

A Parsi World View: A Study of History and Superstition in Rohinton Mistry's novel***Such a Long Journey***

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Abstract

This paper analyses the Mistry's novel *Such a Long Journey* which deals with the Parsis cultural heritage and history. The novel entangles the mirror of reflection around the characters in the novel. The Parsis are treated as secondary humans and they are neglected in all fields. The novel concerns the real ideologies of the Parsi community which faces many problems because of the corrupted governments. As a Parsi writer, he raises his voice for the people belonging to the low class and their rights. There is a concept that wherever the destruction of caste, culture and class division are buried, there arises a new morning star for every individual in the society. The distinction between the cultural and caste make many conflicts in the contemporary society. The cultural diversity exists not only in a particular culture, it spreads all over the world.

Keywords: Real ideologies, Reflection, Parsis in India, Cultural diversity, Cultural conflicts.

Introduction

Rohinton Mistry is a famous Parsi novelist, critic and short story writer. He focused his writings on many fields like feminism, dual identity writing and travelogues. He analyses the

main idea of individuals suffering in literature. As a Parsi writer he himself had many problems like immigration, sense of fear, alienation and loss of cultural values which are reflected in his novels. The Parsis feelings are noticed as cultural values which are reflected in his novels. The Parsis feelings are noticed as one culture gets dominated and the other plays a dominant rule. They had always had a fear in mind that their life had no security and authority to lead a peaceful life. Sudesh Mishra noticed in Mistry's writing as

After the independent nation, Mistry analyse spreading of Parsi community and the suppression of their rights are the causal issue in India. The western thought notices that Parsi people are surely be a suppressed people who has no rights, responsibilities, and escapism is their only aim in their life. (12)

The Parsi writers capture the conditions of women in the society treated as a gender and preserved as a goddess, but in reality they are ignored and given many problems like dowry demands, divorce cases, sexual harassment, rape and many physical issues. Even though women are given equal importance in all fields they find it's difficult to survive in the male dominant society. The writers use literature as a powerful tool to develop skills and knowledge. Mistry has diasporic and Canadian identity. Devika khanna reflects "the concept of alien people is same as the new comer and they will survive in the top of the two borders, they tried to maintain a strong balance in the two worlds".(25). The development of Canadian literature has similarities of the colonial literature and its nativity. Among many immigrations, the former group were the New England Puritans in 1760. The notable Canada's novelists are John Richardson, William Kirby, Sir Gilbert, Sara Jeannette Duncan and Margret Atwood.

Canada is a place of nature 's lap and full of realistic elements. Many writers chose Canada as their background of the novels the land has its own value growth, nutrient element snow chillness and imagination. The background of the land is shown as snow and some writers use the theme of snow as positive and negative compared to death and heaven .The writer had a craze to make a picture of snow as destroyer and preserver. Canadian literature commonly illustrates the land of Canada itself with its values and traditions. Because it has their own enrichment the parsi idea of Mistry is noted by Mclay as;

Yes, there are may difference made by the western people over the ideas if parsi .The creation of sohrab is shown in the novel *Such a Long Journey* like the characters Jehangir is fond of collecting stamps while playing in tales of *Firozsha Baag* and the character Jehangir is fond of collecting stamps while playing in tales of *Firozsha Baag* and the character customs knowledge to memorize the notes of musical instrument called violin.(20)

Mistry sketches the novel *Such a Long Journey* by examining the relations between the two identities of his community and their native cultural beliefs. He creates the illusion of Parsi which are considered as the secondary religion. Like Mistry many writers focus on the parsi cultural beliefs such as Bapsi sidwa, Farrukh Dhondy and Firdaus kanga. The Parsi writing in English contributes to the social network and the other Information. The Parsi writing in English contributes the social network and the other information .the parsi writers had a spirit to write for their community as A.K Singh analyses

Their work exhibit consciousness of their community in such a way to explore the communities exploration which shows the community emerges as a protagonist from

their work though on the surface these work deal with their human protagonist. It serves as the coverage of the whole Parsi community. (7)

Condition of Parsis in India

In India Parsis belonged to the native religious majority although they were a minority in India, they make a remarkable contribution to society, economics, commerce, science, political condition and literature. They are people living mostly west coast of Mumbai. The Parsis are the Prophet Zoroaster's disciplines and their faith is called Zoroastrianism. The central character in the novel *Gustad* belongs to the middle class Parsi community. He performs and loyally follows parsi tradition and customs and considers all religious practices and religion as equal. He believes in prayer to get peace and illumination. The sufferings of parsis are noted by Khushwant Singh as "the dying group the death ranks is heavy than the low birth ranks , the increase of inter caste marriage also change the parsi cultural values and change their religion"(10)

In some situation the Parsi lack their freedom, happiness, fortune, and even positive hope for their life. In India the Parsis feels comfortable but they had a sense of fear in their lives. The land of hope gives a spirit to the parsi principles and beliefs .The novel shows the parsi identity which encompasses the entire community in general. They are also noted for the diasporic significance and differences in the society. Vinay Kirpal shows the diasporic ideas as;

The term alienation is connected with the ancient ideas of the history ,it has some post -colonial ideas which is refined and creates a new messages to the society. The post- modern tendency shows the low grade, fear, anxiety, and unsatisfied wishes of the parsis in the present society.(9)

Post –Colonial Identify in *Such a Long Journey*

Such a long journey has depicts the ideas of post -colonial theory and the author's narrative technique makes the difference and adds uniqueness in the novel. During the post-world war the people faced many problems. The war resulted in the loneliness and immigration. It suits for every human beings who are subjected in the war. The Indian people were by the Britisher's some centuries ago. The colonial idea shows the rootless and loneliness of the immigrant writers and people. The novel shows the perfect picture of the Parsi community.

The suppressed Parsi people are given many tortures and harm ness from the dominant group. As an innocent man Gustad received many insults and problems from his surroundings. He had many ambitions towards his children's future. He had a lifetime aim to be given a best education and to admit his son in the IIT field. All his dreams are shattered by his son who rejected his father's wish. As a lovable father he feels a broken heart for few days, he avoids his son for many days. At last because of the death of main character Tehmul unites the father and son. The novel gives a particular feeling of wall in the Khodadad building where the Parsis residence is also noticed. Bharucha states as," the wall which preserve and destroy the lives of people, it is a shield and a net to show the strength of the parsis to the other companies"(123)

Mistry presents that the whole community undergo insecure life because of the political power of the government. Mistry analyses the life of a parsi man is not an easy task, had a sacrifice life to maintain their households. The society feels, a man's talent or personality comes from their community so the Parsis are ignored and given a exclusion in all the fields of their activities. He writes the novel by using the post- colonial ideologies and he breaks the

wall while writing the higher theme in his novels. He contributes the novel in the concept of two background war incidents like India- Pakistan and India- China war. Rushdie marked the difference as:

Writers are no longer sages dispensing the wisdom of centuries. And those of us who have been forced by the cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truths, all certainties, the wisdom is a path of thrones to achieve it, which have perhaps has modernism forced upon us. (13)

The tremendous change happened in the world history in India and China war dates back in 1962. The war loses many people and change their life. The common people suffered a lot and conflict arouses everywhere in the city. The difference noticed in the war is evident in the words of Gustad in *Such a Long Journey*,

And problems in the city-fear and Lathi charges and firing everywhere. A problematic century 1962 has been. A sudden suppressed fall, every places the people talking about how the city changes and modern Inventions take place because of Chinese influence. The Indian army had developed many ideas to strong the both walls like peace and unity.(9)

During the war results in a great loss not only for the common people but also for high class people also faces many difficulties. At the time the soldiers finds difficult to protect the motherland and their native nation. The irresponsible leaders gave the public false speech to gain votes from the people. The political parties gives false ideas that during the war time. The party only collect funds and money to raise the people's welfare.

Historical perspectives of the society

Mistry's views in the changes which is resulted in the history. He compares the past and present situation in the novel. He states the human world is like full of heat, dust, sounds, symbols, happiness, misery, memories and tensions. The history of parsis is shown as the ideal perspective. The parsis are people who occupied the prominent group in the country. The history is more important than the past experiences.

The title journey symbolises the parsis journey towards an Iran towards other parts of the world. The journey has many ideal reason. Like the Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, is analyses the whole globe as a journey and the fellow travellers who travel to reach the destination of God. The surrender of God to attain divine is the final aim for every human being in the society. The sense of alienation which is expressed in the writings of Rohinton Mistry. The Parsi community controls every desire and they sacrifice their life for their pathetic life survival.

Alienation of Parsis

The theme of alienation is a common theme used in many Mistry's writings. The concept of alienation makes a man lead a lonely life and has a fear always in mind. The novel, *Such a Long Journey* analyses the central character, Gustad's loneliness feeling towards in parsi community. Putla Anand Rao depicts the parsi identity as:

Mistry show the sense of fear and forgiveness which is picturized in the novel. The parsi community faces many loses during their life time. They feels that a losses cannot destruction their life only hope to guide a strong path, happiness, ideologies in their life. As a parsi man Gustad travel a path full of thrones and bushes, atleast attain divine.(79)

Mistry's views are well portrayed in the novel *Such a Long Journey*. Rohinton Mistry's other novel *Family Matters* analyses the central character, Nariman old age fear he has no one to care and experience a loneliness in the society. As a alienated man he sometimes behaves like an odd person and he did know how to communicate with people and his surroundings.

The Parsi writers mostly use the theme of alienation in their writings. Like Mistry's novels also analyses the theme of alienation because of their parsi identity. Like a child born as lonely at first, it has no one to give hope. The mother teaches him everything like at the end of the life and travel to the path of divine as soon as surrender everything in the feet of God. In the process, some people has more beliefs towards God, but some has no faith but the characters in the novel depicts beliefs and practices, many superstition faith and hope.

Indian Parsis and Indian politics

Mistry analyses the Indian parsis and the political conflicts in his writing. The novel criticizes the black marks and evil notions. Like the death of the some important characters makes a feeling and emotions. At first he uses the political issues in his novels, as a fresher to the writing field, he uses many controversial themes. Sometimes the immigrant parsis are treated evil to the society. Because of the political situation puts the people mind in a turmoil and clash difference. At the starting stage in India the parsis are the people who practice works like agriculture, textile shops, mills. As soon as the community grows its strength become a wealthy persons in the society. The corrupted government is analysed in the authors point of view. The political parties in country are noted as," the birth of new politics was halfway between the beginning and ending of the Shiv Sena, the labour class enjoyed in every aspect of the lifestyle in the novel"(16)

The thematic study of Mistry analyses the full story which shared the Parsi cultural heritage and history. The concept of politics and Parsis had mixed term which creates a lot of troubles and struggles in the contemporary society. In the present situation also the Parsis are considered as the marginalized people and they have no effect to raise their voices in the public places also. The high class people are given a peculiar respect but the low class people are considered as the slaves in the society. Mistry uses his hand as a scope to give equal importance to the every individual in the present society.

Irrational beliefs

Irrational beliefs are otherwise called superstition beliefs. The Parsis has some fear and faith in the black magic and superstition beliefs. Because they feels that there is a presence of good spirit likewise the presence of evil is also present in the society. Many characters in the novel like Dilanavaz, Kutptipia, Roshan also practice many superstition beliefs and practices.

Conclusion

At the end of the novel *Such a Long Journey*, Mistry compares his novels to the postcolonial writings. He is the first writer who fought for the Parsis rights, needs and equality in the society. The central character Gustad Noble travels in the path of fear and loss at last in the novel ends with a positive note that he tears the paper and throw outside of the window which shows some how the gains a hope and happiness in the concluding section. The novel begins with the negative side and the death of the many characters. It ends in with optimistic ideas and regain a new spirit to travel the life journey. The diasporic context creates a new beginning and hope for the characters in the novel. Mistry's free flow of thoughts has a wide range and values of the parsi community and their native cultural heritage.

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