



## PROJECTION OF INDIAN POLITICS AND POWER IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S *SUCH A LONG JOURNEY*

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### ABSTRACT

*Rohinton Mistry, a writer of Indian Diaspora reflects the crisis of self-identity and aspects of immigration in his writings. He belonged to Parsi community of Indian origin but migrated to Canada in his early twenties. As a Parsi-Indian and Canadian writer within the new social milieu, he faces many challenges. He carves out the pain and sufferings of immigrant writers who migrate from India for better education, career prospects and for other reasons which make them more and more strong through his characters in his writings. His first popular novel Such a Long Journey, which is shortlisted for the distinguished Booker Prize, reveals his deep concern for the Parsi community in India and for the post-colonial India generally. The author through the undisputed protagonist Gustad Noble, projects the instant when socio-political commotion in India under Indira Gandhi's regime spirals steadily into the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war and therefore the ensuing succession of Bangladesh into Bangladesh. This paper examines the lifetime of Parsi Indians within the turbulent early 1970's and therefore the brilliant portrayal of Indian culture and family life against the backdrop of the subcontinent's volatile postcolonial politics. Such A Long Journey deals with the matter of India during India's second war with Pakistan. The action covers the amount after 1970. It takes up the conflict between political and private realities. The plot is drawn on the political canvas where Gustad Noble, a citizen of Bombay, the protagonist, is striving to become a responsible husband and father amidst his rebellious son Shorab and superstitious wife.*

**Keywords** - Indian Politics, Emergency, Alienation, Marginalization etc.

### INTRODUCTION

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*Such A Long Journey*, written by Canadian-Indian author Rohinton Mistry, follows Gustad Noble as he navigates interpersonal conflict and political scandal in early 1970s India. Indira Gandhi's corrupt government and India's war with Pakistan provide the story's political backdrop. It is widely praised for the novel's compassion and humor. It had been shortlisted for the person Booker Prize for Fiction. A strong and capable man, Gustad Noble carries a private history of sadness. He lives in Bombay together with his wife, Dilnavaz, who takes care of the house and therefore the family. They need three children: Sohrab, who has been accepted to technical college but doesn't want to go; Darius, the second son; and Roshan, the youngest, who may be a girl. The family lives in an apartment within the Khodadad Building.

Jimmy Bilimoria, a major, is an old and trusted friend of the many years who has disappeared. Gustad feels the betrayal deeply, as he loved Jimmy sort of a brother. Gustad arranges a birthday dinner for Roshan, and his friend Dinshawji from work involves help celebrate. Dinshawji may be a jokester who has been very ill. During dinner, Sohrab makes it clear to his father that he has no intention of getting to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). They argue, and Gustad declares that Sohrab is dead to him. Gustad receives a letter from Jimmy, who now works for the key Service and wishes a favor. Remembering that Jimmy helped him get over a broken hip, Gustad agrees. Dilnavaz seeks advice from Miss Kutpitia about resolving the difficulty between Gustad and Sohrab, beginning a practice of superstitious behaviors that last throughout the novel.

Roshan wins a doll within the school raffle; Tehmul, the disabled man who lives within the building, falls crazy with its creamy skin and blue eyes. Gustad meets Ghulam Mohammed; an associate of Jimmy's who gives him a package from Jimmy containing a million rupees. Jimmy wants Gustad to deposit the cash during a fake checking account. Dilnavaz wants to send the cash back. Gustad agrees, but over subsequent few days finds two dead animals and a threatening note in his bushes. He decides to deposit the cash and enlists Dinshawji's help, deciding they are going to deposit two stacks of cash every day to avoid suspicion. Meanwhile, Roshan falls ill, and Sohrab packs a bag and goes to remain with friends. Gustad takes Roshan to their general practitioner, Dr. Paymaster, whose office is near a well known brothel.

Roshan's health improves even as Dinshawji's health declines. A report of Jimmy's arrest appears within the paper. Gustad stops depositing the cash and goes to ascertain Ghulam, who says Gustad must return all the cash to him in 30 days. Gustad retrieves the cash five days before Ghulam's 30-day deadline. Even as Dinshawji hands the last of the cash to Gustad, he collapses and is taken to the hospital. Gustad returns the cash to Ghulam, and Ghulam gives Gustad a letter from Jimmy. Jimmy wants Gustad to visit Delhi to



ascertain him. He wants to elucidate everything to his old flame. Meanwhile, Gustad regularly visits Dinshawji, helping him eat and entertaining him with gossip about the bank. Gustad's old flame Malcolm takes Gustad to a Catholic shrine where he experiences peace, but upon returning home, Gustad learns that Dinshawji has died. Gustad goes to the hospital and sits with Dinshawji's body until his wife arrives. He attends both the family funeral and therefore the public ceremony.

Gustad travels to Delhi and visits a sick Jimmy within the hospital. Jimmy apologizes to Gustad for involving him. Gustad now feels that there is nothing to forgive. On the return journey to Bombay, Gustad hears the prime minister announce on the radio that India is at war with Pakistan. Indian forces advance, and Bangladesh's independence seems imminent. Pakistan surrenders and, reading the newspaper during his lunch hour, Gustad comes upon a brief piece announcing the death of Jimmy Bilimoria. Gustad is that the only mourner at the funeral. Meanwhile, Dr. Paymaster and Peerbhoy Paanwalla lead a column of protestors marching against the town to protest poor living conditions. Workmen have come to Khodadad Building to widen the road ahead of the complex. Fighting erupts between the protestors and therefore the city workers. Tehmul steps outside, is hit within the head by a brick, and dies. Tehmul's death brings peace between Gustad and Sohrab.

Inside his apartment, Gustad pulls down the blackout paper that has covered his windows since the war with China years before, marking a replacement beginning. Such an extended Journey is an ingenious story which explores the life and anguish of the middle-class Parsi people. Amrijit Singh says that *Such A Long Journey* is that the story of Gustad Noble, the small man who holds on to his dignity, strength, and humanity during a sweltering tide of disappointment, confusion, betrayal and corruption.

The author describes the pitiable circumstances and therefore the melancholic story of Gustad Noble, who is that the protagonist of the novel. He belongs to the middle-class Parsi community, who worked as a clerk during a bank. Being a clerk, he has got to face many problems in life. He was a fanatical husband, works very hard to uphold his family's financial situation. Noble was a father of three children, elder son Sohrab, youngest son Darius and Roshan, his daughter. He lived within the Khodadad building together with his family where most of the Parsis reside. Major Jimmy Bilimoria and Dinshawji are the faithful friends of him who also lived along side the Noble family within the Khodadad building. The novel clearly explores the socio-political issues which affect the lives of the characters and also the anxieties about their future as minority people. Mistry has effectively intertwined components of Parsi society and religion in his writing. It signifies different classes, professions, caste, and daily lives of the common Parsi people during a unique way. He utilizes his writing as a weapon against the exploiters and giving the reader information about the political



exploitation and its consequence on the common middle-class people. In one among the interviews conducted by Ali Lakhani, Mistry says that a new country is revealed with its wonders, life is a journey without destination.

*Such A Long Journey* examines the lifetime of a couple of Parsi Indians within the turbulent early 1970's. When Britain withdraws from the subcontinent in 1948, two states are created. Muslims form one state, Pakistan. Pakistan's two parts are widely separated by its massive southern neighbor, India. In India, Hindus predominate, although society is officially secular. Parsis are a small, secretive religious minority. The inhabitants of Khodadad Building north of Bombay are all Parsis. The foremost pious of them is Gustad Noble, the novel's protagonist. He is employed during a Parsi dominated bank downtown. Gustad intends that his eldest son, Sohrab, who excelled in secondary and college studies, attend the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and find a career more lucrative and prestigious than his own. Gustad bears many grudges from the past, which have limited his possibilities. Sohrab, an artist at bottom, rejects the plan.

The hard headed father and son clash and switch their backs on one another. Gustad's middle child, a son named Darius, causes only minor problems. Gustad's 9-year-old daughter, Roshan, is chronically ill, though. The illness brings Gustad into contact with a politically active doctor. Gustad's superstitious wife, Dilnavaz, falls under the sway of an upstairs neighbor who practices both black and magic. A Parsi mystic advises Gustad's sworn enemy. Another eccentric old Parsi rages out his window at the unfairness of the Almighty. A tragic and mentally deficient young man wanders about, delivering messages and playing. His mind was destroyed after falling from the neem at the middle of the compound. Although Gustad's war hero ally, Major Jimmy "Bili Boy" Bilimoria, has vanished from the apartment complex, he writes to Gustad to ask a favor.

Gustad follows his friend's instructions and receives a really great deal of money. Gustad is forced into depositing it gradually into a false checking account. Then he's compelled to withdraw it even sooner. It is clear Gustad is handling terrorists. Gustad is forced to involve another friend, the cancer-riddled, lecherous Dinshawji. Dinshawji's hospitalization, death, and funeral force Gustad to contemplate anew the mysteries of life. Jimmy Bilimoria reveals the sordid political story behind the cash laundering, during a heartbreaking visit Gustad makes to his friend's prison hospital bedside. The shadowy lieutenant who is intermediary between Jimmy and Gustad makes clear Major Bilimoria's natural death in prison was a murder.

The novel's climax comes when the denizens of an especially depressed neighborhood, march to the municipal buildings to demand essential services. On the way, they pause at the wall



outside Gustad's business, which a street artist has covered with depictions of the gods and holy people of all the religions of India. The municipality has decreed it'll be demolished to widen the road. during a violent street fight, Tehmul, the tragic cripple into whom Dilnavaz drew her son's evil demons, dies while trying to catch a brick. Gustad's lifetime of frustrations and anger melts as he prays over the victim's body. Sohrab and Gustad embrace. Although the sacred wall is demolished, so too is that the limiting, bleak past. Gustad Noble, the protagonist of *Such A Long Journey*, may be a well-meaning man with a highly developed sense of duty. Lesser men might well become embittered by the losses that his family has incurred. Noble's grandfather had a thriving furniture business; his father, a successful bookstore. Mismanagement by Noble's dissolute uncle resulted in bankruptcy and therefore the loss of everything the family had accumulated over the years. Though Noble sometimes recalls those earlier days of relative luxury, he tries to form the simplest of his modest circumstances.

As the novel opens, he's praising Ormazd and contemplating his own luck. At fifty, Noble is healthy; his wife, Dilnavaz, is attractive, good-natured, and efficient; his son, Sohrab, has just been admitted to the Indian Institute of Technology (ITT); and his younger son, Darius, and his daughter, Roshan, are intelligent, obedient children. Noble's only worries are the stench outside his apartment house, caused by passersby urinating on the wall; the repression of the Bengalis in East Pakistan; and, more immediately, a letter from his old flame, Major Jimmy Bilimoris, asking Noble to form bank deposits which will provide relief for Bengali refugees. That very day, things begin to travel wrong. Sohrab announces that he not wants to travel to ITT, and his frustrated father evicts him. Roshan develops a stomach disorder, and her parents cannot agree on the way to treat her. Neither the folk's remedies of Dilnavaz nor the expensive medicines of a backstreet doctor whom Noble trusts seem to assist. Noble's only success therein troubled period of his life involves the wall.

One a part of Mistry's style in Long Journey which will be seen as traditional is that the concept of a conclusion. The work is filled with conclusions and fulfillment: Dinshawji dies and is at rest, Roshan gets well, Mrs. Pastakia gets a closure to her past and gets to start out anew, the war with Pakistan is won, Gustad rids himself of problems with Jimmy Billimoria, and Gustad renews relations together with his Sohrab. But throughout the story, we see hints that Mistry wants for instance the continuing, never-ending, always turning hand of your time and affairs in such things because the destruction of the wall, the reshaping of the artist's life, the continuing dilapidation of the companies and surrounding community, the further corruption within the government, and even Ghulam Mohammed's plans for revenge that in how foreshadow the assassination of Gandhi in later years. This urge to write down a completely unique without closure was finally let free in Mistry's latest work, A Fine



Balance, creating, as its stalemate chess games illustrate, a struggle against and with life with no clear winners.

Such an extended Journey is that the typical Rohinton Mistry that we always want, bringing us right to the scene of action. Although his sort of plot seems within the midst of development during this work, the book is certainly well worth the time it takes to read it. Again we are introduced to India; indeed, he makes us live there if just for a couple of hours. We get to understand a touch bit about India's past, its leaders, its corruption, its religions, and its political relations. And, better of all, we get an honest story to read.

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