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life forms in extreme conditions and links such a possibility to the beings of the Oort Cloud:

There is no reason to suppose that extremophilic consciousness is confined to minor interplanetary bodies. Perhaps the majority of the earth's biomass consists of subterranean extremophiles. (84)

The use of scientific terminology only adds to the effect of jargon. In fact, 'extremophilic consciousness' merely refers to life forms that live extreme conditions. An extremophile (from Latin *extremus* meaning "extreme" and Greek *philia* meaning "love") is an organism that thrives in physically or geochemically extreme conditions that are detrimental to most life on Earth (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extremophile). In other words, human life itself is under threat, may not be from aliens from outer space, but most possibly from under our feet itself: Perhaps the majority of the Earth's biomass consists of subterranean extremophiles. Watch the ground. (84)

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Power, Resistance and Acceptance in Two Parsi Novels

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Post-colonialism is an intellectual direction that has been in existence since the middle of the 20th century. It developed from and mainly refers to the time after colonialism. The colonial subjugation to power and resistance and acceptance of it on the part of the Indians continued even after the British Empire had vanished. The colonial human habits still occupy post-colonial literary works. Still we "accept" as we believe in human welfare and the need for creating the "oneness" of human society.

The chief occupation of the postcolonial writers like Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga and Vikram Seth is to search the cultural territory for the post colonial society in order to repossess its own history. The postcolonial concern of the Parsi writers like Rohinton Mistry is not only to fight for a cultural territory but also to create a distinct Parsi as well as a human identity.

The Parsis are a moribund community whose number is declining very sharply. In her article Aditi Kapoor voices this concern in the following manner. "Unless something is done to augment their fast depleting numbers and to revive their religion, the Parsis after an illustrious past could well just face out in oblivion" (166).

A similar observation is made by Nani Palkhiwala, a Parsi jurist and economist, who says that it is entirely up to the present generation of Parsis to decide whether "they will become a decadent community with a glorious past, a perilous present and a dim future" (106).

With such serious concerns in sight, Mistry as a young writer takes up this challenge and says that his works will preserve a record to show the hey days of the Parsis in India. His novels *Such a Long Journey* and *Family*

Mistery not only deal with the Parsi Diaspora in the Indian context but also project the tendency of colonial power-resistance and his final acceptance of it for the sake of human co-existence.

Almost all the characters in these novels are chosen from the middle class Parsi background and are shown resisting the snares of power and finally accepting their lot in their own way. Michael Foucault in his *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* says: "where there is power, there is resistance" (95). Power and resistance form a singular dynamic called struggle. But being a novelist very sensitive to human issues, Mistry introduces a third element called "acceptance" in his novels and nullifies the former two anti-humanist and destructive forces.

Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*, portrays the pulsating patterns of empowerment and the operation of resistance on the part of the central characters, Gustad Noble and his wife and family members. His family had its happiest days during his grandfather's time who was a prosperous furniture dealer and a lover of tasteful living. His father too had been a great lover of books and owned one of the finest bookstores in the country.

As a child, Gustad had enjoyed the luxuries and lavish lifestyle of his grandfather. But everything came to an abrupt end due to his alcoholic and gambler uncle. Gustad's father was too bound by parental loyalty to salvage his share of the parental property. Gustad's initiation to the resistance of patriarchal authority for the first time in his life is to give his bookstore to his brother and thus he virtually lost his last source of income.

Gustad's present circumstances are too insignificant both socially and financially. He lives in a two-room flat in Khodadad building with his wife, two sons and a daughter. His meagre income from the bank where he works as a clerk has left him nostalgic for his grandfather's days but he dreams to reconstruct his family's lost prosperity through his eldest son Shorab's admission in the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology.

Shorab's success in IIT entrance makes Gustad's dreams come true. To celebrate this along with his daughter's ninth birthday, he invites his bank colleague Dinshawji, his only Parsi friend in whom he confides everything. The initial atmosphere of merriment, humour, songs, jokes and fun contributed

by Dinshawji is to be followed by a nice dinner consisting of Basmati rice, vegetable stew and chicken curry.

Everything goes smooth atleast for the time being. Then comes the struggle. The struggle starts when his son Shorab turns violent uttering volleys of freakish remarks to his father and announcing his decision not to join IIT. He vows that he will pursue the arts programme with his friends. The boy has no fear, no respect for parental authority. Unlike his father (Gustad) who is mild, he will resist to the maximum. When Gustad did not relent, he runs away from home. He is a new generation Parsi.

When Shorab shows his resistance by refusing to join IIT as he would not like to part with his friends, Gustad retorts with anguish:

Friends? Friends? Don't talk to me of friends! If you have good reasons, I will listen. But don't say friend! You must be blind if you cannot see my own example and learn from it . . . What happened to the great friend Jimmy Bilimoria? Our Major Uncle? Where is he now, who used to come here all the time? Who used to eat with us and drink with us? Who I treated like my brother? Gone! Disappeared! Without saying a word to us. That's friendship. Worthless and meaningless! (SALJ 48)

Later, when Shorab returns after a long lapse of time, Gustad who has been grieving all the time accepts him willingly back home.

Jimmy's sudden disappearance from Khodadad building without informing Gustad causes him considerable heartburn. After a long wait, Gustad receives a letter from Jimmy, entreating him to receive a package from the Chorbazaar. It turns out to be a huge sum of money to be deposited in his bank in a fictitious account for his guerilla operation. While Gustad assesses the threat to his friend Jimmy in RAW, his wife Dilnavas senses the threat to their family and shows her resistance saying: "for him it is his job, he joined the secret service. Let him do all his secreting service himself, without making us starve to death" (SALJ 20). Being a Parsi woman cast in a different mould, she can be loyal to her husband, but she will always resist external forces which may disturb the peace of the family.

Before the money is deposited in the bank, Gustad's neighbour, inspector Banji and halfwit Tehmul smell its secret. Through his colleague Dinshawji, Gustad is able to avert the immediate threat of the forbidden money but he is caught again by Dinshawji's inadvertent disclosure of this secret to the lady typist Lauri Cautino who impersonates herself as a man working for secret service. Foreseeing the danger in his frolicsome spree, Gustad rebuffs him sharply and warns him to cut short all his jokes and teasing. Eventually, Dinshawji falls a victim to the irrevocable betrayal of his frail body. All these events portray how Mistry's characters in his novels struggle hard to put forward their resistance when controversial problems arise.

Political power and corruption form the most vital pattern of empowerment in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*. The snares of political power and corruption at higher places trap Major Jimmy Bilimoria. He is arrested on the charge of extorting sixty lakh rupees from the bank by impersonating the Prime Minister's voice. It may be pointed out here that Jimmy is none other than the fictional counterpart of Nagarwala who was arrested and exterminated during Indira Gandhi's regime. Mistry shows "Power" as an "Evil", as the heartless powermongers unleash it on even innocent people in order to appease their "hunger".

This incident, as it involved a Parsi had jolted the image of the whole community. By re-enacting his persona, Mistry vindicates the disgust of his community as well as every politically conscious citizen. Under no circumstance, Mistry can give up his community. He writes:

Is it routine for our national banks to hand over vast sums of money if the Prime Minister telephones? How high up does one have to be in the government or the Congress party to be able to make such a call? And was the chief cashier so familiar with Mrs. Gandhi's voice that he accepted the instructions without any verification whatsoever? If yes, does that mean that Mrs. Gandhi has done this sort of thing frequently? (SALJ 195)

While exposing the political corruption at the national level through third person narrative of newspaper reporting is Mistry's typical mode of

resistance, it is more pungent when he attacks bloody-minded super power like USA for their international domination. The inhuman killing unleashed Bangladesh by Pakistani army with tacit financial and armament support from America to block Russia's access to Indian Ocean becomes the target of scalding criticism of Dinshawji: "And then America's two little *golaas* are in Russian hands. To protect their soft *golaas*, they don't care even if six million Bengalis are murdered, as long as Pakistan is kept happy" (SALJ 76).

Only few Indian English novelists have projected the post independence dilemma of the minorities like the Parsi community as Mistry. In the pre-independence period, they had enjoyed the privileges of power and social status by owing allegiance to the colonial masters. But after independence they were forced to the periphery both socially and politically. The emergence of fundamentalism and linguistic movement as the yardstick for determining national allegiance, sidelined the religious other (the Muslims) and the cultural other (the Parsis).

Gustad voices Mistry's concern vociferously. "No future for minorities with 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 White man to get half as much" (55). Dinshawji's laments with emotion on the change of street names brings forth the notion of displacement effectively, it also posits Mistry's resistance to the name-changing politics of the cultural majority:

Names are so important. I grew up on Lamington Road. But it has disappeared, in its place is Dadasaheb Bhadkhamkar Marg. My School was on Carnac Road. Now suddenly it's on Lokmanya Tilak Marg... So what happens to the life I have lived? Was I living the wrong life, with all the wrong names? Will I get a second chance to live it all again, with these new names? (SALJ 74)

Dinshawji's scathing attack on Indira Gandhi and the Shiv Sena is nothing but Mistry's voice which resists the policy of minority-hunting policies and sneaky racism.

... she is a shrewd woman, these are vote-getting tactics. Showing the poor she is on their side . . . Remember when her happy was Prime Minister . . . she began encouraging the demands for a separate Maharashtra. How much bloodshed, how much rioting she caused. And today we have that bloody Shiv Sena, wanting to make the rest of us into second-class citizens. (SALJ 3)

Mistry's *Family Matters* also traces patterns of empowerment and modes of resistance or acceptance through its characters. The story centres round a 79-year-old Parsi widower, Nariman. He lives in a seven-room apartment in a complex called Chateau Felicity. With him live his two grown-up stepchildren: Coomy, a bitter woman who seems intent on plaguing Nariman with rules "to govern every aspect of his shrunken life" (FM2) and her brother Jal, a mild, but good-for-nothing fellow.

As for Nariman, life is better than it was in his spacious flat where he had to content with Coomy's sourness and Jal's helplessness. Here he has his grandson's company and when he talks in his sleep, Roxana and her husband, Yezad, rush out of their bedroom to put him back in rest. As time goes by, the Chenoy family struggles on to care for Nariman as their monthly budget becomes more and more strained. However, they give up all luxuries and save money to meet the present dire needs. Roxana, her husband and sons, each in his or her own way, attempt to find money needed to meet the additional expenses. Each has his or her own share in the total sacrifice.

Roxana's elder son Murad in an honest, straightforward manner takes to walking home from school and slips the saved bus fare into his mother's envelops. Yezad and Jahangir are more adventurous and they go in for bigger money. Yezad with the help of Villie, the Matka Queen, places at first small and later big bets on the daily lottery. Jahangir, being the homework-monitor in school, deals with the rich students and marks non-existent homeworks as acceptable, in return for monetary consideration. So Roxana's little envelops mysteriously become plump once again. This is an extreme form of acceptance.

In *Such a Long Journey*, Dilnavaz, Gustad's wife is a patient woman. For instance, when India is at war with China, Gustad tapes blackout paper on all the windows in the house and for nine years the paper remains there. In addition, "the paper collected dust and was difficult to clean . . . and it made

the whole house dark and depressing" (SALJ 22). Gustad still refuses to windows. Gustad, however, either claims that with the blackout paper in place, they will always be ready for another war, or answers "Why the big rush? I'll do it when I have some time" (SALJ 377). But while he goes to work at the bank everyday, Dilnavaz must live in unnecessary darkness, in a home where "the morning never seems to come" (SALJ 22) and "even starlight and moonlight is blocked out" (SALJ 64). She feels she has enough responsibilities in keeping the household in working order. For example, she explains that while she is heaving big tubs of water around the kitchen every morning, Gustad sits and reads the newspaper. Dilnavaz also points out that she must "shout the scream, while nice Daddy watches quietly. To finish their food, to do homework, to pick up their plates" (SALJ 207).

Discussing family and community "matters", Mistry in tune with the behavioural-pattern of his ancestors and his cultural heritage, makes "acceptance" as the high mode to be followed, though there may be occasions giving rise to bickering, misunderstandings and resistance. But, he, like his contemporary Parsi novelists, cannot mince matters while dealing with the "matters" political, social and otherwise that may cavil and damage the Parsi sensibility. He "resists" verbally all events as strongly as possible in the interest of safeguarding the name and fame of his community.

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