

# Exploration of Cultural Odyssey and Traumatic Upheaval in Rohinton Mistry and Elif Shafak's Novels

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## Abstract

This comparative literary analysis tries to explore the emotional and physical journeys undertaken by the heroes in no man's land in the novels "Such a Long Journey" and "Island of Missing Trees". The tribulations of Gustad Noble in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* and Kostas Kazantzakis in Elif Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees* are similar, as both characters share perspectives marked by struggle and uncertainty, with little sign of resolution. Both the novels underline the overarching themes of displacement, identity crisis and resilience. Mistry's novel delves into the history of the Parsis, their mental anguish in India, and his focus is primarily on the bitter sweet journeys of the hero Gustad Noble and Elif Shafak's novel too reflect the issues of diaspora and displacement relating to mental trauma. The tragic occurrences in the novels are foreshadowed by the earlier incidents that act as cobwebs in the lives of the heroes. The novels encompass the themes of fear and unpredictability associated with displacement and relocation of the migrants combined with the intricate tapestry of past emotions, reflecting on disconnection during journeys.

**Keywords:** migration and trauma, Diaspora, Displacement, Identity crisis, Cultural disconnection, Postcolonial literature

## 1. Introduction

The original homeland of the Parsis was the ancient Persian province Pars (or Fars) in Iran, and they are the followers of the prophet Zarathushtra. In the seventh century A.D, the Parsis fled from Persia due to the Arab-Islamic conquest and they migrated to various countries, including Afghanistan, China and Russia. Most of the Persians eventually settled in Sanjan, Gujarat in India. The Parsis, the ethno-religious group of people, were provided asylum on several conditions put forward by the then Hindu King. Initially, the Indian king denied them refuge but his reconsideration eventually allowed them space. Their promise of sweetening Indian community still resonates in cultural memory and their contribution has a long list of achievers ranging from science and technology to Arts and culture. Yet, the socio-cultural and religious conditions extended by the Indian King made the life of the Parsis rather miserable leading them to feel deprived of their freedom.

## Assimilation and Identity Challenges

Owing to severe constraints, such as the adoption of Gujarati, the Parsis were compelled to relinquish their own language, attire, and cultural practices, often at the expense of their traditions. In the settled nation, they settled themselves as weavers, farmers, and horticulturalist. The condition of the Parsis was changed during the British era. They held unique positions in many departments during the British era as they got pockets of support and influence from the imperialists. Their fair skin, facial structure and hair texture akin to the British lured them to see the commonalities between Iranian and European ancestry, which in turn fostered closer ties with the British. But when the colonizers left India, their indulgent flourish got suspended and the situation of the Parsis worsened to a certain degree. In due course, their imitation of 'everything' brought ebbs and flows in their lives. Said's (1978) concept of Orientalism helps explain how Parsis' mimicry of British culture reflects both assimilation and subjugation within colonial discourse.

The Parsis, after spending some years of settlement in Gujarat, went to various directions especially to Ankleswar and Nassar and Cambay. Their settlement in Mumbai in 19<sup>th</sup> century marked an era of development for the city. Yet their minority status also brought psychological

strain, instilling a lingering sense of vulnerability. This feeling has haunted succeeding generations of the Parsis. Furthermore, the Hindu mainstream community's ambivalence towards these migrants rapidly instils a sense of exclusion. Their persistent efforts to assimilate themselves into an alien culture are futile and, as a result, they gradually begin to lose their identity.

## 2. Literature Review

The Parsis, despite their flourishing state, is a dwindling community due to their significantly small minority status. Their contributions in diverse fields earn them name and fame. Yet their minority status keeps them aloof from the mainstream community. Their dwindling population too becomes a matter of concern for the Parsis. Apart from this primary worry, they face yet other problems which threaten the community's sustainability. They possess a distinct culture and their incessant struggle to maintain the same in an alien soil lends them towards emotional detachment. Luhrmann (2006) examines the struggles the Parsis face in India while preserving their distinct culture and religious practices. Palsetia (2001) explains how their displacement from Iran and their subsequent settlement in Gujarat were proved to be challenges. Banaji in his recent work *Modernization and Tradition: The Contemporary Parsi Dilemma* (2023) provides an in-depth analysis of the factors which led the Parsis to move from their native soil Iran to India. He explores the nuances of tension that exist between modern times and traditional period and focuses how the clash led to the erosion of the community's distinct identity. In *Parsi Property and Religious Autonomy: A Legal Perspective* (2020), Irani addresses the displacement scenario and analyses how the modern legal frameworks and policies have affected the community. Desai (2015) highlights the efforts taken by the community to maintain distinct identity in the foreign soil.

The Parsis, despite finding refuge in India, feel that their identity is contested and negotiated. David Theo Goldberg and John Solomons in their *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic*

*Studies* stress the importance of identity: "...identity gives one a sense of personal location, and provides a stable core for one's individuality; but it is also about one's social relationships, one's complex involvement with others and in the modern world these have become even more complex confusing" (6). As Calhoun, Light, and Keller (1995) observe, migration and minority existence often lead to restructuring of social identity and community roles, a notion that resonates with the Parsi and Cypriot experiences. The migrated Parsis in India possess confused identities and have experienced a great sense of alienation. Homi Bhabha, a Parsi critic, in *The Location of Culture* addresses them as ambassadors and refugees (68). Uma Parameswaran observes that they were caught between two rocks (39). Anjali Roy describes the Parsi fiction as the trend setter of ethnic writing in India (20). Kapadia and Khan (1997) further argue that Parsi literature reflects deep-seated ethnic anxieties and the community's struggle for cultural preservation. Urbashi Barat describes journeys of the Parsis as "emotional journeys" (64). According to Becker and Ferrara (2019), Forced Migration leads to loss of homes and possessions. Forced migration leads to loss of homes and possessions (Becker & Ferrara, 2019). Subhendu Mund in "Identity Crisis: Indian English Novelist in a Globalized World", echoing the views of Robin Cohen on diasporic community, observes: "All diasporic communities settled outside their national (or imagined national) territories, acknowledge that 'the old country' – a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore – always has some claim on their loyalty and emotion" (63). According to Sherien Sabbah and Ayuningtyas (2022), "People migrate from their mother land due to several reasons including social, political and economic reasons hoping their migration would promise assured security and better life". War and the subsequent events allow Kazanzakis family to undertake a bitter journey to an unknown land which remained an enigma for them for the rest of their lives, says Zehra (2023). Jain (1998) situates Indian diasporic writers within a framework of negotiation between home and abroad, a context that illuminates both Mistry and Shafak.

There is a research gap exists on the psychological trauma faced by the heroes in both the novels. By doing the research on the area, the researcher can address the similar complexities faced by the migrant community in toto. The research attempts to present an in-depth analysis of the trauma experienced by the migrant people who live in different parts of the world possessing assimilation challenges and confused identity. Their journeys, both physical and emotional, are the realm of their psychological construct. As Ryan (1999) notes, literary theory provides critical tools for analyzing how narratives reflect broader cultural and political histories. The research paper focuses on the journeys in the novels and analyses how these journeys reflect the emotional overtones.

## 3. The Parsi Experience in Postcolonial India

The post-colonial era marked the beginning of social isolation with renewed vigor. The Parsis started experiencing emotional pain, loss of identity, insecurity, anxiety and memory trauma. The Parsi writers seemingly blend the haunting memories to construct Parsi Discourse. Parsi writers like Firdaus Ganga, Bapsi Sidhwa, Farrukh Dhondy, Boman Desai, Meher Pestonjee, Rohinton Mistry expresses the Parsi consciousness in their writings. Of these writers, Rohinton Mistry provides a pioneering voice for the Parsi people. McLeod (2000) points out that postcolonial literature often negotiates hybridity and displacement, themes strongly evident in both Mistry and Shafak. Bharucha (2003) also emphasizes how Mistry's early works, especially *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, mark the beginning of his exploration into Parsi identity and diasporic consciousness. His works strives hard to hold the Parsi norms, canons, and conventions. Mistry's first novel *Such a Long Journey*, published in 1991, deals with the sufferings of a Parsi in the political turmoil of 1971 Pakistan war. It was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. His second novel *A Fine Balance* was published in 1995. It was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1996. Mistry published his third novel *Family Matters* in 2002. The present paper attempts to read the diasporic journey and the lives of the Parsis in the alien land focusing mainly on Rohinton Mistry's novel *Such a Long Journey*.

Mistry's maiden novel *Such a Long Journey* centers on the life of Gustad Noble, an ordinary middle class Parsi, whose sufferings are either personal or racial. The emotional scars are due to

many reasons as his son Sohrab's refusal to join IIT, overflowing coffers from his friend Bilimoria and the unexpected demise of his friend Dinshawji. The stress of his racial sufferings weighs heavily on the political interplay involving his friend Bilimoria. Bilimoria's sudden death, and the punitive demolition of the holy wall burdened him with mental anguish.

*Such a Long Journey* is set against the 1971 Indo-Pak war and the emergence of a new nation, Bangladesh. Besides highlighting Indo-Pak war, Mistry also depicts the Indo-China war of 1962. The novel ostensibly traces out the suspected death of Lal Bahadur Shastri and Feroze Gandhi, and highlights the Nagarwala Case in which a Parsi falls prey to politicking. The abrupt cessation of his friend Bilimoria metamorphoses Gustad's life entirely. Yet, Bilimoria's letter brought cheerful updates regarding his appointment in RAW but the subsequent events shattered Gustad's normal life. The novel unfolds the travesty of major political upheavals during Indira Gandhi regime.

Mistry presents Bilimoria as the replica of Nagarwalla who is a member of Parsi community who was working in RAW allegedly received sixty lakh rupees from a bank manager in Delhi to fully equip the Mukti Bahini guerrillas on the strength of a phone call from the Prime Minister but later it was found out that he only imitated the voice of the Prime Minister. There were many rumors concerning the incident but the truth remains elusive. In the meantime, Nagarwala died suspiciously during the course of the investigation. The chief investigator died in a car accident. When Gustad meets Bilimoria in jail, he comes to know the secret behind his arrest. The image of the Parsi community gets tarnished due to Nagarwala incident and it creates a sense of aversion among the Zoroastrians towards the rulers and later gets extended to the whole nation.

The Parsis showed blithe when their community member Feroze Gandhi married Indira Gandhi. But their separation came like a bolt from the blue and their aversion got elicited with the sudden death of Feroze Gandhi. Gustad Noble as a Parsi finds no comfort stay in India. He muses "No future for minorities.... It was going to be like the black people in America-twice as good as the white man to get half of much (65). The Parsis once owned the banks and When Indira Gandhi nationalized 14 major Indian banks in 1969, many Parsis lost their elevated status and they were subjected to downward trajectory. Dinshawji muses: "What days those were, Yaar. What fun we used to have Parsees were the kings of banking in those days. Such respect we used to get. Now the whole atmosphere has been spoiled ever since Indira nationalized the banks"(45).

Being an infinitesimal minority community, the Parsis are subject to injustice, discrimination and marginalization and they try to conquer these feelings by devising superiority of their community, religion, culture and tradition over Indian culture and tradition. Jeffery's (1976) study of Pakistani migrants in Britain similarly reveals the tensions of cultural retention and adaptation, reflecting challenges faced by Parsis in India. When Malcoom Saldana tried to prove the landing of Apostle Thomas on the Malabar coast ".....long before the Parsis came in the seventh century from Persia"(28), Gustad replies "our Prophet Zarathustra live more than fifteen hundred years before your Son of God was ever born"(28). The Parsis' are unable to mingle with other Indians and the train voyage and the travellers often irritate Dinshawji. The dubbawalla (a person who is part of the traditional lunch box delivery system in Mumbai, India) who stands beside him was sweating and when he sat near him Dinshawji says". He turned and slipped into my seat. Insult to injury? What to do with such low-class people? (87).

#### 4. Journey of Resilience

"Such a long Journey" is a novel which throws light on the life journey of a middle-class Parsi migrant. The introductory page of *Such a Long Journey* commences with the following lines from T.S. Eliot: "A cold coming we had of it, just the worst time of the year for a journey, and such a Long Journey." The lines which appear in Eliot's poem *Journey of the Magi* deals with the journey of three Magi to see the newly born Jesus Christ. During their long voyage, they suffered a lot but at the end, their worries are vanished in air when they see Christ.

Journey is an important motif in Mistry's "Such a Long Journey". The hero Gustad Noble and other important characters undertake journeys throughout their life which help them in navigating the path of reflection and judgement. Gustad undertakes various voyages for various reasons and the risky gambits are for the sake of his family or friends. Gustad Noble, a Parsi suffers throughout his life journey as his status has the middle-class signboard. But he enjoyed his childhood due to the income that his family got from the furniture workshop that his grandfather owned. When the business collapsed, there came a setback in his life. He started to live the life of typical middle-class men with the complaints of work pressure, financial pressure, and household duties. Gustad, often muses over his flourished state during his childhood days, even though he is a father of three children now. "He had dreamt of his childhood days...while his grandmother sent the servants out repeatedly to buy special herbs and masala for the feast cooking under her supervision" (22).

The hero Gustad Noble is a typical Parsi, who scarcely forgets the root of his community. When attempting to preserve his root, he encounters with a multitude of obstacles. Being beset with rootlessness in India, his sense of insecurity and identity crises figure everywhere in the novel. His journey to Delhi to visit his close friend Major Bilimoria in the prison injects complex mix of emotions and thoughts. Bilimoria who is in the prison Hospital expresses his wish of meeting Gustad. Gustad is reluctant to go to Delhi but "it is the only way to find out the truth or he will never know peace. And to be honest, neither will. All the same thought of Gustad entertaining jail, even as a victory was frightening"(308). Gustad's only intention regarding his Delhi travel is to find out the truth behind the corruption case in which his friend Bilimoria is involved. He comes to know of his friend's arrest from the daily newspaper and he believes that his friend is innocent. His plan to go to Delhi has a stoppage when the railway workers announced strike. Hearing the news, at first, Noble feels happy "... felt relief now: I can cancel the trip with a clear conscience"(303). but after much internal struggle, he embarks on a journey to Delhi with trillions of doubts in his mind. He moves on with his own compassion and courage but at times losing his confidence too. While boarded on the Bombay-Delhi train, he thinks, 'would this long journey be worth it? Was any journey ever worth the trouble? (307). His meeting with his friend Bilimoria clears his doubts when the latter explains him how he becomes a political victim. Bilimoria becomes a political victim and

it triggers a chain of events too. The catastrophe events left him in the lurch rendering the void. The journey is the central theme of the novel and it ascertains the racial-diasporic journey of the Parsi race too.

### 5. Conflict and Migration in Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees*

Elif Shafak is a Turkish -British Novelist and her works have been translated into fifty-five languages. Her written works encompass her noted novels, *The Bastard and Istanbul* (2006), *The forty Rules of Love* (2009), *The Daughters of Eve* (2016), *10 Minutes 38 seconds in this strange world* (2019). Her recent novel "The Island of Missing Trees" published in 2021. Elif Shafak shares a unique and collective ideology of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in her contemplative and symbolic novel "The Island of Missing Trees. The narrative reverberates the ordeals plagued by the conflict victims and it resonates anyone who hail from complex and contentious history of land with historical trauma, border disputes, power struggles and is a "fiction—a mixture of wonder, dreams, love, sorrow and imagination" (Note to the reader). Her realistic portrayal of the events complies with her words in an interview "One should never ever remain silent for fear of complexity". The novel is divided into six parts. The story revolves around the Turkish invasion of Cyprus which is "beautiful and blue that the many travelers, pilgrims, crusaders and merchants who fell in love with it either wanted never to leave or tried to tow it with hemp ropes all the way back to their own countries" (Prologue) and it was survived through multiple conquerors including Egyptian and Persian.

The novel sheds light on different time periods and the novel traces the surreal stories of Cyprus of the 1970s to London of the late 2010s. The readers experience a time travel with different characters belonging to different time periods. The novel has a surprising note which astonishes the readers with the unusual narrator i.e., a fig tree. The novel is prefaced with two epigraphs. The lines from Pablo Neruda's *Memoir* "Anyone who hasn't been in the Chilean forest doesn't know this planet. I have come out of that landscape that mug, that silence, to roam, to go singing through the world" reinforces the psyche of the migrated people, their exiled state and their emotional bondage with their natal soil. The second epigraph from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* "It will have blood manifests in the portrayal of trees as the iconic figure and witness for the bloody human actions". She gives voice to the non-human entity, the nature and focuses on the tribulations and the challenges confronted by the biodiversity synchronously with the afflictions and aggravations administered to the human kind.

### 6. Identity and Generational Trauma

In "The Island of Missing Trees", Elif luminously presents a historical narrative that maps the ebbs and flows of Cyprus's history, from the island's past to the current rift. Cyprus had a mixed population of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The country got independence in 1960 but the historical unrest that existed between the Greek inhibitors and Turkish people led to a conflict in 1974. A Greek Cypriot coup tried to take control of Cyprus with the aim of uniting Cyprus with Greece but it was intervened by Turkish Military. It resulted in displacements, mass killings, and disappearance. Like any War, it too brings a range of woes beyond the physical pain. The political turmoil has led to the formation of a buffer zone, called the green line "a slash to the heart "(21) that separates Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots which is guarded by United Nations to avoid escalating tensions between the two opposing forces. The central character of the novel is a Greek Cypriot migrant namely Kostas. His love for a Turkish Cypriot named Define amidst the stormy scene due to war unfolds suspense and, violence though out the novel. Though these teenagers inherit different cultural ethos, they have a close bondage and they secretly meet in a tavern. The fig tree which grows near the inn becomes the silent witness to their secret love that gets developed amidst the political unrest on account of alarming tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Being upset over the current political conflict, Kostas' mother sends him to London. This unprecedented move marks the beginning of the upcoming sorrows that shook the lives of Kostas and Define. Their fervent pleas go into air and their desires are being buried underneath. His migration to the UK from the war- torn Cyprus marks the beginning of his diasporic journey.

Resilience becomes the choice of the migrants after overcoming much emotional pain and Kostas too shares the similar notion:

Kostas felt a sense of loneliness so acute it was almost tangible. After that day, he would no longer talk about fruit bats and how important they were for the trees of Cyprus, and hence for its inhabitants. In a land besieged with conflict, uncertainty and bloodshed, people took it for indifference, and is insult to their pain, if you paid too much attention to anything other than human suffering. This was neither the right time nor the right place to carry on about plants and animals, nature in all its forms and glory, and that is how Kostas Kazantzakis slowly shut himself off, carving an island for himself inside an island retreating in to silence (120).

Ada Kazantzakis, a teenage girl and a third-generation Cypriot migrant in English undergoes an emotional journey which is caused due to the loss of her mother at younger age, her identity crisis, and uncertainty about the family history. She asks: "What I don't understand is why my own parents never talked about the past even after they moved to England. Why the silence?" (313). Her lingering thought of rootlessness made her a laughing stock among his friends making the school a nightmarish. On screaming at the school during a discussion on cultural heritage, she starts to understand the underlying issue in terms of her poor mental health. Her mental state after seeing her aggressive pictures circulating on the social media tries to uncover her taunted self which she already experiences in her everyday life. Subsequently, she develops an antagonism towards her father. Because "he spends a lot of time with his trees" (24). Her father's obsession with plants and nature never attracted her and she concealed his identity as a writer from her acquaintances. Because "She had no intention of giving her classmates yet another reason to conclude that she –and her family–were weird (24).

The fig tree, never attracted Ada in the beginning. But her love and affection for the tree have reached the zenith after knowing her parents' love story, their sacrifice and their battered lives. Her journey towards identifying her origin ended up with her revelation of the emotional bonding between the fig tree and her father. The story behind the fig tree is the predictive of her lineage with Cyprus, the ancient city.

Through these revelations, it is revealed that the fig tree connects the past and present, offering Ada a new perspective for healing her mental pain. Thus, Ada's journey as a teenager becomes the most striking part of the novel. She is the witness of the occurrences of the throbbing past, present and future like the fig tree.

## 7. Connoisseur

Shafak presents that the boundaries are meant for only for human beings and not for nature and it is quite evident in the writings of Safak. She also highlights the inextricable link between human migration and natural environment. The novel depicts the memory of the homeland through an interesting character Meryam, Defie's sister who travels to English to renew her relationship with sister's daughter Ada. Cyprians live in communion with nature and their love for nature becomes the collective memory of the whole nation. The striking self-narration of the fig tree lures the readers into the greener shade of the universe where one can get the glimpses and reflections of the lives led by the characters in the novel. The enduring power of the fig tree is wonderfully portrayed throughout the novel. Fig tree possesses as a trauma healer and stands as a symbol of positivity.

One of the common issues migrants faces in an alien country is loneliness, and Kazantzakis is no exception. He responded sensibly to this struggle and heads into a hunt for a diversion in the foreign soil; the diversion that frees him from his burdens is 'nature'. He is recognized as an environmentalist icon in the settled nation. Kostas' love for fig and love for nature allows him to take the fig plants to his settled nation UK. In sync with his expectation, the fig tree, despite being uprooted, grows and spreads its branches and regains the past glory with the positive vibes. Fig symbolizes his love for his country too. Fig tree in the garden often reminiscences his native soil and it reflects his cherished bondage for his ladylove and his treasured memories of the tavern. "When you save a fig tree from a storm, it is someone's memory you are saving". He diligently guards the fig trees and the tree itself says: "He cared about me, always had. In the past, whenever the weather turned frigid, he took precautions to keep me alive. I remember one chilly afternoon in January he set up windbreaks all around me and wrapped me with layer upon layer of burlap to reduce moisture loss" (26).

The following lines by the narrator fig beautifully summarizes the emotional bonding that exists between the fig and Kostas:

I was cold and, though I did not want to admit it to myself, frightened. I wished I could have shared my worries with him. But even if I could have spoken, he was too distracted to hear me, absorbed in his own thoughts as he kept digging without so much as a glance in my direction. When he was done, he would put the spade aside, look at me with those sage-green eyes that I knew had seen things both pleasant and painful, and push me down into the hollow ground (26).

Man, sometimes tends to believe and connects the human feelings with nature. Kostas ignorantly projected human emotions onto the tree. He talks to the fig tree thus: When you are buried, I'll come and talk to you every day... 'you won't feel lonely" (34). The fig tree reacts: I wish I could have told him that loneliness is a human invention. Trees are never lonely. Humans think they know with certainty where their being ends a someone else's start. With their roots tangled and caught up underground, linked to fungi and bacteria, trees harbour no such illusion. For us, everything is interconnected" (34). On being the sole asset of human beings, loneliness often hurts their mental and physical well-being and it further injects the thought of identity crisis and rootlessness among the migrants. The question always lingers in the mind of Kozantas is "Will I go back to my land?". His guilty consciousness due to his separation from Defie and his bondage over his land take him to his homeland Cyprus and the alluring journey reunites him with the fig tree in the tavern once a voiceless observer of their ardent love.

## 8. Comparative Analysis: Mistry and Shafak

The repercussions due to the unpleasant incidents for being a Parsi robs off Gustad Noble's mental peace affecting his overall well-being. Similarly, Kostas and Daphne too travel with sentimental nostalgia navigating their Cypriot and Turkish identities which often pervaded by seclusion and separation. Both the novels set against the back drop of historical events. Such a Long Journey is woven along with the unifying thread of the Emergency period which shook the ordinary Indians during 1970's in India. The conflict between the Greek and the Turkish, war-related trauma and nostalgia leave a lasting impact on the lives of Kostas and Daphne and their shattered dreams trigger their psyche and the reflection get manifested in the life trajectories influencing their entire lives.

By the same token, the novels written during different time periods, revolve around physical journeys as well as mental journey of diverse characters "The Island of Missing Trees" echoes the journey of Kostas from Greek to UK" whereas *Such a Long Journey* reflects the painful journeys of Parsis from Iran to India. With the bundled fervor, the heroes settled down in an alien land but with the resolution of resilience and adaptation. In the settled nation, there exists symbolic yet contentious relationship between the native dwellers and the migrants. Both the heroes undertake emotional journeys which encompasses depression, disappointment, lack of love, loss of identity, and the mental woes. "The voices of our motherlands never stop echoing in our minds. We carry them with us everywhere we go. Still today, here in London, buried in this grave, I can hear those same sounds, and I wake up trembling like a sleepwalker who realizes he has ventured dangerously into the night" (Shafak, 2021: 341).

In "Such a Long Journey" and "Island of Missing Trees", the heroes are portrayed as settlers of alien lands as their lands became war hit areas. While in *Such a Long Journey*, the hero Gustad's fore fathers migrated to India due to the Arab invasion of Persia, Kostas was sent to UK by his mother fearing of losing yet another son in the war in "The Island of Missing Trees". Gustad experiences mental trauma due to his son Sohrab's denial of joining in IIT, his close friend becoming a political victim, and strikingly, Kostas also finds himself in troubled waters due to the indifferent behaviour of his daughter Ada and the psychological emptiness of the new land UK, further deepens

his sufferings.

## 9. Conclusion

Memory and diaspora always go hand in hand. Similarly, memory plays a vital role and the concept of diaspora holds a significant presence in each of the novels. The narratives employ journey as a motif and the heroes undertake physical and emotional journeys as well. However, they live with hope amidst the disarrays of modern life. The fabrication of story line results in the exploration of the recurrent theme of stabbing pain of migration. To summarize, the Parsis in India are haunted with diasporic consciousness which is evoked out of their nostalgic memories, rootlessness, oppressive attitude of the settled land, and alienated feelings. Gustad's journeys are quite challenging and are similar to the journeys of the hero Kostas in "Island of Missing Trees". Both titles *The Island of Missing Trees* and *Such a long Journey* are evocative and they explicit the plethora of experiences faced by Kostas and Gustad during their settlement in an alien place.

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## Authors' contributions

Dr. R. Latha Devi conceptualized the study and was responsible for the primary drafting of the manuscript as well as the coordination of the writing process. Dr. S. Prabahar contributed to the synthesis and development of the research framework. Ms. Priya K. S. conducted a critical analysis of key literary texts and carried out an extensive literature review. Ms. Maheshwari Suresh assisted in formulating arguments within the interpretive framework. Dr. J. Mary Vanaja supported the editing and formatting of the manuscript, while Dr. Amal J. Eronimus provided a critical and final review to ensure coherence and quality.

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