

Diasporic Consciousness in *Such a Long Journey*

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Imagine a country as this country is, peopled by characters who have abandoned their setting and who seek to plot their own story in a new way. They choose to displace themselves, to surrender the familiar. .. Curiously enough, because they make the choices, they are happy, if not always satisfied with their story, and the effects of displacement only begin to appear in the children or grandchildren. Some people would say that it is only a matter of adapting to a new environment, or adjusting to a custom, of learning a language. I maintain that it is much more profound, a displacement so far-reaching that it only vanishes after several generations I learned that the world was fiction and fiction was refuge. (Aritha Van Herk)

Such a Long Journey (1991) unfolds a long vista of varied interests all along the development of a well-wrought plot. Set against the background of the Indo-Pak war of 1971, it delves into the human predicament meted out to the central character, ruining all his hopes by circumstances beyond his control. Gustad Noble, the central character in the novel, is pitted against heavy odds, which he faces almost with placid serenity. Side by side many things do not escape the novelist's serious concern. He cherishes the values of friendship, condemns the scourge of war, and denounces unscrupulous, corrupt and hypocritical political leaders who have eaten in the vitals of the nation. In a post-modernist tone, however, he refrains from becoming a political propagandist so that his work does not become a political mouthpiece. His frankness in exposing social and political ills of India is due to the fact that he has no political axe to grind. Furthermore, Mistry's strong opposition to social and class distinctions and his anguish over the environmental pollution have widened the spectrum of the contemporary gamut of reality the novel conveys.

The novelist's predilection for the great tradition rather than for the modernist method of fictional experimentation with its emphasis on time and consciousness manifests his ideological stance of being a critical and socialist realist. Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* is in line with the realist tradition in which the narrative is pushed forward in arithmetical progression and is chronological rather than spatial in the development of the plot. It gives comedy, tragedy, humour and satire. Along with them there lies a rich fabric of beliefs, superstitions, magic, rites, nationalistic ideas, humanism, radicalism, secular views and so on. In other words, it is life in its fullness, freshness and variety that the novel ceaselessly contemplates. Based on the sequential development of the plot the book offers a powerful narrative that keeps a sustained intensity throughout with a few surprising turns in order to effect a climax.

In the opening of the novel Gustad is seen as a god-fearing man, the envy of all : "Tall and broad-shouldered, Gustad was the envy and admiration of friends and relatives whenever health or sickness was being discussed" and although he had met with "a serious accident just a few years ago" even that left him with "nothing graver than a slight limp" Comparatively, a happy man in his early fifties, Gustad is a bank employee and a father of three children, two sons-Sohrab, nineteen, Darius, fifteen-and a daughter, Roshan, nine years old. As the novel progresses, one finds Gustad's hopes, dreams and aspirations being blighted in a manner quite contrary to his likings. He incurs the frowns of fortune rendering him distraught and helpless: first, the sudden disappearance of Major Bilimoria from Khodadad building, who "had been like a loving brother" to Gustad and almost a "second father to the children" (14); second, his son Sohrab's

refusal to enrol himself as an IIT student, whose bad manners and violent temper spoil the ninth birthday party of Roshan, culminating in his desertion of his home; third, the protracted illness -of Roshan, a complicated case of diarrhoea; fourth, Gustad's receipt of a package from Major Bilimoria and the trouble thereafter to hide ten lakh rupees; fifth, Gustad's close friend Dinshawji's illness and his eventual death; seventh, the death of Tehmul Lungraa, an idiot and retarded child, another inmate of Khodadad building; and the last, the destruction of Gustad's sacred wall by the municipal authorities.

Things start in their usual smoothness. Gustad is seen offering his "orisons to Ahura Mazda". His son Sohrab gets admission to IIT, a symbol of pride. Gustad plans to celebrate it on the ninth birthday of Roshan, at which his very close friend Dinshawji is to be present. He brings a live chicken in the house, much to the embarrassment of his wife Dilnavaz. The initial atmosphere of gaiety, humour, songs, jokes and fun contributed by Dinshawji followed by a good dinner consisting of basmati rice, stew and chicken curry comes to an abrupt end when Sohrab turns violent uttering volleys of freakish remarks to his father and announcing that he is not going to join IIT and is not ready to part with his friends in the college and would pursue arts programme. The sudden and uncalled-for rebuff of Sohrab not only shatters all hopes of Gustad but also makes a surprising turn in the later course of the novel. It is from this point onward that there appears the theme of father-son hostility. Full of frustration when the table turns upside down, Gustad cannot hold his emotion in check :

Throwing away his fortune without reason. What have I not done for him, tell me ? I even threw myself in front of a car. Kicked him aside, saved his life, and got this to suffer all my life (slapping his hip). But that what a father is for. And if he cannot show respect at least, I can kick him again. Out home, out of my life ! (52)

Eight years ago Gustad saved his son's life at the cost of his hip that fractured rendering him limp. True, as a loving father he did a lot for his son even buying almonds for Rs. two hundred a kg. to make him brainy. Jiji's shock and remorse are justified.

Once something is off the normal course others soon follow suit. Now many things start surfacing at an alarming rate. Soon Gustad has a row with Mr. Rabadi, another inmate of Khodadad building, over the latter's charge that Darius has an affair with his daughter. Gustad corners Mr. Rabadi, who is called by him "dogwalla", for his dog, Tiger, usually keeps deposits which are "copious and rather malodorous" (77) over Gustad's vinca and subjo bushes. Besides, Gustad is awaiting a letter from Major Bilimoria very anxiously which has not yet come. And he is disgusted at the horrid smell and flies and mosquitoes coming from the wall side that has been used as a public toilet. "The flies, the mosquitoes, the horrible stink, with bloody shameless people pissing, squatting alongside the wall. Late at night it became like a wholesale public toilet" (16). But the real event that poignantly changes and reverses Gustad's fortune is the coming of the long-awaited package from Bilimoria. The package turns out to be a huge sum to the tune of ten lakh rupees to be deposited in a bank in the name of one Mira Obili. The whole thing makes both Gustad and Dilnavaz's hair stand erect, who do not know how to hide such a huge amount. And even before the amount is deposited, the secret of the money being received is smelt out by others. Gustad feels ill-at-ease when Tehmul tells the inspector that the former has a mountain of money in his flat. Another woman also makes a reference to the money, to his utter dismay. The forbidden package thus drives away Gustad's peace and happiness and he feels annoyed and betrayed. First he hides the money in the kitchen, and then with the help of Dinshawji he deposits the whole amount in the bank since he is unable to meet Ghulam Mohammad from whom he got the package. Taking Dinshawji into confidence, he lets him know all about Major Bilimoria, a RAW Officer, his letter and direct involvement in the training of Mukti Bahinis against the Pakistan army. But the situation never improves. Amidst fear and restlessness on two consecutive days, Gustad finds a headless bandicoot at the base of his vinca and again a headless cat in the compound. Then a folded paper on which is written a nursery rhyme in pencil is also found inserted between two adjacent

branches of his vinca bush. All these contribute to Gustad's unhappiness, landing him in the dark land suspicion. Furthermore, his daughter's suffering from enervating diarrhoea occupies his mind. Then follows his quarrel with Mr. Rabadi, the former asking Rabadi to train his dog, and the latter asking Gustad to teach his son manners and discipline.

However, the most disturbing is Dinshawji's inadvertent disclosure to Laurie Coutino, a typist in the bank, where both Gustad and Dinshawji are working, of the whole secrecy impersonating himself as a man working for secret service, and in charge often lakh rupees to fully equip the Mukti Bahini guerrillas. Gustad sees the imminent danger Dinshawji's frolicsome spree directly invites. When Dinshawji is taken to task reminding him of the grave situation in which they are drawn he (Dinshawji) writhes in the background, suddenly changing his character from a man of public entertainer to a reserved person. Now whosoever greets him gets a stock response from Dinshawji • "Thussook-thussook, my cart rumbles along" (185). At times Gustad feels guilty of what really has happened to Dinshawji.

As things rush towards a climax, the arrest of Major Bilimoria on charges of corruption is published in the paper. The heavens fall; Gustad's horizon is completely darkened with fear and uncertainty that his complicity may be established. In the meantime Ghulam Mohammad asks Gustad in a semi threatening tone to return the whole amount in one month's time to save Bilimoria's. And to make things worse, Roshan's illness continues, and even the worst thing happens : she relapses. When Gustad visits Dr. Paymaster to report to him Roshan's continuous illness, he is taunted by the doctor who thinks 'that he has modified the prescription at will so that the illness assumes an unexpected proportion. Poverty haunts Gustad; he cannot make both ends meet, sells his camera and his wife's two gold marriage bangles. It is at this time that his rose plant, the vinca and subjo bush are hacked to the ground. Roshan's big doll in bridal array, which she received as the first prize in Annual School Raffle, is lost. It is at this critical juncture, again, that Dinshawji is hospitalized after a sudden collapse in the office. The first great blow in Gustad's life comes in the form of the death of Dinshawji, despite his prayer for the lives and recovery of both Roshan and Dinshawji at the Mount Mary. Shortly after that Gustad makes a trip to Delhi to meet Major Bilimoria who wants to tell him all that had happened. It is a big fraud of sixty lakh rupees in which Prime Minister gets directly involved. Bilimoria is asked to get the money from the SBI Director on an emergency basis to finance the guerrilla training pending official sanction by impersonating Prime Minister's voice on telephone. After that Major Bilimoria is asked to write a confession which he did without any second thought. But as soon as the money was received Prime Minister's office intercepted the money before it was used for the original purpose. Knowing the trick, Bilimoria kept ten lakh rupees for distribution to his friends. Before long he was arrested and kept under detention and tortured cruelly until he returned the money.

On the bed lay nothing more than a shadow. The shadow of the powerful built army man who once lived in Khodadad building. His hairline had receded, and sunken cheeks made the bones jut sharp and grotesque. The regal handlebar moustache was no more. His eyes had disappeared within their sockets. The neck ... was as crany as poor behesti Dinshawji's , while under the sheet there seemed barely a trace of those strong shoulders and deep chest which Gustad and Dilnavaz used to point out as a good example to their sons, reminding them always to walk erect, with chest out and stomach in, like Major Uncle. (267)

Bilimoria gets four years' imprisonment, and while serving his term he dies of heart attack and his funeral at Tower of Silence takes place.

Things keep on taking their own course. Roshan's condition improves and she is ready for her school. At least the family returned to normal. Sohrab as usual pays his visit to his mother during the office hour of his father. Mrs. Dilnavaz informs him about the death of Dinshawji, all about Ghulam Mohamad and the

tragic death of Major Bilimoria. She implores Sohrab to stay and talk to his father nicely, who would be coming in a short while from the funeral of Major Bilimoria. Sohrab foresees a fight between him and his father because he knows he is responsible for the latter's unhappiness. He reacts: "It's no use. I spoilt all his dreams; he is not interested in me anymore" (321). But the mother rules out anything untoward would happen: "So much has happened since you left. Daddy has changed. It will be different now". Gustad returns home at the time when the outer wall of Khodadad building, now converted a holy wall with so many gods and goddesses from all religions painted by a pavement artist at the request of Gustad so that the area could be saved from pollution, from the horrid smell of urine and excrement, and from the flies and mosquitoes bred there, is about to be broken by a team of municipal workers under the command of Malcolm Saldanha. The destruction is, however, checked by a morcha jointly formed by people from all walks of life ranging from doctor to prostitutes to snake charmers and paanwallas. Soon an exchange of angry words ensues, and morcha's insistence that the wall be kept intact is not listened to by the municipal workers who proceed with a go-ahead signal from the authority. the heated debate culminates in stone throwing. Excited at the sight of the flying missiles, Tehmul Lungra goes out and is targeted and falls flat with a broken forehead and succumbs to the injury instantly. Taking the dead body inside the room of Tehmul, Gustad prays reciting the Yatha Ahu Varyo five times and Ashem Vahoo three times with tears shedding from his eyes.

At this significant moment, Gustad comes out of himself to be one with death and one with life. He prays for all, cries for all, for him, for Tehmul, for Jimy, for Dinshawji, for his papa and mama, for grandpa and grandma, "all who had to wait for so long". He prays for the mercy of God on all souls, for the end is come, maybe to start again from the beginning. Out of this vast vacuum, there emerges a profound meaning that signifies the archetypal cycle of birth, death and rebirth motifs. It is at this moment that he accepts the return of his prodigal son, who comes to him. It is in complete surrender that the father and the son lose their personalities and exercise their hatred of each other. Now they reach out to each other:

Gustad turned around. He saw his son standing in the doorway, and each held the other 's eyes. Still he sat, gazing upon his son, and Sohrab waited motionless in the doorway, 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 fingers once through Sohrab 's hair: 'Yes he said, 'yes', and hugged him tightly once more. (337)

The novel, while representing its larger rhythm with universal significance, tries to bring in other smaller rhythms within its fold. One notices alongside the main plot there runs a sub-plot to effect the return of Sohrab and cure the illness of Roshan through magico-religious rites performed by Mrs. Dilnavaz following the advice of Miss Kutpiia.

main plot there runs a sub-plot to effect the return of Sohrab and cure the illness of Roshan through magico-religious rites performed by Mrs. Dilnavaz following the advice of Miss Kutpiia. Miss Kutpitia is a person who "wanted to offer help and advice on matters unexplainable by the laws of nature. She claimed to know about curses and spells : both to cast and remove; about magic : black and white; about omens and auguries; about dreams and their interpretation. Most important of all ... was the ability to understand the hidden meaning of mundane events and chance occurrences; and her fanciful, fantastical imagination could be entertaining at times" (4). Dilnavaz becomes so unnerved when her husband and Sohrab carry on fighting, abusing each other every frequently, as her son loses interest in IT, till at least he leaves her house in violent protest against his father's anger and threat unleashed against him. Equally disturbing is the illness of her daughter, Roshan, that goes on worsening day by day.

In fact, the misfortune that befalls Gustad 's family is interpreted by Miss Kutpitia from her own ideological point of view rooted in beliefs and superstitions, culturally accepted and transmitted from generation to

generation. First, the genesis of the trouble in Dilnavaz's family is attributed to the killing of a live bird in the house-the live chicken brought by Gustad to celebrate his son's selection to IIT and the birthday of Roshan. Killing a bird in the house is very ominous, according to Miss Kutpitia. Second, what has happened at the dinner party has many things to do with the incident which took place at Miss Kutpitia's home the same day. In the morning Miss Kutpitia had killed a lizard on her breakfast table, its broken tail wriggling and dancing for about five minutes a definite omen forbidding her to go out for the next twenty-four hours. She declines therefore the honour of joining the dinner party. The initial gusto and merriment of the party decelerate and sink into much sound and fury when Gustad and Sohrab tone up their differences, anger and arguments with the unwarranted declaration by Sohrab that he is no longer interested in IIT. Light also went off a short while ago much to the displeasure of all. Darkness symbolizes the eclipse of the father-son relationship. Nobody feels like eating, and the whole effort and relish go unappreciated: "Of the nine chicken portions, six remained in the dish" (50). When the matter is brought to the notice of Miss Kutpitia by the apparently worried mother, the former attributes all this to "jaadu-mantar" (63). She further contends that somebody tries to gain the interest of Sohrab out of his own loss of interest and that there are ways and means to set things right. Dilnavaz is instructed to do some magic rites for a few days before the setting of the sun. In this process the trial goes on, but the result is far from being satisfactory. Sohrab drinks some lime juice prepared by his mother who does some magic to regain her son's lost interest. But this comes to no avail. Now somebody has to drink a juice mixed with lime juice to transfer the spell from Sohrab to the second person. Both choose Tehmul to be the target. Still there is little effect on Sohrab's mind. Instead things go from bad to worse: Sohrab revolts and leaves home and Roshan's illness becomes a matter of great concern. Miss Kutpitia maintains that Roshan's illness is caused by evil eye. To protect her from it, she asks Dilnavaz to perform a ritual.

Take your needle and thread, a nice strong thread with a big knot at the end. Select a yellow lime, and seven chillies. Chillies must be green, not turning red. Never red. String them together with the needle. Lime goes at the bottom. Then hang the whole thing over your door, inside the house. (149-50)

Then she goes on, "It is like a taveej, a protection. Each time Roshan walks under it, the evil eye becomes less and less powerful. Actually ever in your family will benefit" (150). But even this does not relieve Roshan of her illness. It is both evil eye and some dark force that are responsible for the continuous illness, argues Miss Kutpitia. Ultimately, she discovers and makes Dilnavaz see that the person behind is a man who has a dog, suggesting that Mr. Rabadi is the man. As regards Sohrab's not coming home, Miss Kutpitia asks Dilnavaz to get some nails of Tehmul to burn in coal fire. And when the nails are melted, then turmeric and cayenne powders are to be sprinkled. This ritual "would open wide Tehmul's channels ... through which his spirit would reach and yank the evil out of Sohrab's brain" (153). Even that helps little. So the last remedy is thought out: that is lizard ritual, amidst Miss Kutpitia's warning: "Terrible things could happen. And not all your sorrow or regret later on will do any good, or change one single thing" (275). Some miracle or coincidence does take place: Roshan gets better; Gustad returns home safely from a trip to Delhi; and even Sohrab's absence, Dilnavaz thinks, "would now somehow be put right" (292). Whether the return of Sohrab has something to do with the death of Tehmul is yet a matter of speculation. Surprisingly, the day Sohrab changes his mind, Tehmul dies. All this seems to correspond with the dire consequence Miss Kutpitia had warned Dilnavaz of. But things at this level remain highly unexplainable.

Whether one believes in God or not, throughout the novel there are anecdotes related to gods and goddesses, and miracles like that of St. Thomas who landed on the Malabar coast amongst the fishermen nineteen hundred years ago and who spread Christianity among the Hindus, Brahmins, Sadhus and Acharyas (24-25). The Mount Mary and St. Haji Ali episodes are equally breath-taking. One of the most important things Mistry wants to emphasize is religious tolerance on the basis that all religions are equal. The pavement artist, who has painted gods and goddesses from all religions of the world on the wall, is

one through whom the Indian secularism is reinforced. 'The morcha director shouts : "The wall of Hindu and Muslim, Sikh and Christian, Parsi and Buddhist! A holy wall, a wall suitable for worship and devotion, whatever your faith (326) Misty's concept of faith cannot be questioned. About faith he makes the pavement artist speak thus :

You see, I don't like to weaken anyone's faith. Miracle, magic, mechanical trick coincidence-does it matter what it is, as long as it helps? Why analyse the strength of the imagination, the power of suggestion, power of auto-suggestion, the potency of psychological pressures? Looking too closely is destructive, makes everything disintegrate. As it is, life is difficult enough. Why to simply make it tougher? After all, who is to say what makes a miracle and what makes a coincidence? (289)

The sub-plot woven around Kutpitia-Dilnavaz also reaffirms this conviction. This theme that seemingly goes out of proportion may look like something disjointed or mechanical in the total structure of the novel like the Clarissa and Septimus parts in Mrs. Dalloway at the first glance. But at a closer look, its structural function cannot be ruled out because it is this thematic development by way of a sub-plot that integrates the novel's central disintegrating and conflicting human elements. It is Dilnavaz and not Gustad who tries to make Sohrab come to terms with his father. It is ultimately her triumph that brings order in the midst of chaos. Gustad's epic struggle against a hostile and indifferent world would not have had a profound meaning without the final reconciliation. When Dilnavaz comes out with the benign qualities of a mother in these words, "He is your father. He will always love you and want the best for you" (321), the barrier between the father and the son gives way and dissolves.

Though Mistry is highly imbued with an original writer's imagination in the development of a flawless story in Such a Long Journey, his awareness of the contemporary social and political situation of India, particularly the period of the 1971 Indo-Pak war, is extremely exciting. As a realist, he wields the weapon of satire, which makes him a ruthless artist, a stern political satirist and a devout critic of war. His attack on Nehru and Indira Gandhi is unprecedented. Describing the humiliating defeat of India at the hands of the Chinese in the Indo-Chinese war of 1962, he does not spare even Nehru for fighting a war of defeat, a "humiliating defeat" (9). Mistry goes on describing Nehru's frustration, ill temper, political intrigues that surrounded him, his feud with Feroze Gandhi for the latter's exposure of scandals in the Government, his obsession with his "darling daughter Indira", who left her husband in order to live with him, whose "monomaniacal fixation occupied his days and nights" (11). He praises, however, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who became India's Prime Minister after the death of Nehru, because with his rule 'the stagnant waters of government would at last be freshened and vitalized' (114). Shastri could do in the Indo-Pak war of 1965 far better than what Nehru did in the war with China. Dr. Paymaster rightly says of him: "Short in height but tall in brains is our Lal Bahadur". In this sudden death at Tashkent, beside the possibility of a Pakistani or Russian plot, the role of Indira Gandhi is suspected: "so that her father's dynastic democratic dream could finally come true" (114). There are direct attacks on Indira Gandhi for her nationalization of banks, for her encouragement to make a separate Maharashtra state that caused bloodshed and riot, and for her creation of Shiv Sena to divide people on class basis, as Dinshawji remarks, "wanting to make the rest of us into second class citizens" (39), and for her narrow political gains, i.e. to get votes of the poor by showing that she is on the side of poor. Her financing of her son's Maruti car manufacture, the secret Swiss Bank accounts, the use of RAW as her private police force to spy on her political opponents and on her cabinet ministers, her involvement in sixty-lakh-rupees scandal. the very calculative move to save herself at the cost of Major Bilimoria expose the political order of Indian democracy. For a radical change, two things suggested by Sohrab as he puts what Bilimoria used to say : "Only two choices : communism and military dictatorship. if- you want to get rid of these Congress party crooks. Forget democracy for a few years, not meant for a starving country" (68). The nauseating dirt, ugliness and pollution in the city, in the bazaar, and at Khodadad building are a microcosm of what happens at the Centre. Congress party-for that matter. Congress Government, - "are called a rogues' gallery" (325). All people. men, women, grown ups,

cannot tolerate decay, greed, treachery, dishonesty, fraud, moral turpitude and deception at the Centre. Dr. Paymaster honesty, fraud, moral turpitude and deception at the Centre. Dr. Paymaster puts the gravity of the situation metaphorically in the following terms :

... our beloved country is a patient with gangrene at an advanced stage. Dressing the wound or sprinkling rosewater over it to hide the stink of rotting tissue is useless. Fine words and promises will not cure the patient. The decaying part must be excised. You see, the municipal corruption is merely the bad smell, which will disappear as soon as the gangrenous government at the centre is removed.

The fictional world Mistry creates in *Such a Long Journey* is thus no utopia of any kind. It is a picture of the fallen world in which the call of the Holy Word is not heard. Again, it is a world in which all forms of corruption, knavery, hypocrisy, tyranny, ugliness and decay, have become the order of the day. The society which is depicted is completely deprived of resilience. Mistry's shock at the sight of stinking human condition and rampant corruption turns him into being realist, who is obliged to expose the world around him. At times he looks like a naturalist reporting the human condition as in itself it is. Wars between nations, the complete lack of commitment on the part of the big powers, and so on show the degenerating political scenario in the international politics. The nationalistic fervour in the novelist makes him at times a ruthless critic of the corrupt government at the Centre. His nationalism is above petty selfishness; He keeps aside such things as turning up and selling of clothes and gold ornaments collected by way of donation during the Indo-Chinese war by politicians and fund-raisers in Chor Bazaar and Nul Bazaar without attaching much importance (though the satiric implication is deeply felt) as long as "the glow of national unity was still warm and comforting" (10). Though he is in favour of certain change he cannot think of a political situation under dictatorship and communism. This is shown when Gustad snaps at his son, Sohrab, who speaks of dictatorship or communism as a better alternative to democracy : "Be grateful this democracy. If that Russiawala was here, he would pack you and your friends off to Siberia" (69).

So when looked at closely, Rohinton Mistry is not a political anarchist, nor does he favour the blueprint of a new society based on radical change. But the most important thing, politics apart, that the novelist wants to emphasize is the question of life, i.e. the problem of human loneliness in the modern world. Gustad's sufferings and struggle with fortitude and humility in life re-echo the classical tragic hero's life and sufferings. The world Gustad is doomed to live in is, like Hamlet's Elsinore, torn by a time which is "out of joint". His quotation from Firdausi's Shah-Nama well conveys this state of the world : "How did they hold the world in the beginning, and why is it that it has been left to us in such a sorry state ? And how was it that they were able to live free of care during the days of their heroic labours?" It is in this atmosphere that life has to get going. On the one hand, the journey from Firdausi's Shah-Nama to Tagore's Gitanjali (from which he also quotes) proves to be a long journey in a cold and hostile world. Gustad's friends, Dinshawji, Bilimoria and Tehmul, have already undertaken Such a Long Journey, on the other, it is also a journey, a long journey, from hopelessness to hope, and from despondency to millennium. For Gustad the hard times are over, no matter how badly he has been battered.

In *Such a Long Journey*, Rohinton Mistry comes out as a critical realist so far as the of social reality is concerned. Through this method, his ideology comes out to project the kind of society he wants to be a part of. In his consciousness of the social and political aspects of a particular historical period he emerges as a progressive writer, but in his vision of a larger rhythm of life, in which all forms of human happiness and misery are seen woven inseparably in the development of the central character towards a climax, he shows his allegiance to literature's timeless values, independent of narrow commitments, whether political or regional. The novelist's departure from the emphasis on the representation of the psychic being of the character reveals the inadequacy of the novel-form in the post-modernist period. his interests in the predicament of modern life, the diseased effect of degenerating society on life, issue forth gushing in the novel. The remarkable thing about *Such a Long Journey* is its absolute Indianness, without any trace of



the Canadian immigrant experience that the author must have gone through for fifteen years before the publication of the book. It is steeped in the atmosphere of Bombay, particularly of the exclusive Parsi community of that city.

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