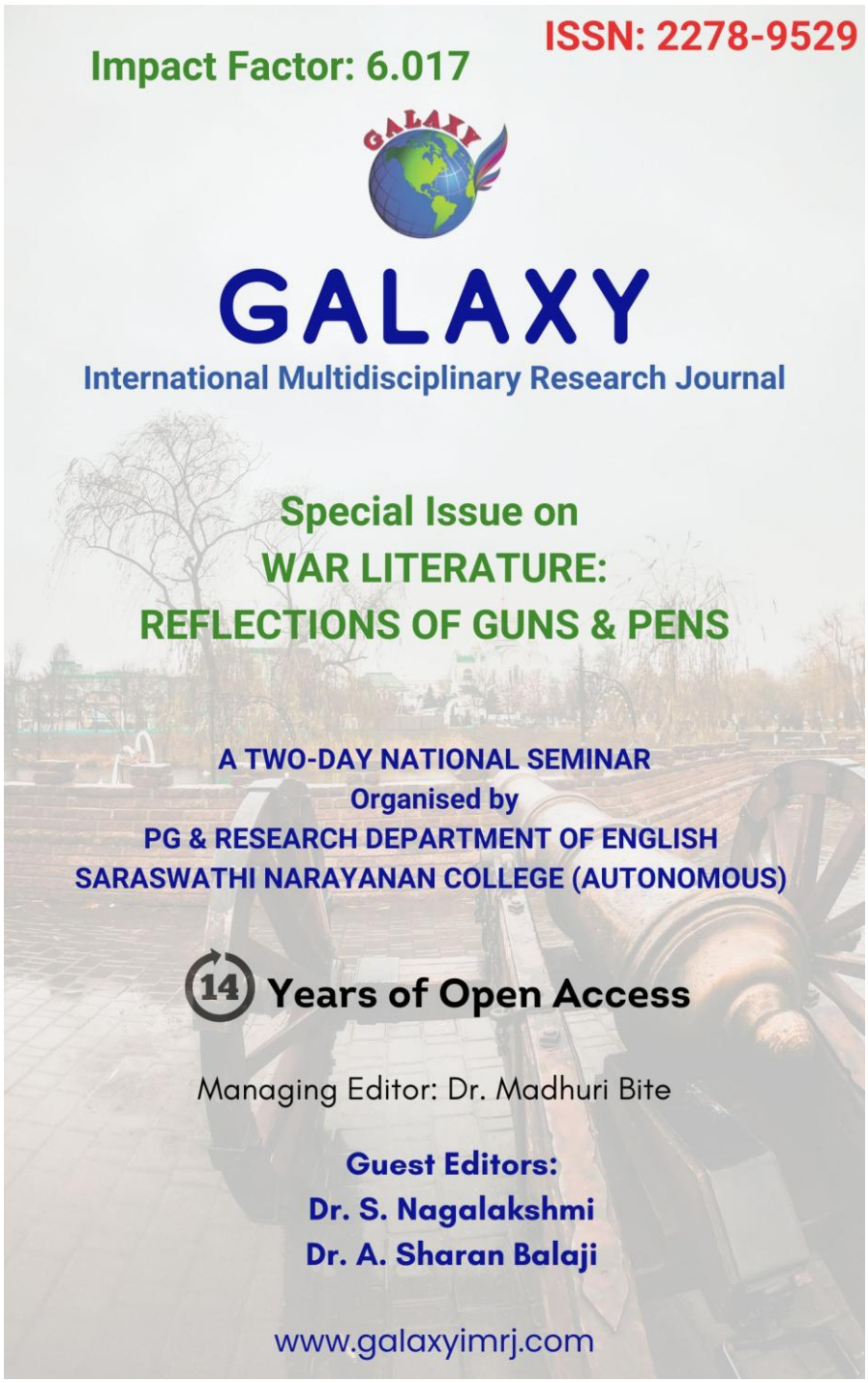


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Rohinton Mistry's Novels as War Literature: A Study of Conflict, Survival, and the Human Spirit

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Abstract:

In *A Fine Balance, Family Matters, and Such a Long Journey,* Rohinton Mistry wrote about battle, survival, and human strength from a unique point of view, which made his novels important additions to the body of war literature. Although Mistry doesn't write a lot of traditional war stories, he does look at how regular people deal with changes in society, personal problems, and government abuse, through his writing. Mistry changes the genre of war literature by showing that war happens in places other than battlefields. He does this by looking at things like systemic cruelty, governmental corruption, ideological conflicts, and the psychological effects of oppression in everyday life. Mistry shows war as a constant force through his characters, who fight for their right to justice and respect while trying to stay alive against threats from both inside and outside the country. This article talks about how Mistry's writing breaks new ground in war literature because it shows how public and private conflicts mix in the lives of regular civilians, showing how strong people are while they keep going.

Keywords: War literature, political unrest, structural oppression, psychological effects, survival.

Introduction

Throughout history, war literature has mostly been about violent events that happen on the battlefield and feature soldiers. When war happens, real effects happen that go beyond military activities on the battlefield. As well as physical fighting, war also has intellectual, emotional, and social structures that show up as violence, poverty, and oppression that happen over and over again. From an analytical point of view, literature can show the political and social struggles for justice, as well as the fights for survival and respect in systems that aren't fair. It can also show the hidden wars of everyday life.

Rohinton Mistry, who is from India and moved to Canada, is known for writing complex characters who show people in tough situations with a lot of understanding. Even though his books don't have any battle scenes, *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995), and *Family Matters* (2002) capture the essence of war writing in their pages. In his works, the main characters fight against social inequality, government corruption, economic problems, and ideological wars, both on their own and with others. They do this in a way that shows how brutal and pointless most war literature is. By showing how hard things are for his characters and how much pain they go through, Mistry challenges readers' traditional ideas about war literature and broadens its scope to include everyday social and political battles. This article looks at how Mistry's character experiences are affected by political unrest, institutional oppression, class differences, and personal disasters in order to show how his works are connected to war literature. Mistry writes about war in a unique way by changing the settings from physical battles to mental and emotional upheaval, showing how people can endure hardships while fighting for justice and survival.

Political Struggle in *Such a Long Journey*

In his novel Such a Long Journey, Mistry writes about war through public unrest and government control methods. The story takes place in the streets of Bombay during the 1971

Indo-Pakistani War, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. In Such a Long Journey, the main character, Gustad Noble, is a middle-class Parsi guy who has personal problems that are connected to big political events. This includes war propaganda and dishonest government officials. As Gustad reflects: "Nothing ever happens the way we want it to. Nothing ever turns out right. Everything is an illusion" (Such a Long Journey 294). Mistry uses the idea of institutional distrust as a main theme in his book to show how political fighting hurts regular people.

Historical Background: The 1971 Indo-Pakistani War:

The Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 was a major turning point in history that happened during this time. When India sent its military to help Bengal get its freedom, it added to the political conflict that East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) started when it fought West Pakistan. After Pakistan lost its last battle, the country we now call Bangladesh was formed. India's political and social order went through big changes because the armed forces fought between India and Pakistan all the time.In *Such a Long Journey*, all the characters are affected by major secondary bad effects caused by secret war forces that work through channels that can't be seen. In order to get military help, Gustad joins a shady money scheme, even though he seems like a normal person. Politicians take advantage of military situations to make money for themselves, which turns patriotic projects into complex, dishonest networks that they control. Even though the characters don't fight in the war, the book shows how ordinary people are caught up in propaganda wars, moral problems, and financial fraud.

Social and Psychological Disintegration in *Such a Long Journey*

People who are in war have mental health problems, which show up as a mix of worry, suspicion, and weaker family ties. He is paranoid, which is a lot like how people's minds broke down during the time of the social and political uprisings. As the book goes on, social unrest across the country gets worse, and the tense relationship between Gustad and his son Sohrab is

a metaphor for this. Internalized violence and ideological differences between people show up in domestic disagreements that show how people feel about the country as a whole. Some people don't like *Such a Long Journey* because the author's description of a mental breakdown is too close to what you can read about in war literature, which is about how soldiers break down with identity issues and moral questions. Mistry's book is a work of war fiction because it looks at the breaking points of people that happen during times of political unrest. The problems within the family in the book are a lot like the divides that happened across the country during wartime. . Critic Neil Kortenaar notes: “Mistry presents war as an ever-present force, shaping identities and redefining morality in civilian life” (297).

The Battle Against Oppression in *A Fine Balance*

In *A Fine Balance*, the government starts a unique kind of war that violently oppresses its own people. In Such a Long Journey, on the other hand, readers are sucked into more intense political and military battles. The story takes place during Indira Gandhi's Emergency, which happened from 1975 to 1977, and shows the lives of Dina Dalal, Ishvar, Omprakash, and Maneck Kohlah. The main characters are constantly ostracized and mistreated as they try to stay alive in a society that is becoming more and more authoritarian.

Historical Background: The Crisis (1975–1977)

When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared an emergency in India, she took control of the media, limited civil freedoms, and began to attack her political opponents. During this time, forced sterilization was the cruelest way to control the population because it hurt poor and otherwise disadvantaged people the most. The book shows the violent power of the state through the hard lives of Mistry's characters to show how the Indian people are oppressed. Ishvar and Om, two lower-caste characters, were made to get sterilized, which was a horrible example of a practice that was okay with the government. When war makes it possible for

politicians to use people for national goals, they lose their basic humanity and become useless objects. These violations are similar to state-sponsored violence.

The Decline of Humanity and State-Sanctioned Violence:

Instead of open warfare violence, the book shows state-enforced cruelty that targets weak social groups. Mistry's writing shows that the state-approved violence has more effects on Ishvar and Om than just leaving scars on their bodies. People are mutilated by a government that is too strict, which means they lose their rights and dignity. Ishvar and Om are victims of state-sponsored violence when they are sterilized against their will. The most harrowing example is the forced sterilization of Ishvar and Om, who are subjected to state-sponsored violence: “The proof of their powerlessness was written on their bodies, in the scars they carried, in the bones that had healed crookedly, in the limbs that were never whole again” (A Fine Balance 432).

The truth of war goes beyond standard military conflict, according to this type of conflict that targets people's minds and bodies, rendering them helpless. Mistry's story attacks how war makes people less human by showing how the government treats people badly in places like hospitals, sterilization centers, and faraway battlefields. The pictures show how people who live through war and the physical and mental injuries that come with it feel. Literary critic A.K. Mehrotra notes:“Mistry’s depiction of forced sterilizations parallels the horrors of wartime violence, where the state treats its citizens as disposable bodies” (91).

The Battle for Survival and Dignity in *A Fine Balance*

In Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, the main characters work hard to keep their honor when they are faced with different kinds of horror. After her failed wedding, Dina Dalal becomes financially independent, which shows that she wants to be free while also being honest. Even though they are treated badly, Ishvar and Om both keep working to make the economy grow. Classic war literature is full of stories whose main characters fight against enemies on many

levels. In the same way, Mistry's characters fight to live state violence, which is a similar take on the same themes. Society's numbers show that the human spirit can win over oppression, economic hardship, and intellectual suppression by peacefully resisting, even when the odds are very against it. Critic Shashi Sharma argues:"Mistry's depiction of despair and loss of meaning echoes themes of post-war literature, where survivors grapple with existential crises" (49). The author's work has the traits of war literature because it shows how oppressive government rules can crush people's spirits.

Family and the Problem of Individual Trauma's in *Family Matters*

In Mistry's novel *Family Matters*, he writes about how social changes affect families emotionally. However, it is different from his two other novel, *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*, which are more about politics. This novel is mostly about Nariman Vakeel, the old patriarch, and the moral and mental problems that arise in his family during the 1990s, a time when Hindu nationalism was growing.

Internal Wars as Battles

People's internal and external conflicts at home are explored in the novel *Family Matters*, but there are no traditional war scenes in the story. The frail state of Nariman's health and the fact that his children can't take care of him are shown in the pages, like soldiers who are too tired and hurt by war to accept their past. People get emotionally stressed when they have to deal with harsh, negative situations, as Coomy's angry reaction to her father's illness shows. In *Family Matters*, Coomy complains about having to take care of her father, which is similar to how people in war literature feel about fighting fights that aren't necessary. Hindu nationalism has made ideological differences between family members stronger, which makes family problems worse. Because nationalism often leads to hostility when countries are at war, *Family Matters* shows how personal views can break down families emotionally. There are

social problems in the novel that are similar to political problems in that time period. This shows that national problems can affect people's daily lives.

The end of traditional family roles and expectations

People in Nariman's family are fighting over who is in charge because traditional social structures are breaking down. Families in India are often split up because of different views and generational differences, which are made worse by rising political and religious tensions. These days, people have to deal with more problems in society because of changing political views, social norms, and economic trends that affect families. Yezad, Nariman's son-in-law, has been in conflict for a long time, and it slowly breaks down his morals until he gives in to Hindu nationalist ideas. Critic Linda Hutcheon observes:“Mistry masterfully depicts the slow but inevitable transformation of individuals in times of political and ideological warfare” (203). Through his story, Mistry shows that ideology can get into people's personal lives, but troops have to learn to deal with it or risk losing their identity for good.

Mistry -the canon of war literature :

The fights that don't happen in traditional war become important parts of Rohinton Mistry's books, which make the whole collection of war literature better. Most war literature is about soldiers on the battlefield going through trauma and defeat, but Mistry's writing expands the meaning of war to include struggles in family relationships, the human body, and people's inner mental states. In his stories, the characters struggle to stay alive in the face of oppressive government systems, indifferent society, and an overwhelming sense of exhaustion. Mistry's writing challenges readers to learn more about war by showing that destruction on the battlefield means social, psychological, and emotional pain. His books are good for the genre because they move important parts of war literature forward and show people who fight against impossible odds.

Conclusion

In his books, Rohinton Mistry gives an interesting look at war that covers political battles, psychological warfare, and the effects of violence on individuals. Because Mistry sees war as an all-encompassing power that goes beyond standard military engagements, his definition of war opens up a wider view of war literature. His writings show how regular people fight against violence in institutions, unfair social conditions, and abuse from the government. Mistry's work shows that people will always be fighting for justice, morality, and the will to live, even when things are impossible. By going into great depth about pain and endurance, Mistry writes groundbreaking war literature that solidifies his place as one of the most important authors of our time.

In his book *Such a Long Journey*, Mistry shows how people battle in corrupt political systems that force them to give up their morals in order to stay alive. The study goes further in *A Fine Balance* by showing how regular people fight institutional violence and the fight to keep their dignity. Internal family issues are brought to light by *Family Matters* to show that they can be just as destructive as external ones, even though most people don't think about them that way.

The paper looks into Mistry's way of writing, which changes some standard parts of war literature. In Mistry's stories, moral and emotional conflicts, as well as mental battles that are just as strong at creating fear, happen at the same time. His pictures of regular people trying to protect themselves from social dangers and personal problems serve as a general symbol of survival that connects traditional war stories to the complex inner struggles that run modern society. By dealing with daily problems himself, Mistry is able to come up with new ways to understand how conflicts work. Through his characters, Mistry shows how people's struggles for justice, survival, and self-respect come from a wide range of places, not just war zones but also their homes, communities, and the private minds of people who are on the outside. When

Mistry's novels come out, they expand the genre of war literature because they solidify his position as a major author whose works show hidden conflicts in modern life.

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