

Yuppie Culture of California in Vikram Seth Novels

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Abstract - A writer is identified based on the socio-topographical network and culture in which he belongs, as well as the customs, life, and language he employs in his writings. The Indian English authors of the 1980s are totally accustomed to Western society, creating a distinct social and abstract heritage that is linked to life in India and abroad. The literature expresses individual lives, but it also portrays the total human attitude toward society. In reality, literature shapes societal attitudes and draws the ideology and mentality of society. The writer's viewpoint on society is crucial in preserving history, reflecting current society, and projecting the future. The multi-cultural viewpoint of Vikram Seth's writings is examined in this article.

Keywords - yuppie culture, california, vikram seth, novels

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INTRODUCTION

Seth might be regarded a global explorer who began his voyage from the local traditions of India, encountered the ways of life in England, China, and America, and made the entire planet his home as a result of his journey to the west. With the admiration and empathy of a humanist, he works with multi-culture. Leslie Remarks on his debut work, The Golden Gate, as follows:

His passion for California, not his detachment, was the most important factor in his decision to write the book. From the outside, one cannot look at a place with a cold, objective eye and then write about it with passion. One must have spent years at that location, just watching.

The Golden Gate by Vikram Seth is set against the backdrop of the American culture. This book covers emotional love, LGBT concerns, sadness, frustration, nuclear weapons, and his characters' search for self-acceptance. The novel's backdrop environment is depicted by Seth as the San Francisco area. His experiences in San Francisco have influenced him to show the lives of ordinary Americans in a detailed and realistic manner. In his work The Golden Gate, he depicts the lives of Yuppies, city officials, craftspeople, and ordinary people.

The word "yuppie" refers to young people from all over the world who travel to California to work in urban areas with high salary and a high standard of life.

Young people prefer modern lifestyles over traditional lifestyles, thus they desire to untangle some of their traditional ties and live their lives as they choose. These young people who have established in metropolitan regions and have a decent job want to celebrate their lives, therefore they participate in traditional events. Because of their multi-cultural upbringing, some people may lose touch with their traditional and cultural origins. Thus, the socio-culture of young people is given with current requirements, whether deliberately or unknowingly. The novel's young protagonists are the embodiments of the twentieth century. They are always involved in their official duties, have all of the latest technology, and proudly wear their official identification cards around their necks like a garland. Their food, culture, language, and way of life represent California's contemporary civilization.

During the 1980s, San Francisco became a significant crossroads in North America. Young people from all around the world want to pursue higher education in California, and India has sent its young blooms to bloom there as well. Seth had attended Oxford and Stanford after completing his studies in India. Seth explains why California was chosen as the setting for his novel The Golden Gate:

Oh my God, thick-headed beach lads with no cerebral chats, I thought. But then I encountered people who were both extremely clever and fascinated by intellectual pursuits, as well as folks who would gladly teach you to swim butterfly. In

a fantastic manner, it was like a revelation for me. That is why, despite its sadness, The Golden Gate is a joyous book in certain ways.

He earned a bachelor's degree in science from Berkley University and went on to work for a nuclear research organization in San Francisco as a computer programmer. Computers were one of the most popular items in the world around the turn of the twentieth century. People have always been enthralled by contemporary devices such as computers, telephones, radios, and automobiles. According to the era's fashion, the novel's hero studied Computer Science as well. Even now, many people consider computer science to be a prominent field. Priya mentioned John in her piece *The Golden Gate: Crisis of Identity, Alienation, Aloofness, Loneliness, and Death*.

He is a typical representative of the middle class family whose parents are busy in their child. He always carved for his mother's love but gone none. John is ordinary young man well educated, conservative, economically well to-do American Yuppies who suddenly finds sinking deep into the ocean of despair and loneliness.

The tale opens with the young protagonist, John, in his solitary and finishes with his isolation. The failure, anxieties, insults, and alienation of John were evident from the opening of the story. Because he couldn't discover anything beneficial in his life, John's persona embodies nihilism. He had no idea why he was alive in the first place. Janet Hayakawa is a pivotal female figure in this story. Her family moved to Canada after emigrating from Japan. She, like John, remained alone in her flat. She, too, is dedicated to her career and used drumming to distract herself from her troubles. Her life was recounted by the author as follows:

She is a Sculptor. Stress and pleasure

For her thus perfectly combined, The boundaries of toil and leisure

By definition ill-defined,

Her work time doubles as her playtime, But hand and eye deployed in daytime

Yield, when night comes, to ear and hand.

John told Jane that he couldn't get away from the alienation and that he was worried about developing neurosis as a result of his aloofness. "What is the core of my neurosis?" he asked. ... I'm going to die! I pass out! I'm a failure! Isink! (1.23). His alienation was due to loneliness, which Jane was fully aware of.

She suggested that he find a life companion. She put together a matrimonial ad for John. The matrimonial advertising was quite successful, and the bride and groom chose their life mates themselves. As a result, the couples chose their life mates without the help of their parents. The majority of these marriages fail because the parents, who were only observers of the marriage, were powerless to intervene in their children's lives. Matrimonial commercials may have prepared the stage for cultural degeneration over time. Jane has drafted an advertisement for John that reads as follows:

Young handsome yuppie, 26

Straight, forward, sociable, but lonely

Cannot believe that he's the only

Well- rounded and well- meaning square

Lusting for love. If you, out there,

Are friendly, female, under 30,

Impulsive, fit, and fun, let's meet.

Be rash. Box _____

This advertisement garnered 84 responses, demonstrating the prevalence of commercials and the twentieth-century advertisement culture. People place a lot of confidence in commercials, yet most corporations or the young bride or groom exploit people who place a lot of trust in them. People in the twenty-first century are addicted to advertising, and they will buy salt that has been prominently marketed. As a result, consumers were more concerned with the aesthetics of a product than with its quality.

Advertisements abound in the twentieth century, and individuals may see them wherever they go. It was erected on both sides of the highway. Drivers were diverted by the slogans, and accidents were common. Hark for Jesus, says the author, referring to some of the marketing slogans. The President is a Lesbian Spy, and Nuke the Nukes drew the attention of the drivers and caused them to detour from their intended course. Due to traffic, John was unable to get to work on time, and he was frequently reprimanded by higher authorities for his tardiness. The author intended to portray California as it was, and he did it honestly.

Jane's advertising for John received 84 responses, indicating that the females were pleased by the way it was presented rather than by John's true character. John chose three letters from the 84 answers. He met three females and talked with them before deciding that none of them were right for him. After that, he went through everything again and chose the

seventh letter; he was captivated by Liz's handwriting and wanted to see her. She finished her legal studies. John was only interested in seeing Liz because of her handwriting, and he didn't care whether or not her character was right for him. As a result, the yuppies are unsure about what they should be paying attention to.

As a result, via the lives of John and Jane, the story reveals the realities of the Yuppie lifestyle. They both loved each other before the novel began, and when the story began, they were presented to the readers as friends. Jane then goes on a quest for John's ideal partner and creates a matrimonial advertising for him. As a result, John and Liz fall in love and begin living together for a period of time. They find a place for their future survival before getting married.

Seth uses get-togethers or party scenes to portray the country's socioculture. Seth uses scenes of gathering to highlight the current state of affairs and various social activities of the time. In the story, there are five important gathering situations, each with its own meaning. In Vikram Seth's *Golden Gate*, June Edverson Thjomoe depicts the different parties that have been hosted as well as the cause for hosting in his Poetic Technique:

Liz and John throw the first party, which is a cocktail party. The second is a recurring 'potluck' breakfast gathering held by Phil, which is attended by neighbors and friends. A Thanksgiving meal, hosted by the Dorati parents at their vineyard estate, is a third party. The wedding celebration of Liz and Phil is the fourth party, which is also hosted in the vineyards region; and the fifth party is held at Jan's apartment, where John ends up playing host.

Seth introduces both central and peripheral individuals in each gathering scenario, each with their own reason, context, and point of view. Their viewpoints enrich the understanding of readers who are familiar with this culture. The reader will love the party scene since it is realistically depicted. Liz and John throw a housewarming party, which is the first and most important gathering. People drink and enjoy themselves during this party:

...—Ah, the hostess! Drinking His seventh glass of gin and lime, Professor Pratt, fine-tuned historian

.....

Roars in her ear as she goes by

And holds her with his bulbous eye.

People met their loved ones during the housewarming

party. Before moving into a new home in India, folks hold a housewarming ritual. This ritual was also practiced in America. John and Liz looked for the greatest place to live and eventually chose an apartment and decided to relocate there. They decided to have a housewarming celebration and invited their neighbors, friends, and family members. Phil, who had been John's roommate while they were both living in Berkeley, came to John and Liz's housewarming celebration.

Phil and Claire married shortly after falling in love, but they were unaware of the significance of marriage. Claire abandoned Phil and her five-year-old son Paul in order to pursue another guy. This demonstrates that the majority of young people in the West are unaware of the importance of love and emotions. Liz, too, left John and married Phil at the end of the novel; so, Liz and Claire both disregard the sentiments of their lovers, John and Phil, respectively. When problems arose, they abruptly ended their relationship. Instead of thinking on how to solve the problem, they disrupt the family's bond. The lack of an united family system is the cause of this type of marriage breakdown. In India, the elders keep an eye on the family and offer helpful advice on how to keep things running well. As a result, they should be able to quickly resolve the issue since they discuss it with their elders. This type of family arrangement may be found in *A Suitable Boy*.

During the Globe Wars, the brutal face of nuclear weapons was viewed by the whole world with terrified eyes. During the World Wars, America used the most beneficial scientific technology as the most fantastic equipment. America has perverted this extreme weapon twice in order to destroy the identity and existence of the magnificent country of Japan. In the year 1945, there were two major nuclear-weapons assaults. On August 6th, 1945, a nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and on August 9th, 1945, another nuclear bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, another historic city. The entire world came to a halt when they saw America's illegal behavior, and the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still suffering the consequences of the bombing. Nearly 1,30,000 people died as a result of the explosion, and tens of thousands more are now suffering from medical illnesses as a result of the radiation.

According to the Quebec Agreement, America had a crucial part in World War II since it invented and utilized the most horrific nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom and the United States have reached an agreement to collaborate on scientific and technology development. They had both spent a lot of time and effort inventing complex devices to demonstrate that they were the world's most powerful governments. The United Kingdom backed and supplied the United States with everything it needed to develop nuclear weapons.

In America, young people with technological expertise aspired to demonstrate their scientific

abilities as well. They anticipated that atomic energy firms would improve their living standards. In reality, the government has deceived the youth under the guise of science. Many young boys and girls became involved in the manufacturing of nuclear weapons without realizing the consequences. America had developed two types of bombs, each containing two different elements: uranium and plutonium. As a result, the young people decided to do study and develop something new.

Vikram Seth depicts how nuclear weapons endanger young people and cause them to abandon their scientific pursuits. People were opposed to science and technology only as a result of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Scientists like Phil have even resigned from jobs that pay well. Naturally, when a person loses his work, he experiences mental stress, which causes him to despise the country's whole heritage, culture, and every beneficial component. Unemployment has grown over the world, and the character Phil has expressed their problems and pains. Phil not only quit his work, but also expressed his opposition to nuclear weapons. He began to strive for the nation's peace. Phil made the public aware of the dangers of nuclear weapons production and the need of living in a nuclear-free world. He planned to eliminate the horrible Lungless Labs, where the world's nuclear weapons were created. When John asked Phil why he resigned, Phil stated that he did so "to rescue the world" (TGG 4.14). Phil's response demonstrated his patriotism and societal duty. However, John, a computer engineer, critiques Phil's approach. John was a supporter of nuclear weapons and attempted but failed to persuade Phil. Liz supported Phil with all legal assistance as he led the kids in a demonstration against nuclear weapons and other horrifying scientific innovations. Phil had already mentally prepared himself to face any challenges and was even willing to go to prison. He issued an appeal to all philanthropists in the society to help rescue the earth. Liz spoke at the awareness gathering and gave an excellent presentation on the subject. Phil was caught, and during his detention, he was more concerned about Paul than about his own freedom.

The entire youthful community did not accept Phil and Liz's ideas, and others like John demonstrated their opposition to the anti-nuclear society. John believed that the country should progress at the same time as technology. Phil, according to John, was doing the country a disservice. John attacks Phil, claiming that his attack on Lab is unjust because he is in charge of the government and the courts. If he wishes to fight for the people's welfare, he must follow the right procedure for speaking out on legal issues:

You've got the courts. You've got the press. You've got the vote. To use duress

Is inexcusable. You're screwing

Your country while you claim to be

The high priests of humanity. (TGG 6.40)

Despite the fact that Phil and John are both technophiles, they have opposing viewpoints. Liz was a staunch supporter of Phil, and this appeared to be the source of John and Liz's misunderstanding. Young people had a responsibility to safeguard their society, and Phil, the most responsible of them all, wanted to protect their homeland and culture. Vikram Seth reveals California's social involvement via the perspectives of its youth. As a result, the novel's central subject and motif, anti-nuclear civilization, has been successfully represented via the lives of Yuppies.

Phil was apprehensive about attending John and Jane's housewarming celebration since he had to meet Janet, Claire's friend. Phil drank too much and gave a brief speech on nuclear weapons' terrible consequences. Phil's reasoned argument drew the attention of a young guy named Ed Dorati, who was twenty-three years old and Liz and Sue's cherished brother. Ed's adoration for Phil is described by Vikram Seth as follows:

A young man stands and stares as Phil

Says, – . . . Fallout can't tell Omsk from Reno. . . .

He stands there wordless, half in love, Drinking Phil's speech, the image of El Greco's Felix Paravicino:

The same plae, slender, passionate face, Strength and intensity and grace.

Ed was interested in Phil's speech, and according to Vikram Seth, Ed is drinking Phil's speech. Ed's adoration for Phil is evident in this description. In western nations, it is customary to consume alcohol during a housewarming event. As a result, the young individuals partaking in the cocktails party exemplified modern California's culture. In India, rituals and traditional festivities follow religious guidelines, and alcohol is not permitted. Drinking at a traditional festival is considered a sin by Indians, who believe their house to be their dwelling temple. However, in California, having alcohol at weddings is fairly usual, and no one can argue with it.

Edward Dorati, Liz's younger brother, plays a crucial role in this tale. Despite being a devout Catholic, he had a gay connection with Phil. Ed had that type of relationship with Phil, despite Liz and Sue's care and admiration for him. And this demonstrated that gay relationships are solely the result of biological factors, not mental or emotional factors. As a sharp observer of society, Vikram Seth studies the socio-

cultural life of California, with a particular focus on gay relationships. The Gay Social Movement began in California in the 1950s. According to Nardi:

... such organizations helped gays and lesbians in that era endure the harassment of politicians, police, straight citizens alike. Also discussed is the importance of World War II, which brought gays and lesbians from all over the country to major U.S. military installations in San Francisco, Long Beach, San Diego. Many gay men and lesbians discovered their identities and each other during the war and they stayed in California's port cities to join the first gay and lesbian network and communities.

The housewarming party came to a close with live music from a band. The characters' laments and screams were repeated by the current rock band. Music is an important part of people's lives in both the modern and traditional worlds. Music is also a reflection of the people's culture. The music in *The Golden Gate* reflects and exposes the personalities of the individuals. In general, parties in western nations are linked with band music, and people enjoy the music and dancing.

Jane and Liz are both professional musicians. They are quite self-sufficient, and these young ladies not only acquired an education but also learned art. Jane is a professional musician, and when she is engrossed in music, she forgets about her concerns. Jane is a sculptor and the drummer for Liquid Sheep, a popular rock band.¹ Jane stayed alone in the flat, as per the unwritten Yuppie Culture. The majority of the young people, such as John, Jane, Liz, and Ed, were living alone in their flats, and some were accompanied by their pets. The lonely heart is always on the lookout for happiness, and music soothes it.

Throughout the work, Vikram Seth emphasizes the importance of music in many circumstances. The novel discusses four different styles of western classical music. Mozart, Brahms, Schonberg, and Vivaldi are the composers in question. All of these kinds are closely tied to the characters' moods. Sue enjoys Mozart's music, and whenever she hears it, her heart is filled with joy and happiness:

*And Sue in recent years had been So
 captivated by the cello*

That bows and rosin and Mozart

Not beaus and roses, filled her heart.

Music reflects a society's culture, and the author of *The Golden Gate* concentrates on Mozart. On several occasions, the author mentally selects the appropriate musical tone to convey the characters' emotions. Phil

remembered his wife Claire's recollections as well as her singing voice. Phil understood how to play the piano and was familiar with the musical word Brahms. They were both talented musicians, and Phil recalled a previous encounter that had something to do with music:

... Sometimes we would light a fire I at

*the Keyboard, and you'd sing- Like the
 old days in the Bach choir Where we
 first met. ...*

After Claire abandoned her kid and husband, Phil was forced to care for his son Paul on his own. He was continually humming Brahms to Claire's tune, and he was tired of Paul's desire. The music cheered up the family and helped them forget about their troubles. Liz's family was also musically inclined, and everyone knew at least one type of music. Ed could play the violin well, Sue could play the cello, and Liz could play the cello and viola as well:

... ..Ed

Soon dumped his violin, instead

*Sustaining through his adolescence
 (By turns) guitar, trombone and sax.*

... .. Of

joy today envelops Sue

In her Mozartian debut.

Vikram Seth also draws parallels between Mozart and Schonberg's music. He claims that Schonberg causes ulcers, which symbolizes the author's personality. According to Phil, Brahms appears to be a link between him and Paul, whereas Liz Schonberg believes that Mozart is the prince of music and that he may create ulcers.

Music is a global language that each and every individual on the planet understands. The music may differ in style from nation to country, but it always reflects the country's distinct character. As a result, music is a central theme in all of Vikram Seth's major works, including *A Suitable Boy*, *The Golden Gate*, and *An Equal Music*. If music is the meal of love, play on and feed me the excess on it, as Shakespeare put it (I.I.1). While listening to and playing music, all of the young brains' love and passion blooms.

The band's music enhanced John and Liz's housewarming ceremony, and the guests liked the music. John and Phil were old friends, and John determined to locate Phil the greatest party companion possible; Phil had lived a very lonely life since his divorce from Claire. Phil and Ed met during the party and struck up a chat, as well as sharing

their thoughts. They say their goodbyes with an embrace at the end of the celebration. They also said their goodbyes to their visitors.

CONCLUSION

An in-depth examination of the novel *An Equal Music*, which accurately depicts human experiences and emotions. Seth's looming perspective on human nature and behavior gives the tale a sense of realism. This tale depicts the artists' financial concerns, as well as their desire for recognition, agony, love, and failure. The author depicts apathy toward life, a communication gap, and a yearning for love in this work.

These are the prevalent concerns in Europe in the modern age. As a result, the story depicts regular people's lives while also posing important and thought-provoking questions.

When Michael's father's favourite cat, Zsa-Zsa, dies, Tiwari characterizes Michael's delicate nature: "One thing that I did sense while reading *An Equal Music* is how hard, thick-skinned, and cruel the experiences of life make us." The tale depicts life's gentle side. Love for a beloved cat, its death, and the subsequent sensation of bereavement are all too beautifully expressed, with no hint of exaggeration.

Because of their fear, the characters have suffered psychologically. Michael disregards his father's advice and departs from his town. When he travels to London, Vienna, and Venice, he goes through a lot of hardships in order to stay in his industry. Because of the generation divide, he is unconcerned by his father's anxiety. He only leaves his father and mother, Carl Kall, his employer, and Julia, his ladylove. He suffers greatly as a result of his attitude. He can't seem to fit in with anyone else in his life.

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