance of their purity in the face of high death rates and low birth rates” (130).

The main problem for Parsis is their ever dwindling birth rate. As Maseeh views the main cause for, it is their unwillingness to accept conversion. He stresses the need of liberalism in Parsi community to which many Parsis disagree. The Parsis were granted the right to settle on the coast of Gujarat provided they would not be disruptive to society and be willing to acculturate. The local rajah expected them to explain their religion to him, to henceforth adopt Gujarati as their native tongue, to dress according to local customs, to dispense with weapons altogether and to practice their faith only after nightfall so as to avoid giving offence to the local Hindu majority. As the Parsis complied with the rajah’s conditions, they were allowed to settle in Sanjan and since that time proved loyal to their respective rulers.

The trajectory of the Parsis since early modern times is impressive. Starting out as a rural community consisting predominantly of Farmers, Weavers and Carpenters, the Parsis quickly became wealthy merchants and industrialists. As a matter of fact, their rise as a community is closely connected to the British penetration of India. Parsi knowledge of trade and country became a crucial instrument in the British development of the Indian market. The community made a name for itself by serving the colonizers as cultural translators. Regarding their involvement and support to the British Kulke opines:

The British(as well as other European powers)preferred to transact their business with the Indian hinterland through Parsee agents and ‘brokers’, who, can the one hand, had at their disposal the necessary knowledge of land and language, but whose minority role in Indian

society, on their hand, gave them flexibility in commerce with foreigners. (32)

When the British shifted their centre of trade from Surat to Bombay, the Parsis as ship builders and industrious merchants were encouraged to settle there. They played an important part in the development of Bombay whose dockyard they built and owned for a long time. As a consequence of their entrepreneurial success, the Parsis became India's most urbanized and most prosperous community. With their assistance, Bombay developed into the center of Indian economy and industry and became the focal point of Parsi life and culture.

Identification with the British and their life style led to an extraordinary degree of Westernization among the Parsis. They developed a taste for western music and became fanatic cricket players. Parsi anglophilia also led to the foundation of clubs modeled on the Victorian gentleman's favorite place of recreation. Members of the community began to dress in a distinctly Western way and surrounded themselves with Western furniture. While the role the community played under the British was disproportionate to their number, the Parsis were marginalized in postcolonial times. The community lost its privileged position in the emergent Indian nation state. Many members of the community felt that an acceptable positioning within Indian society would become increasingly different and decided to leave India for the International Diaspora. Parsis had been in India a thousand years, they count as Indians. This process of 'cultural inversion' becomes evident in Dinshawji's complaint about the change of street names in *Such a Long Journey*. At present the member of Parsi community and their position is marginal, they do not seem to be in the elitist position mainly because of the encroachment of the elitist group or religion of 1970s Bombay.

## The Shiv Sena

The Shiv Sena is a local party with considerable influence in Maharashtra. Founded in 1966, the party started out as a small faction advocating the reservation of jobs in the lower ranks of white-collar workers. The name of the party translates as ‘Army of Shiva’, a name drawing attention to its radical religious motivation. The Shiv Sena is a right-wing Hindu organization that openly advocates racist goals and agitates against South Indian immigrants, mostly from Tamil Nadu, who were blamed for the scarcity of jobs in Bombay. As Jayant Lele points out “the Sena raised the Bogey of ‘the other’-the religious other, the Muslims, the linguistic other, those who came from other parts of India” (62).

The name of the Party comes from the great Hindu warrior, Shivji Bhonsle, known for his great courage and strong determination to fight the Muslim rulers in India. Bal Thackeray named his political party after Shivji to reassert the party’s nationalist identity and ideology. “Sena” literally means the warrior of Shivji. In 1966, Bal Thackeray formed the Shiv Sena party in Bombay, located in the western states of Maharashtra. Initially Shiv Sena used the rhetoric of nativism to demand that Bombay was the capital of the state of Maharashtra, only Maharashtrians should be given the opportunity to make the most of what their city had to offer. Since 1990s Shiv Sena has embraced Hindu nationalism and their rhetoric has become virulent in its attacks of Muslims in India.

The Shiv Sena party arose as a Hindu nationalist with slogan of “say with pride that we are Hindu” (*garva se kaho hum hindu hai*). In Hindi, not Marathi. This incantation as a counter piece of Shiv Sena events would have been scarcely imaginable in the early years of Shiv Sena. Both the stress on the Hindu identity and use of Hindi in political sloganeering are indicative of a major shift in the politics of

regionalism in Western India. This turn to Hinduism is what seemed to underlie the outbreak of violence in Bombay on a scale never before witnessed in the city. It is a shift in which the once-local, nativist party in Bombay, the Shiv Sena now finds itself the dominant political force in the state of Maharashtra, with a ready capacity to incite widespread violence, extract rents and shape public policy and legislative initiative.

The Shiv Sena effectively exploited a discursive opportunity to link its own locally produced version of militant Hinduism with the politicized Hinduism that has been rapidly spreading throughout North India since the mid-1980s. It has got no more vital space in other parts and able to take hold in Bombay and in Maharashtra due to the tightly structured and coercive characters of Shiv Sena as an organization operating in a political milieu that was increasingly fractured and undirected. As long as the Shiv Sena continued to focus on local, nativist issues alone, its political appeal beyond the metropolitan reach of Bombay city was limited. And yet its turn to the ideology of Hindutva would have been of less far-reaching implications were it not for party's organizational strengths and the incapacity of other party and state institutions to respond. In the case of Shiv Sena, Hindutva and Maharashtra, this has everything to do with the Sena's organizational wizardry and coercive practices and with the weakened institutional structures in the state of Maharashtra.

After its establishment in Bombay in 1966 it contested municipal elections two years later, winning one-third of the seats in the municipal corporation. From its beginning, the party made its imprints on local politics by championing the economic interests of Maharashtrians whose jobs, the party claimed, were being usurped by outsiders, particularly south Indians, and outsider immigrants, living in Bombay Shiv Sena rebounded onto the political scene in 1985, winning 70 seats on municipal corporation, up from the 21 seats it had won in 1978. From the mid-1980s, the party

under went an ideological makeover, reordering its agenda to emphasize themes of Hindu nationalism. The Shiv Sena chief, Bal Thackeray, stepped up his anti-Muslim diatribe, urging his followers to take up a holy war or dharma yuddh. Shiv Sena's sponsored Hindu festivals and celebrations became more lavish and elaborate; the party reached out to try to create an alliance of Hindu minded parties, calling a meeting in 1994 of seven Hindu parties. After it's collaboration with BJP, Shiv Sena tried to establish; as a major political parties taking part in different elections of the nation.

After its preliminary years of establishment, mainly the Shiv Sena and its followers tried to create convulsion with other religious groups agitating against the security of the jobs in white collar officers and side by side language identity. In this regard, they tried to change the name of streets creates cultural identity crisis in the life of some characters as well as the Parsi community in the main issue of cultural encroachment in this novel.

Mistry shows that Indian national identity construction relies on a strategy of othering that threatens to victimize the Parsis. The Shiv Sena in this novel is represented by the characters as a very real threat to a distinct Parsi identity. The Shiv Sena criticizes rudely telling the Parsi community as Parsi-crow eaters" (SLJ 39), thereby mocking the community's burial rites, Dinshawji fears that the Parsis might become second class citizens in the near future. The central importance to the Shiv Sena's agitation is issues of language and language planning. The party advocates a translation of English road names into Marathi and overlooks the effects that such a step has on the former colonial elite of the Parsis.

The people of Parsi community face similar nature of torture, and domination by the so called nationalist group (the Shiv Sena) in the name of demanding job

security. They wanted to establish a Marathi Raj in Bombay and demand job security in the white collar offices where they are not getting their job in easy way. As a result of their demand, they try to vandalize other minority group like Parsi, whose status, at the time of colonial elite is highly praised because they are highly skillful in the work of banking, marines and different other places. In order to construct the identity of Shiv Sena, they started to attack other minority group mainly Muslims and Parsi, who were the immigrants from different parts of the country. Shiv Sena and their cadres started to change the name of streets of Bombay from English into Marathi, this step of changing, creates identity crisis in the life of some characters of this novel.

In the name of widening road, the municipal government break down the wall of the building of Khodadad, which is the focal point for the people of Parsi, which they regard as their main habitat and the wall stands for their secure place from the attack of outsiders. As a result of smash down the wall, creates crisis in their life security and pushed them in the verge of displacement. It is the political, social and religious cause, which compelled them towards extinction in the near future. They faced severe attacks in their cultural- religious practices too, taking the burial rites and the Shiv Sena criticizes them as a “Parsi-Crow Eater”, mocking over the funeral ceremony of Parsi people.

In such a context, Mistry’s debut novel *Such a Long Journey* tries to trace out the critical situation faced by the protagonist, Gustad Noble because of the direct attack from the side of Hindu Nationalist, Shiv Sena and indirectly from the side of central government blaming in the scandal of so called Nagarwala Affair. They trace the inconsistencies of Indian cultural identity of immigrants who migrated from other parts especially in Bombay. They create a problematic situation where duality takes place. As a result Parsi member and community feel culturally alienated and displaced.

### III. Textual Analysis

#### Memory of Loss and Betrayal in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*

The multi-layered novel, which acclaimed a Booker Prize and winner of the Canadian Governor- General's Fiction Award, can be read in terms of the importance of physical, social and political details. They are- sociological facts as well as for what they come to symbolize and which has received much critical acclaim in the west as well as in India. The fictional world that Mistry's debut novel *Such a Long Journey* centers on is a lower middle class people especially the Parsi community of Bombay. It is a novel with epic ambitions – the story on the surface of the life of the virtuous Bombay clerk Gustad Noble develops a tale of a minority community and its fears, anxieties and sense of Powerlessness. It is thus obvious that Mistry has in this novel included various narratives with the central narrative of Gustad Noble. Avadesh Kumar Singh observes it as “the story of middle-class Parsi protagonist, re-narrating a country and community, in the vein of Post-colonial writers who endeavour to postulate their own versions of history of their people” (193). The protagonist is at first overwhelmed by feelings of loss and insecurity but comes through several chastening experiences of a changed man.

Adding about the protagonist Amritjit Singh opines that “Gustad Noble, is a little man who holds on to his dignity, strength, and humanity in a sweltering tide of disappointment, confusion, betrayal and corruption” (214). He is an ordinary Bank clerk who shares the social invisibility and anonymity of the average low middle class Indian. He was once the grandson of a prosperous and highly esteemed furniture dealer, and son of a reputed bookseller who allowed himself to be betrayed into bankruptcy by an irresponsible brother. Gustad despairs at being reduced to a cramped existence in his Khodadag Building apartment with his wife and three

children. Gustad therefore pins all his hopes on Sohrab, his eldest son, who is a bright and intelligent boy for an escape and elevation from his middle class existence. And which seemed to be within reach when his son gained admission to the coveted Indian Institute of Technology.

But Sohrab's act of defiance in refusing to join the IIT leads to anger and bitterness and a breach in the relationship between son and father. At the dinner party, Sohrab bursts out, "I'm sick and tired of IIT, IIT, and IIT all the time. I'm not interested in it. I'm not a jolly good fellow about it, and I'm not going there [. . .] Fool yourself if you want to" (48). Gustad equates Sohrab's betrayal with the loss of a dream, of an escape route from the present. It shows that the protagonist and his personal world is not secure as the family tie is weakened and creates a personal crisis.

Another source of bitterness and supposed 'betrayal' for Gustad is Major Jimmy Bilimoria, a great friend and tenant of the Khodadad building, with whom he is used to do the Kustis at dawn. Bilimoria had vanished one morning without saying a word to anyone, as Gustad comes to know later, to join Research and Analysis Wing, a wing of the Indian Intelligence Service. The vacuum created in their friendship with major's sudden departure had been gnawing at Gustad to the extent that he finds fault with friendship.

Yet, Gustad cannot help but remember Jimmy. He remembers his indebtedness to Jimmy for taking him to the bone-setter when he had the accident, "What would I have done that day without Jimmy, he wondered [. . .]" (SLJ 60). Though separated in physical space and time, Major Bilimoria, is interestingly present at the dinner-table with the Nobles and Dinshawji, in spite of the outburst against him, Gustad's mind is filled with gratitude for Jimmy Bilimoria. If it hadn't been for

Jimmy's taking him to Madhiwala Bonesetter, he would be a complete cripple today. Instead, here he was, without crutches or stick.

The memories are almost always followed by Gustad's seeking comfort from the past. The furniture company of his grandfather and his father's bookstore are the models for all his subsequent misreading of Jimmy Bilimoria and Sohrab. The protagonist in this sense tries to analyze present situation with his nostalgic past.

The major cause of Gustad's frustration in life is his son Sohrab who thwarts his father's plans. What was left, he asked himself, after the very purpose he had struggled and worked and waited for all these years-after that purpose was callously shattered by his own son and dropped clattering in the rubbish-pail, like his application forms. All I wanted was for him to have a chance at a good career. The chance wrenched away from me. .But in actual fact, what has been shattered is Gustad's own vicarious search for liberation from his lower-class status and closing horizons. The end of the story for Gustad is always loss and death.

The real betrayal, however, is not by son or brother, but by the government. Increased as he is by Jimmy's 'betrayal', Gustad reluctantly and after some delay, reads Jimmy's letter. Acting on the contents of the letter, Gustad unwittingly gets involved in a plot fraught with dangerous implications that could well have wrecked his life and career. With the help of friend Dinshawji, Gustad deposits vast sums of money sent by Bilimoria through an accomplice, Ghulam Mohammad for Bilimoria's secret purpose. Bilimoria tells Gustad about Indira Gandhi and the betrayal of his faith in her. Gustad is shaken by what he hears. Imprisoned and later hospitalized, Bilimoria reveals more details of the shady deals and plans outlined by Indira Gandhi and how he was tricked into making a confession of his guilt in the entire scandal. Gustad is baffled as to how Bilimoria could have trusted her completely.

The events surrounding the life and death of Jimmy Bilimoria are clearly shown in Nagarwala case. Mistry uses this incident to bring together the personal and the political; the abuse of power and the corruption among the political elite reach out menacingly into the private lives of ordinary citizens. There are other vexing problems at home and the bank leaving Gustad a very bewildered and unhappy person. His daughter Roshan's recurring sickness depressed him. He is saddened by the death of his friend and colleague Dinshawji, who had for years hidden his bodily afflictions and his domestic anguish behind his clowning exterior. Also frustrating are the little annoyances in and around the lower middle class Parsi enclave that include the wall outside the building used as a public urinal; too little space and too much noise in and around his apartment. Mistry places these happenings in Gustad's life in 1971's India, when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was at the height of her power and East Pakistan was getting ready to become Bangladesh.

An Observation of how Mistry weaves into the story certain historical facts reveals that the novel becomes a platform for the expression of betrayed hope and loss of faith at the national level. Gustad's fears and anxieties stem from not merely personal troubles or national politics but also from a perceived threat to his Parsi identity. Mistry's novel deals with the Parsi community and its identity, with its national consciousness. As a community, it has not only lived peacefully amidst the vast Indian culture but has also accepted the land and contributed to development in its own way. But the nationalization of banks in 1969 destroyed their hegemony on banking system, as Dinshaw ruminates,

What days those were, Yaar. What fun we used to have [. . .] Parsis were the kings of banking in those days. Such respect we used to get.

Now the whole atmosphere only has been spoiled. Ever since that  
Indira nationalized the banks. (SLJ 38)

The above quote tries to clarify the condition of Parsi in the time of colonial elite but at present they are suppressed by the so called elite community, the Shiv Sena.

Dinshawji also voices his fear and grief over the loss of familiar names under pressure of the Shiv Sena. To Gustad's question what is in a name? He counter-asserts that renaming is an infliction of linguistic violence on social identity.

Counterpoised to the dignity and struggle of the present are memories of the security and cultural dignity of the past. Governing Gustad's emotions of loneliness, fear, insecurity and skepticism is an all pervading sense of loss of what the past had symbolized. Some of the most evocative passages in the novel are those facts of remembrance that mourns the loss of a social pattern of life associated with childhood and his grandparents making the connection between the past and tradition inseparable, and pitting the past value system of 'us 'against that of' them'.

It is for this reason that the novel has been described as a novel of the memory of loss wherein journeys undertaken retreat back into the comfort of the past. *Such a Long Journey* is not optimistic about India- partly, inevitably, because we see it from the viewpoint of an insecure minority, the Parsis- but Mistry's encompassing vision is broader, its idealism tempered by a search for individual humanity and self-sacrifice against the odds of squalid poverty and cynicism. Symbolizing the novelist's mature vision is the way reconciliation has been effected between Gustad and Jimmy Bilimoria. Persistent pleadings on the part of Ghulam Mohammad lead a reluctant Gustad to undertake a journey to Delhi to meet Bilimoria, sick in hospital.

Jimmy makes sure that Gustad does not get into trouble with the money he has deposited in the bank. Jimmy refuses to confess the authorities where the money is

hidden. Jimmy's regeneration is then as a friend who will die before he will betray his brother. When Gustad reaches the hospital and meets the Major, he explains why he did not tell them about the missing money:

Had to protect you and Ghulam [. . .] did not want any trouble for you  
[. . .] What has happened has happened. I just wanted to talk to you.  
To make sure you don't think I tried to trick you. You were so angry.  
Ghulam told me [. . .] in your place I would also have been. But I was  
hoping [. . .] you will forgive me now. (SLJ 280)

The lines mentioned above try to give focus on the matter of the scandal and the apology made by Jimmy not to betray and create crisis to his friends. It also clarifies that the people of minority are suppressed by the elitist creating and involving the character in the public scandal which is evident in concern with the arrest of Jimmy Bilimoria, a member from Parsi community.

Yet another friend who does not enact the code of betrayal is Dinshawji, who used to come to his bedside when he was recuperating after the accident and update him with his bank bulletin. Risking his job, Dinshawji helps to deposit a vast sum of money in Gustad's possession for Bilimoria's secret purpose. Life, as Gustad comes to realize slowly, has vital interconnections which mark new matrices of relationships with a greater sense of indebtedness. Gustad is convinced that he is the cause of his friend's death; hence the prick of conscience, Gustad's code of betraying brother now doubles back on him. At Dinshawji's funeral, Gustad comes to a new understanding of life's journey.

He is touched by Dinshawji's death, but not moved to tears. There is a highly charged meeting between Ghulam and Gustad after the funeral. Gustad here arrives at the crisis point in his life. Each visit to the Tower of Silence has radically shaken him.

For instance, on his second visit to the Tower, Gustad's mind is a canvas of a wide range of emotions where the colors are subdued and expresses his sorrow of loss of his friends. He ruminates over as:

I feel Jimmy's loss too, he wanted to say, but I cannot cry. He offered his hand, Ghulam took it, and then drew him forward to hug him, kissing both cheeks. Thank you for coming, Mr. Noble, he whispered, 'or Bili boy would have been alone. Thank you very much. (SLJ 322)

Gustad seems afraid to acknowledge for others compassion and humanity he has always shown Tehmul, the half-wit. In the final scene of the novel, after a brick has fatally hit Tehmul in the riots that accompany the municipality's attempt to remove the wall around the Khodadad Building. This present details tries to pin down the personal suffering faced by the protagonist because of the death of his own community's members. After the death of those members Gustad is totally alienated and confined himself with in the memory of the past incidents.

The wall was dear to Gustad as the "sole provider of privacy, especially for Jimmy and Gustad when they did their Kustis at dawn. Over six feet high, the wall ran the length of the compound, sheltering them from non-Parsi eyes" (SLJ 32). The wall is the private idyll for the practice of cultural ritual of Parsi people. The novel's last public act is the demolition of this wall as part of a superfluous road-widening scheme, coinciding ironically with an ineffectual demonstration against municipal corruption. The demolition of wall creates some sort of cultural alienation and it shows that their future is no more secure to perform their cultural practices safely.

### **Fear and Temptation in *Such a Long Journey***

This sub topic tries to analyze the text in terms of the protagonist and his suffering, keeping the aim to fulfill and clarify the issue raised in this research. *Such a*

*Long Journey* shows how the political maneuvering and corruption in the centers of power affect them. Gustad, the protagonist reveals his anxiety for the people of his community thus,

No future for minorities, with all these fascist Shiv Sena politics and Marathi language nonsense. It was going to be like the black people in America-twice as good as the Whiteman to get half as much. (SLJ 55)

These lines clarify that the life of Parsi in Bombay is in crisis whenever there established Marathi speaking people and their demand of job as an intertexture of black American people in America

Gustad experiences the visitations of fear and temptation one after another. In spite of his fears and anxieties he challenges the fateful chances conspiring against his hope and temptation so as to compensate his loss of fortune and happiness. But formidable events do occur, and they reverse his course of life. One such event involves his possession of the lakh rupees from Bilimoria. His own neighbors testify to his possession of the amount to the police. This scene recreates the controversial Nagarwala case in which sixty lakhs of rupees was drawn from the bank impersonating the then Prime minister, Indira Gandhi. The implication of a member of the Parsi community in this crime not only brought ignominy to the community but also a sense of fear about attempted wiping out the Parsis from this hemisphere.

The fear stricken Gustad is symbolically delineated by the novelist so as to drive home his phobia with a grain of psychological realism. In this context, the headless, truncated body of the bandicoot that Gustad looks at with nausea serves as an objective correlative for illustrating his neurosis or complex of fear. Similarly Sohrab's realization of his father and embraces him. The scene charged with intense

emotion throws light on the forgiving father who still nurses temptations of keeping his son under the spell of his protecting love and concern. To quote from the text:

Gustad turned around. He saw his son standing in the door way, and each held the other's eyes. Still he sat; gazing up on his son, and Sohrab waited motionless in the door way, till at last Gustad got to his feet slowly. Then he went up and put his arms around him. Yes, said Gustad running his blood stained finger once through Sohrab's hair 'yes', he said, 'yes' and hugged him tightly once more. (SLJ 337)

The dramatic reunion of the father and the son demonstrates the fulfillment of the father's temptation to keep his son integrated within the family fold in practical terms. And it is also an indication of the father's fear about his drifting son.

Apart from Gustad in *Such a Long Journey*, another character Dinshawji also experiences the spate of fear when he feels a sense of displacement at the changing of names. According to him, names play an important role both in a city and a nation as a whole. Hence he reveals his anguish thus, "Names are so important. I grew upon Lamington road. But it has disappeared; in its place is Dadasaheb Bhadkhamkar Marg. My school was on Carnac Road. Now suddenly it's on LokmanyaTilak Marg. I live a Sleater Road. Soon that will also disappear" (SLJ 74). Here Dinshawji echoes the sentiments of the majority who are not at all taken into accounts of by the elitists who rule the country after the exit of the English rulers.

*Such a Long Journey* is concerned with discourses of sameness and difference not only on a literal but also on a metaphorical level. Boundary negotiation structures the novel in two ways, i.e. with respect to the problem of making meaning and as regards the issue of cultural difference and identity politics. In order to prevent Khodadad Building from becoming a potential target for the enemy's air strikes, the

windows of Gustad's flat are covered with blackout paper. Grotesquely enough, the blackout paper is not removed for years although the danger has long ceased to be imminent: "Gustad had put it up nine years ago, the year of the war with China" (SLJ 9). The everyday reality of 1971, together with the psychological reality of his traumas, is unpleasant and threatening for the protagonist of Mistry's first novel. Both have the power to unsettle the microcosm of his world. His fear of light is complemented by an obsession with darkness: "It was pitch dark but he did not switch on the light, for the darkness made everything seem clear and well-ordered" (SLJ 6). Darkness discloses the escapist character of Gustad's private idyll. There can be no doubt that this idyll, characterized by the exclusion from the political reality of the war of 1971 and the exclusion of painful events of the past, is a construction.

The blackout paper is not the only boundary erected and defended in this novel in order to exclude an allegedly hostile environment. The compound wall of Khodadad building becomes a line of defense against the road widening scheme which is feared by Gustad. As an enclave of peace and respite, the compound provides the Nobles and their neighbors with a refuge from the noise and turmoil of Bombay. Not only is it an island-like space where the retarded and innocent Tehmul can live a protected life. The compound also is a space where Gustad can derive meaning from practicing his religion in comfortable seclusion:

With the increase in traffic and population, the black stone wall became important than ever. It was the sole provider of privacy, especially for Jimmy and Gustad when they did their Kustis at dawn. Over six feet high, the wall ran the length of the compound, sheltering them from non-Parsi eyes while they prayed with the glow spreading in the east. (SLJ 82)

The fall down of the wall destroys a source of refuge and meaning for the future because it destroys the memory of the past: “For the briefest of moments he felt the impending loss cut deeply, through memory and time; the collapse of the wall would wreck the past and the future” (SLJ 329). A reduced awareness of time and place signifies a severe threat to the resources of meaning in Gustad’s life.

In the course of the novel, the boundary of the compound wall is affected by two factors. First of all, it is threatened (and eventually turned down) by the municipality in the course of the road widening scheme. Secondly, the value of the wall for Gustad is reduced considerably by urinals and defecators. The wall as dividing line no longer guarantees absolute protection but offers merely relative shelter from the environment, i.e. the world outside. When Gustad decides to fortify his defenses by having the pavement artist paint the wall with Indian deities, he appropriates art to turn a profane wall into a sacred place of worship.

Khodadad Building, like Firozsha Baag, can be read as a microcosm of the Parsi community in India. The wall provides Gustad’s prayers with a space apart from an allegedly secular India. As such, the loss of the wall reflects an exposed position of the Parsis on a metaphorical level. It is said to minimize the contact with Indian reality, something which is regarded as inherently problematic. Within such a reading, the usefulness of the wall becomes rather ambivalent and figures as a protecting wall. If the wall is instrumental in preserving “the Parsi in his self-sameness and hierarchical privilege, and to protect him from the threat of difference, of otherness itself “ ( SLJ 98). In the eyes of self-centered Parsi community the outside world becomes an other who is excluded rather than actively engaged with. Wall and blackout paper signify not merely protection; both can be seen as boundaries which eventually prevent an active engagement with Indian reality. In this context, the

pluralism of religions advocated by the wall can be read as a means to a rather egotistical end. In a way, religious tolerance is overridden by the desire that Parsism might continue to rule supreme.

*Such a Long Journey* can be read as a novel about the struggle of its protagonist eager to realize his idea of a meaningful life. On a symbolical level, *Such a Long Journey* therefore not only alludes to the notion of life-as-journey but also to the tradition of life-as-struggle. Rather, Gustad's struggle takes on the quality of a search for meaning in human existence, figuring as faithfulness, reliability and constancy. Gustad has to learn that these values are difficult to realize permanently, as too many factors turn out to be incalculable and uncontrollable for the subject in the context of secularization, fragmentation and ontological chaos. The compound is eventually diminished, and the wall with the artist's oil paintings is ironically brought down at the end of the novel. *Such a Long journey* identifies the longing for permanence, epitomized by the blackout paper and the wall, as a source of cultural sterility and human sorrow.

The above mentioned details try to give focus on different aspects of the protagonist Gustad Noble and his identity crisis from different relations which he regards challenging and threatening in his life and he feels alienated and his community and his other Parsi members also feels displaced because of the direct and indirect domination from the side of elitist i.e. Shiv Sena, and the central government led by Indira Gandhi and others. The idea is getting focused through the expression of different characters in this text as well.

The main analytical part of this dissertation is to look after the multiple traumas faced by protagonist, as a member of Parsi, who is fade up with family tension as well as from the side of Local fascist culture led by the Maharashtrians

nonsense. As according to the title of this dissertation this analytical study tries to clarify the cultural aspects. Through out the text by the multiple referents of the protagonist's struggle for the survival mingled with different problems. Both issues are in crisis and about to displace because of the direct and indirect encroachment of Shiv Sena and the central government of then scenario of Bombay. It also shows that the people of minority is suppressed and dominated by the elitist in the name of job security and the establishment of their Marathi raj in Bombay creates cultural alienation and they feel displaced and their life is insecure.

#### IV. Conclusion

The discourse of cultural alienation finds a powerful expression in Mistry's novel and the present research expose that Mistry's character undergoes the crisis due to the encroachment and cultural alienation in the 1970's Bombay. Culture as a source of identity appears to be critical in providing a sense of belonging to people. Cultural root, sense of location, nostalgia and present condition of alienation always find expressions in their activities, as it has been evident in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*.

Basically because of the encroachment of Shiv Sena and the central government, most of the characters like Gustad, Dinshawji and others feel insecure and displaced. The protagonist Gustad Noble experiences different series of problems one after another throughout the novel. Even at the end portion of the novel, while the municipal government destroys the wall of the Building, he feels the existential crisis of Parsi people and as a whole the Parsi community. As such the loss of the wall reflects an exposed position of the Parsis on a metaphorical level. The wall guarantees the Parsis a privileged space apart, that many members of the community in the novel seem essential to the practice of their culture, religion being a case in point. For in the eyes of the self-centered Parsi community the outside world becomes other which is excluded rather than actively engaged with.

At the end of the novel, the process of learning that Gustad has undergone makes him dispense with blackout paper, and the wrecking of the wall proves a blessing in disguise. Both instances suggest that *Such a Long Journey* eventually questions the validity of categorical exclusion as a means to construct a self image. The fate of the most of the characters is determined by the vagaries of relations- within family, caste, class, community and nation. Most of the characters appear

claustrophobic, trapped within the cloister of their unfulfilled dreams, residing in caverns whose walls are decorated with images of hope and prosperity.

In this regard we can slot down the idea that conflict is observed in this text between two cultures mainly in the issues of job security and the establishment of Maratha Raj as well as of language struggle. Parsi people feel their culture is in crisis when the Shiv Sena raised the issue of language identity and the job security in the offices of white collar against the people of other community who are migrated from other parts of the country. Similarly, the main character of this novel also expresses his worry about the insecure future of the minority community in Bombay.

Finally, all the members of Parsi community feels culturally displaced and alienated from the domination and fear created by the central government led by Indira Gandhi and right wing Hindu extremist Shiv Sena, which forces minority culture on the verge of extinction excluding them from the main working place that is banking at the time of postcolonial Bombay before the emergence of Shiv Sena. Parsi people also ruminate over the insecure future of minority in Bombay.

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