CHAPTER V

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SETH’S NOVELS

In this chapter, Vikaram Seth’s craftsmanship as novelist is explored, in the backdrop of the themes of his novels. In the composition of the first novel *The Golden Gate*, he has chosen to employ verse as a means to give shape in words to his sense of inventiveness and innovativeness. But his other two novels have been composed only in prose, though in *A Suitable Boy* Seth’s passion and interest in poetry is recurrently displayed in the form of couplets of kakoli. In all the three novels, the theme of broken love recurs.

In *The Golden Gate* John becomes a casualty of broken love. Liz finds herself in a position where she is unable to continue her affair with John and he is deserted. Likewise, in Seth’s second novel *A Suitable Boy* the affair between Lata and Kabir does not prove to be successful. The romance between Lata and Kabir is so intense that the former cannot even think of a life without the latter. But, religion poses bigger hurdles to them. Mrs. Rupa Mahra is bent upon breaking the love between the two. And their love, being denied on the ground of religion of Kabir, ends up in fiasco, leaving, Kabir as a victim. In the same way, *An Equal Music* Seth’s third novel portrays the gloom of Michael. He grieves for the departure of Julia whom he deserted in Vienna ten years ago on an irrational impulse. She marries an American banker from Boston, by name, James Hensen. Even if Michael sees the entry of Julia in his life after her marriage, it is only a brief relationship which does not last long. Julia feels guilty of betraying the trust of her husband. And then, she leaves him once for all.

On the plight Seth’s protagonists, it is described thus in *The golden Gate and the Yuppies of silicon valley*, by Mala Pandurang.

“In Seth’s novels, couples who share passionate relationships do not get married in the end. In *A Suitable Boy* Lata opts for the safety of a marriage with Haresh Khanna over the possibility of excitement and
passion with Kabir. Julia in *An Equal Music* resists an affair with Michael fearing a total emotional takeover by the hyper-sensitive musician. Liz in *The Golden Gate* gets married to Phil” (28).

In all the three novels by Seth, readers can see the protagonists as the victims of broken love, John of *The Golden Gate* Kabir of *A Suitable Boy* and Michael Holme of *An Equal Music*. In addition to the protagonists some other section of people in every novel are hit hard by tragedy. They are Mrs. Jane, Matt Lamont and his wife Jon, Ed and Claire in *The Golden Gate and in A Suitable Boy* apart from Kabir, the protagonist, Maan, Mrs Mahesh Kapoor and Zainab, Nawab’s daughter, also suffer a great deal. Likewise, in *An Equal Music* Mrs Formby and Michael’s mother suffer.

Besides throwing light on the plight of protagonists of the novels, this part of the thesis focuses on the gloom and melancholy of other characters as well. And the researcher investigates this predominant theme of fiasco of love being depicted by Seth in his fictional works.

In *The Golden Gate* John at first is in love with Janet Hayakawa and later they depart. Nevertheless, the friendship between them, being intact, continues later. When Jane Hayakawa comes to learn that her former lover John languishes in solitude, she wants to relieve him of that. She gives a newspaper advertisement for a girl friend. Liz, a Stanford Law student, responds to that positively. In course of the developments, John and Liz fall in love. At one stage, Liz is introduced to Phil, John’s former classmate in Berkely, who champions the cause of nuclear non-proliferation. Liz, who is a lawyer by profession, is interested in the movement. The possession of similar views on the cause of nuclear non-proliferation makes them come closer. At another level, Liz’s younger, Ed, happens to have homosexual relations with Phil whose wife leaving her only son, Paul, to him eloped with someone. Phil and Ed have started spending nights together. When John becomes aware of this homosexual affair between Phil and Ed, he flies into rage. He, being conservative, in issues like this, finds hard to accept it whereas Liz holds the
view that there is nothing wrong in homo-sexuality, which further infuriates and upsets John. With regard to John’s stance on homo-sexuality Jehanara wasi comments in his book review of *The Golden Gate* in the following way:

“John’s part, he is horrified and disgusted to learn of Phil’s homo-sexual indulgence and is further hurt and angered by Phil’s and Liz’s marriage. After a bitter spree of one night stands and singles bars, he starts up again promisingly if tentatively with Janet Hayakawa only to lose her in an accident. While Phil and Liz care for their expanding family, which includes Phil’s son, a child who survived the auto accident that killed Janet and their won newborn baby boy. John is left aching and alone” (48).

John who is opposed to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and homosexuality, is unable to get along with Liz who has completely different views on the issues of eradication of nuclear weapons and man-man relationship. And it causes a rift between them. In the meanwhile, he becomes uncomfortable with Liz’s cat Charlemagne as well. All these things lead Liz to depart from John and marry Phil. Regarding Liz’s preference for Phil over John the article, by Mala Pandurang, *The Golden Gate and the Yuppies of Silicon valley* describes as follows:

“The relationship between Liz and Phil, lacks in such physical rapture and sexual excitement. When Liz finally chooses the homely looking and balding Phil over John, it is on the basis of companionship. She recognizes this as a compatibility that she failed to establish with John” (86).

John, who at the start of the novel, is portrayed as a lonely and solitary man, has to continue to live in solitude, with the death of Jane, his only well wished. The key character of this verse novel is John whose love life is an utter failure. It has left him completely demoralized. Despite having all the advantages and benefits of modern life, such as decent job with attractive salary, social status and financial self sufficiency, his emptiness in life is
massive. The hope of Jane that when John has a lover, she will provide him with the peace, mental comfort, solace he badly needs, goes in vain, with the departure of Liz. To add to his woes, Jane who has been a source of encouragement, is also killed in an accident towards the end of novel at a time when she makes arrangements for a party. With regard to John’s plight it is portrayed in the following way in the article entitled *Commonwealth Fiction*, by John Thieme:

“In San Francisco which Seth describes as the loveliest city in the world there are also these lonely lovely lads and lasses lusting for love. Janet is lonely though she and many others in California are very busy with their professions to the extent of being workaholic to use one of Seth’s expressions in the novel. Phil is lonely because his wife Claire has left him and he seeks first the companionship of Ed in a homosexual relationship and later at the termination of this homosexual affair he turns normal again and gets married to Liz. Indeed, all the time, it is all happening in California. John who is introduced in the first sonnet as ‘lonely’ is ‘lonely’ at the end of the novel after the desertion by Liz and after the death of Janet Hayakawa” (76).

Seth has depicted American life in his novel *The Golden Gate*. It has all the ingredients to be rightly described as a Californian novel. He has composed this novel in such a way that readers are unable to see any Indian connection in the novel. And he depicts the Californian activities, picnics and walks, junk food, music, pastimes like scrabble, the pets, the college reminiscences, the feminist reactions, the way people generally talk, advise, confess and to feel and care for about each other.

Inspite all these, the presence of melancholy and dejection is dominantly depicted here. And John is a victim of that. Further John’s plight resembles that of most Indians who settle abroad especially in America seeking their fortune and livelihood there. Although they are able to fulfill all their needs and necessities and economically quite comfortable, they do not seem to have
emotional fulfillment. The thought of being far away from home and handicap of not having anyone to share with haunts them. This novel has not spoken in any place about the plight of such Indians. But coming across the character of John and his plight will make anyone associate him with such people of foreign connection and settlement there. Economic stability is abundantly available in the lives of software professionals like John but emotional compatibility is hugely lacking in them.

In *The Golden Gate*, Seth does not seem to project other characters in positive light. On the one hand, there is a depiction of parties, cinema, friendly get-together and rural agricultural practices of San Francisco and its neighbouring areas. On the other hand apart from John, readers have to come across characters like, Jane, Claire and the kid Paul, Matt Lamont, Phil’s doctor and his wife John their kid Chuck, in whose lives fate has wreaked havoc and devastation. Their lives have been wrecked by tragedy.

Among them affected by the fate of misfortune Janet Hayakawa is worst hit, next to John. Right from her introduction, until her end towards the end of the novel, her appearance has a soothing and cooling effect on John. Regarding the consolation, she offers to John, A.N.Kaul in his article entitled *Wise and Witty* comments in the following way:

“Jane Japanese American girl is the second character introduced in the novel, the first being John with those strange, twisted loneliness the novel both begins and ends. When the Yuppy John expresses his sense of loneliness to Jane, she says to him what he needs is a lover” (105).

Jane is a drummer in the music band “Liquid Sheep” in addition to being a sculptor. She is of Japanese origin. She has suffered so much pain and gloom in her life. For all that, she appears to be a forward looking young girl. She rears up two pets by name Cuff and Link. When the novel opens, she is introduced as a friend and former lover of John. When John languishes a great deal in solitude, it is she who takes the initiative to relieve him of that, by giving an advertisement in newspaper for a girl friend. Her affection for John is
so strong that she herself gives a response to John’s advertisement in an imaginary name in order to delight him. She provides him with the succor, encouragement, moral support and care he badly needs now.

And after the separation of John and Liz over Charlemagne and the former’s suspicion of affair between the latter and Phil, again, Jane puts in enormous pains to comfort and console John who has been completely left alone. She gets very close to him emotionally.

Yet tender as is their love - making
John gives his voice no leave to own
what his hand’s touch, what his lip’s quaking
Unknown perhaps to him, has shown
More forthrightly than declaration;
And if Jan’s heart knows the elation
It known six years ago, when they
Were lovers, she does not betray (GG 26)

It seems to be her thinking that getting very close to John emotionally is the only way to bring him out of the dejection and frustration, he suffers. The mature quality of Jane is known from the fact that she never thinks, when John is longing for a caring and loving heart, he does not choose to review and renew their past romance. Instead, he banks on Jane to find out a girl friend for him. Jane does not seem to take it seriously. Girls of her age in that position may think they are not duly recognized and they are left out. Surprisingly, Jane does not have such a grudge. Further, when John is downcast and downhearted at the separation of Liz, again Jane reaches out to him to make him comfortable. She never lets him down, though she is hurt. Another activity of Jane which indicates her nobility is when she is still sanguine of reconciliation among Liz, Phil and John. Her let bygones be bygones attitude is the symbol of her positive frame of mind. And it speaks volumes of her good-will for others, interest in her friends’ unity and strength of their friendship.
A waste, a puerile waste and pity,
Jan thinks, that these three former friends
will not meet somewhere in the city
Some neutral cafe–make amends
or peace or mutual restitution,
perform some ritual asluten
of their ill-will and recognize
That life is short and that time files,
Electra- and that all things taken
into account, John, liz and Phil
Have less of ill than of good will (GG 263).

And she was also works on her maid sculptural work “Mahen”. After the completion of it, she has to work on “Biased Portrait of an Ogress” which has to be displayed in Jan’s exhibition to be held in a small gallery called, Marcus Ladd, a revamped warehouse. She has brought out her best in chiseling these works. But her hard work does not pay her rich-dividends and it has earned only severe and intense criticism from “The clarion” a magazine on sculptural criticism. And it unleashes severe criticism on Janet’s works.

Till the art critic of the clarion
Flaps to the scene in search of carrion
And glares in vulturine disgust
At her live works the writes: I trust
Miss Hayakawa’s terse aridity
Does not mislead colleagues of mine
To judge these feeble works as strong (GG 271.)

In the above mentioned stanza, how far Jane’s sculptural works are poorly rated and marked down is explained. And the critics do not stop with that and they go on to subject her to further humiliation in the following way.

The critics, free to take their cue
From the first trump of his review
Now slither forth their own reviewing.
these worms who, senile / trendy, hung
Their hearts on soup cans and bat dung
Disparage Jan’s exhibits, spewing
“Unsettled”, “Vacuous”, “inbred”,
“Cold”, “Marrowless” unethnic,” “dead” (GG 271)

Jane is unable to put up with this type of wounding and demoralizing criticism. When the critics very badly criticize her works which she chiseled with so much pains, enthusiasm and hard-labour, it is an unbearable and intolerable blow to her. She expects commendation but she is given only condemnation. She burst into uncontrollable tears when she is alone. Then, she slowly overcomes her gloom. She has arranged a party for her friends to celebrate the success of her exhibition which has been an utter failure and flop now, with critics spewing venom on her works. Still, Jane does not lose her positive frame of mind and inspite of the fiasco of the exhibition she is determined to hold the party. And she reminds her friends including Phil, Liz and John.

What is to be noticed here is that she has been very badly humiliated and harassed. Still, she does not show any sign of it outwardly and continues to be very caring, attached and affectionate towards John. Besides, she does not like to cause disappointment to her friends who look forward to this Party.

The party, planned to start at seven
Once meant to mark the show’s success,
will act new as a wake to leaven
Its burial. Jan, through her distress
Thinks, “It is a fine chance- what could mother it
To force a burial of the latchet
(GG 274)

At this point, it can be known well that she prioritises others’ delight over her dejection and disappointment. Even though Jane is dejected and
frustrated, she wants to hold the party where Phil, Liz and John will have to meet one another who share a strained and disturbed relationship now and whose relationship, in Jane’s thinking, might improve. It is indicative of her gentle nature.

When Jane rings up to Phil to remind him about the party, he suggests to her his doctor Matt Lamont along with his wife Joan and their kid Chuck can also be invited. He further adds that since they are scheduled to leave for Oregon, they will make it to the party. In the meantime, when all arrangements are over for the party to start at 8’0 clock in the evening, Jane chooses to bring Matt Lament’s family in her car. When she picks them up in her car, and proceeds towards the home they have so much fun and merriment during the journey in the car. Unexpectedly the car meets with an accident and other than the kid Chuck all other die on the spot. The kid Chuck is left without anybody.

The tragic end of Jane towards the end of the novel is heart-rending. As long as she lives, she lives for her friends. Throughout the novel right from start to finish, Jane has been described as a cheerful, forward-looking, and affectionate damsel. In accordance with poetic justice The good have to be rewarded. Even if they are not rewarded they can atleast be spared without being punished. Absence of poetic justice can be witnessed in the death of Jane Hayakawa and Matt Lamont and his wife. Phil’s doctor Matt Lamont is enthusiastic and eager to grow orchids. And they are described as innocent and harmless. Their end is also harrowing and heart breaking.

In The Golden Gate John, Jane, Matt Lamont, his wife and their kid chuck are the worst affected people. John is alive atleast. But Tragedy and misfortune have hit them very hard. It is even worse when Chuck, who is brought up by Phil and Liz along with their children goes to his house and breaks down. Phil finds it very hard to see the kid Chuck gasping, sobbing, wheezing, crying and reliving his mother dying. On an occasion, Chuck asks Phil to take him to his residence. They go there
The bry stands there, pulls off a Petal
Sniffs it, and frowns, then tries the door
Touches the monogram of metal
His father cast the year before
Reads “M” “J” “C” and stands their silent:
Then with a sudden rage, a violent
plea in his voice, shout, “ Let me in
It’s my house-and I live here” thin
Hysteria seize him. Phil stroking
The boy’s head, says, “sure, chuck, sure sure
Here we are” chuck bolts through the door
And shouting in a voice half-choking
with fear and dust, “Mom! Mom! Dad! Dad!
Runs through the house as if he is mad
(GG 284)

The plight of Chuck is so pathetic and pitiable that brings tears to one’s eyes. And he has become an orphan. Out of love, compassion and mercy Phil and Liz bring him up along with their children. In addition to fiasco in love, Seth has employed the theme of misfortune and fate hitting the vulnerable hard. Tragedy has struck not only John but other vulnerable people like Jane, Mr Lamont and his wife Joan, and Ed as well. The problem with Ed is he is caught in between religions duties and instinctive desires. He has enormous difficulties in coping with it.

Regarding the pitiable characters, Rowena Hill in Vikram Seth’s the Golden Gate: A quick look states

“In seth’s vision of his people there is both irony and compassion. Straighforward compassion is revealed in the passages about chuck, the little boy who loses both parents in an accident or old Mrs. Dorati. But the sympathy is not lost when we come to more complex characters: Ed with his incapacity to adjust the claims of sense and religious duty.
Janet, with her eccentricities, her ferocity against men and her great understanding and generosity viz, who suffers at not being able to stick to her commitments” (88).

Regarding John’s plight, Rowena mill in the same article says “John lost everything he cares for and is left to languish in loneliness” (90).

As part of thematic analysis, the researcher who finds “broken love” as the dominant theme of Seth’s novels next dwells on the plight of kabir of A Suitable Boy. John of The Golden Gate longs for the company and love of a girl friend whom he is unable to find on his own. And his former girl friend Jane has to step in to help him in finding a lover for John. She arranges it through giving advertisement in a newspaper. Unlike the protagonist of The Golden Gate John who has to rest on Janet for choosing a partner, Kabir’s romantic affair with Lata is natural and spontaneous. At the first sight itself, it cannot be denied that Lata is drawn towards him even though she does not manifest it. Both of them, first, meet at Imperial Book shop, located near Brahmpur University. It is he who first takes the initiative to talk to her at the book shop. Although she likes and enjoys it inwardly, she doesn’t exhibit her delight of being talked to by a handsome, and smart young man. After that, they meet after their examination gets over. Having performed badly in the examination, when Lata, sitting on bench, shrinks into gloom over her exam performance, Kabir also arrives there and speaks to her. His speech at a time when she is emotionally down seems to have got a soothing and cooling effect on Lata. Later, it leads her to fall in love with him. And their participation in Brahmpur literary functions also helps them to strengthen their romance. At one stage, Lata finds herself in a situation where she cannot even imagine a life without Kabir. She has become far more passionate towards him than he towards her. She willingly goes along with him in a boat to Barsaal Mahal, one of the best places of tourist importance, in Brahmpur. That is where they are spotted by someone close to Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor’s family resulting all hell broke loose her Lata’s home. Mrs. Rupa Mehra, who cannot put up with even
the thought of her daughter’s love with a Muslim boy, flies into rage. Her frustration, disappointment and helplessness and the feeling that her daughter has betrayed her trust and let her down haunt her so badly that even Savita is unable to control and console her. For her, being in the mould of a conservative mother, inter-religious love is never acceptable to her. When there emerges a remote possibility of her daughter’s love-marriage with the Muslim boy. She treats and perceives it as if it were an unforgiveable and unpardonable sin. Then, she does not like to retain her daughter in Brahmpur, fearing that Kabir might devise deceitful designs to elope with Lata.

There is some substance in the thinking of Rupa Mehra that Kabir might go to the extent of eloping with her. But it is not he who suggests this but Lata does. Bruce king in his article on *South Asian novelists in English* points out that “Like India, Lata struggles for freedom only to make a sensible choice in contrast to the lives around her” (431). Even after learning about the magnitude of her mother’s depression, frustration and melancholy and her total rejection of Kabir, Lata meets and suggests to him that both of them can go to a far away and remote place and settle down there. Kabir, being a practical young man, is not given to functioning according to his own whims and fancies. At the outset itself, Kabir turns down the suggestion of Lata on the ground that it is totally an impractical one and it will create lot of hardships and problems not just for them but for the two families as well. That he does not accept the idea of elopement from Lata does not mean that his love for her is ingenuine and fake. It seems that Kabir is quite confident of emerging successful and victorious in his love through fair and honest means. He is under the impression that the idea of eloping with Lata will be rather unbecoming and improper of the stature of their families. Settlement in a far way place with Lata without the knowledge and consent of their families will bring disrepute and disgrace to their parents. And realizing and forethinking the after effect of such an act, Kabir tells Lata that he has to shoulder the burden as well as the responsibilities of his family and he has his own ambitions of pursing his higher education abroad. Besides, he adds to her that he has to attain his ambition and the age as well as the stage
for both of them to get married is not ripe now. Further, Kabir is of the view that Lata, being very sharp and bright, will very well understand his condition. At the same time, under no circumstance, does he want to lose her. Even though Lata has been brought up in an conventional ambience, she becomes bold enough to elope with him. Regarding her upbringing, the article entitled *Multiple readings of A Suitable Boy* comments in the following way:

“After Ragubhir Mehra’s death the Mehra family lived on the charity of friends and the sense of uncertainty and had its effect on them. Lata for example was brought up by her mother not to give trouble but to take trouble. Savita is determined never to be in the same position as her mother. When Pran develops a cardiac problem, Savita realizes that is determined to study law. Her father in law Mahesh Kapoor believes in women’s education but not in women working” (118).

But the stand, Kabir has taken, deals huge a blow to Lata. Notwithstanding the vigorous opposition of her mother, Lata with all her love and passion for Kabir, thinks as soon as she suggests to him the idea of elopement, he will happily accept it at once. Contrary to her expectation, when Kabir is not in favour of that, she collapses. Unable to bear the pain of the rejection of her idea by her lover, she departs. She fails to find the merit and substance in the statement of Kabir. Then, when Mrs. Rupa Mehra hastily takes her to Calcutta where her elder son Arun with his wife Meenakshi and Varun live, Lata does not show any opposition to her. Lata is of the strong view that Kabir has let her down and is not true to her and her love. She ruminates that the demeanour on the part of Kabir amounts to betraying her, which seems to be a hasty conclusion. During their interaction, at any point Kabir does not say that he cannot marry her. What he just uttered to her was that time has to be ripe for their wedlock and to elope before that will be rather unbecoming of the dignity of their families. She mistakes the statement as well as the point of Kabir.
Lata’s departure to Calcutta is not informed to Kabir which has made him restless. He manages to get Lata’s Calcutta address and writes to her. She is surprised as well as cheerful to receive a letter from him. She even prepares a reply which she later tears into pieces, sobbing secretly. With this, the heart to heart speeches between each other comes to an end. Even though Kabir takes a lot of efforts to revive his affair with Lata, they bear no fruit at all.

Thereafter, with the commencement of classes in the University after the vacation, Lata returns to Brahmpur. She starts attending classes. Her friend Malati, seeing her very sad, downcast and depressed, advises her that Kabir, being a muslim boy, she had better drop him. For all her outward sophistication, refinement and modernity, Malati resembles Mrs. Rupa Mehra with regard to inter-religious love. She is congnisant of the fact it will not be a success given the ambience they dwell in. Then, in order to bring her friend out of her melancholy and gloom, Malati states to Lata that they can act in the Shakespeare’s play” Twelfth Night” to be enacted on college day. Malat’s idea is that it will relieve her of all her sorrows and sufferings. Lata passes through a tough phase. She does not leave any stone unturned to forget Kabir. Desptie all that, Kabir’s memory haunts her very badly.

The reason for this may be that Lata’s attraction and inclination towards Kabir is a natural and spontaneous one. He is a cricketer, who plays for the university. Lata is lured towards his manliness, smartness, handsomeness and sportsman qualities. Regarding his personality the article, by Mala Pandurang, *Multiple Readings of A Suitable boy* describes as follows : “Lata’s first experience of romantic love is with the dashing Kabir who is a student of history at the university and is the son of an eccentric, though brilliant, mathematics professor. His forward looking attitude impresses Lata to a great extent” (118).

Initially, in their earlier meetings Kabir behaves himself in such a way that Lata spontaneously develops a soft corner and good-will for him. His consolation while she is low on confidence, care and concern for her also
influence her love in a big way. On account of this, the reality that they are not lovers anymore and there is no romance and love between them any longer, haunts her. She has no mind to carry on their affair.

To add to her woes, when Lata gives consent to Malati to act in Shakespear’s play *Twelfth Night* she is shocked to find that the role of Malvolio is played by none other than Kabir. It means that both of them have to spend time together, rehearsing and preparing for the enactment of the play. She has had to move with someone whom she wants to forget and for which she complies with the suggestions of her friend Malati.

Amit, the son of a west Bengal Judge and brother of Meenakshi, Arun’s wife and Haresh Khanna, an executive with Canpore leather factory and later supervisor with Praha shoe company are other probables for Lata. The thing is that she has no direct relationship or acquaintance with them. Owing to Lata’s brother Arun’s marriage with Meenakshi, Amit becomes an acquaintance to Lata. And Haresh is introduced to Mrs. Rupa Mehra by Kalpana Gaur, a Delhi based family friend of hers, as a suitable prospect for Lata. Since both of them do not directly talk to Lata at first and they become known to her either through family relationship or the introduction of others, they do not seem to impact her in a big way.

Only out of the force and compulsion of Mrs. Rupa Mehra, who thinks that Haresh Khanna with all his sincerity, devotion, to duty, commitment, forward looking attitude and Cambridge education will be a suitable boy for Lata. And she is so impressed by him that she anyhow wants to tape him for Lata who has no liking and natural fondness for Haresh. Amit is a poet as well, besides being a non-practicing advocate. Critics say that he resembles the qualities of Vikram Seth who has brought in some autobiographical elements through him. Amit is interested in Lata whom she takes to many landmarks in Calcutta, including Botanical garden, and attempts to impress her. His sister Meenakshi and Kakoli also secretly mock at his attempts at earning the love and affection of Lata. Neither Amit’s influential background nor Haresh’s
forward looking attitude has any effect on Lata. She remains as calm as midsea, though in the end she chooses Haresh Khanna.

Of all the three, Kabir alone is very impressive to Lata who has left him shell-shocked in the end, abandoning him. He becomes a victim of love. On his part, he is very faithful and loyal to his love. That he sounds practical while Lata conveys to him the idea of elopement is the only thing he does. It makes her think he cites trivial reasons to forsake her. This misunderstanding on the part of Lata costs Kabir heavily.

John of *The Golden Gate* suffers without a family. Kabir suffers with a family which is handicapped and crippled in more than one way. His father Durrani, a Professor of Mathematics with Brahmpur University struggles hard to bring up his children by himself when his wife slowly has gone out of her mind. With her mental retardation, he shoulders the responsibility of growing them up without allowing this shadow touching the kids. Still, it has its own negative impact on Kabir, his younger brother and younger sister. At one stage, the family has to digest the immature demise of Kabir’s sister which deals a huge blow to them. And kabir’s mother too has to be lodged in solitary confinement and to look after her on a day today basis becomes the bounden duty of Kabir’s father Durrani. Kabir, being elder son, has to share the burden of his father. Kabir’s mother’s mental retardation gets worse to an extent where she is not even able to realize the death of her daughter. Whenever Kabir goes to meet her mother, She asks how his sister is and asks him where his son Kabir is as though she is conversing with someone else. These things are very difficult for Kabir to cope with. He is destined to encounter hardships and obstacles which are far ahead of his age. He is a silent sufferer and he quietly and calmly endures the pain. He never shows it or reveals it to anyone. He has not intimated to even Lata about it. She is not in the know of Kabir’s familial background except that her father is a university maths professor. May be if she had been aware of it, she would not have taken the decision of leaving him simply because he says that the time is not ripe for their marriage.
In Kabir’s life characterised by mother’s mental retardation, sister’s immature death and absence of love and affection, a slight ray of hope and pleasure appears in the form of Lata and it disappears at the pace it appears. It costs him heavily. The punishment given to him is disproportionate to the mistake he commits.

Lata has abandoned Kabir and he is left alone. He has to carry on the duties of looking after his mother, supporting his younger brother and father. With a heavy heart, he has to carry it out. Since his love is genuine as well as naturally nourished and nurtured without any anticipation and expectation, to overcome the pain of broken love is not an easy one for him. His attempts at reconciliation and revival of his love with Lata during the course of the rehearsal of the play *Twelfth Night* proved to be futile. In the end, Lata, having to comply with the advice of Mrs. Rupa Mehra, enters into wedlock with Haresh Khanna.

As in *The Golden Gate* in which John, in addition to the protagonist of the novel, others such as Dr. Macc Lament, his wife Joan and Jane are struck by tragedy, in *A suitable Boy* also besides Kabir, lover of Lata, and victim of broken love others like Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor, Maan and Saeeda Bai become sufferers. In each novel by Vikram Seth, Tragedy hits not only the protagonist but others also. And even if they are harmless and good at heart, they are not spared. The researcher throws light on such sufferers as well, in addition to the victims of broken love.

Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor personifies all the virtues and values of a wife in traditional Indian culture. In accordance with traditional and conventional qualities of an ideal wife, taught in ancient Hindu scriptures and followed in Hindu society since time immemorial, she leads her life. She totally sacrifices her life for the welfare and well-being of her husband Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh as well as for her children Praan, Maan and Veena. She is exceedingly reverential towards her husband. She is portrayed as thinking this life on earth has been given to her only to look after her husband.
She may not be educated but her help to Mahesh Kapoor in making out the scriptures written in Hindi is indispensable to him. He not being strong in Hindi seeks his wife’s help in making out the meanings documents in Hindi. In this context, his Hindi speaking wife who has the ability to both write and speak Hindi, has been of great help to him. Besides, when party men, help-seekers, government officials, general public, agriculturists from villages and people from all walks of life throng “Prem Niwas” the residence of Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, She shows great hospitality towards them. The presence of huge crowds and mobs there at her residence never irritates or annoys her. Nor does it make her lose her cool. Still, Mahesh Kapoor always dismisses her as illiterate, uneducated and superstitious. And he never cares to be with her even during her delivery of children and chooses to be away from home during such situations.

She is very pious and god-fearing as well. When it comes to the celebration of Ram Nawami, a famous Hindu-festival, she makes arrangements for a religious discourse at “Prem Niwas”, collective prayers, singing of devotional songs and providing food to the poor. She observes this function in such a way that the entire ambience there at her residence wears a festive look. Given that her husband is absolutely secular and not given to showing any interest in the celebration of such religious festivals, Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor has to struggle hard to obtain permission from him. And other elderly women such as Mrs. Rupa Mehra and Veena’s mother in law can only help her in the observation of religious festivals. They are unable to be in the fore-front. Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor always willingly takes the lead to celebrate it which she thinks will bring fortune as well as other auspicious things to the family. Although she plays a pivotal role in the celebration of such festival, she is never conceited and proud of it. Besides, she is not given to hurting anyone even her servants with her words of anger. She is incapable of anger. Such is her quality. As the female head of the family and wife of Mahesh Kapoor, she discharges her familial duties as well and as devotedly as she can.
Being a mother, she showers immaculate and impeccable love and affection on Pran, Maan and Veena. When Pran gets married with Savita, falls ill with asthma and later cardio problems, Mrs Mahesh Kapoor becomes the personification and epitome of genuine motherly care. When Baskar, Veena’s Son, is lost in Kumbha mela stampede and later rescued by Kabir she plays the role of a catalyst in his recovery. She is determined to retain him in Prem Niwas until he has complete recuperation from his ill-health. Only after his complete recovery she allows her daughter and son-in-law Kedarnath Tandon to take him to their residence in Misiri Mandi. In addition to that, when Veena’s family is in financial difficulties and unable to make both ends meet on account of Kedarath Tandon’s loss in business, Mr. Mahesh Kapoor helps them with money she has saved from what her husband gives for running the household. She is a caring mother to her children, faithful and thoroughly obedient wife to Mahesh Kapoor and a kind helper to those who approach her for help. When Maan loiters around in Brahmpur without leaving for Banaras where he has his business establishment and comes into contract with Saeeda Bai, Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor puts in enormous pains to save him from the wrath as well as the thrashing of his father who is a perfectionist and who cannot put up with indiscipline and misdemeanour in any form Mr. Mahesh Kapoor feels for her young son Maan who spends all his time at Saeeda Bai’s residence.

At one point, when Maan goes to Saeeda Bai’s house in inebriated mood, he comes across Firoz there. The presence of Firoz there, at late night, provokes him to suspect the possibility of Firoz’s illicit affair with her. As a result of this, there is a scuffle there resulting in Maan’s stabbing of Firoz who in a critical condition is taken to hospital. Maan surrenders to police and is lodged in prison. With this the long standing relationship between Nawab sahib and Mahesh Kapoor turns sour. The case goes through various levels of the court of Law. Mahesh Kapoor loses his prospects of winning in assembly elections because of this incident.
Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor unable to bear the pain of her son being lodged in Jail falls a prey to paralysis. Later, she succumbs to it. Her demise has plunged the family into eternal gloom. Only on the occasion of her funeral procession, Mahesh Kapoor, witnessing huge crowds of men and women and children and multitudes of farmers from Rhudia District making a beeline to pay homage to Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor comes to learn how best she led a life of simplicity, purity and service mindedness. In silence, the help and the assistance she rendered to the poor, the weak and the needy has elevated her to this extent. Mahesh Kapoor, for whom crowds and multitudes are not new in his political career, is stunned by the sea of humanity that has thronged there to pay their tribute to the mortal remains of Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor. Only at this stage, he realizes the value and worth of his wife.

An elderly woman with such great and noble qualities has to languish very badly at the fag end of her life. As long as she lived, she did only good to the people. She is not given to showcasing her helps to others even to her husband. Observing the last days of Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor will bring tears to the eyes. As Janet Hawakaya of The Golden Gate, who is not given to any malice and given only to helping others as far as she can, is killed in an accident, Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor also dies in the end. Both of them are harmless. Jane is a young spinster whereas Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor is a grand old lady. Both of them do not let down those who believe and trust them. Janet is of Japanese origin working in the USA whereas Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor is a typical traditional Indian lady with many roles to play such as a wife, a mother, a mother-in-law, and grandmother. Age, nationality, employment and culture divide them but their humanism for the fellow human beings unites them.

The death of Jane and Dr. Macc Lamont and his wife Joan in The Golden Gate and the demise of Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor is very hard and difficult to digest. The good and the righteous have to be rewarded. Even though they are not awarded and glorified, they could have been left without being subjected to persecution. The protagonist of the novel are victims of only love but the likes
Others in A suitable Boy, in addition to Kabir, whom tragedy has struck hard and who have to lose their reputation, career and livelihood are Mahesh Kapoor Maan and Saeeda Bai. They are not villainic. They have never done anything intentionally to harm or hamper others. Still, they are to suffer a lot. First, Mahesh Kapoor is the Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh who has devised the Zamindari Abolition Act, incurring the displeasure and hatred of many influential landlords and kings who will have to forgo all their estates and properties. Mahesh Kapoor himself has to lose a larger part of his lands. Since he is not given to selfish political gains he is keen on implementing it for which Chief Minister of Purva Pradesh Sheema offers him absolute cooperation. Mahesh Kapoor, both in politics and Personal life, remains very honest, upright, ethical and sincere. He is a man of values and virtues.

Not withstanding his honesty, uprightness, probity in public life, he is unable to retain his peace of mind and solace. When he leaves the congress for a short period, resigns from the cabinet and rejoins congress, he is given a ticket to contest in Election from Rhudia District. Because of the incident of Maan’s stabbing Firoz in Saeeda Bai’s house, the reputation of Mahesh Kapoor in the opinion of electorates miserably falls down resulting in him being defeated by Wargis a servant of Batar House who has employed all unethical and unjust means to defeat the former Revenue Minister. Success and failure are part and parcel of politics. Still, a leader of Mahesh Kapoor’s stature loses to an ordinary man and it is very hard and difficult for him to endure. It may have pained him very badly, although outwardly he shows no sign of it. In his personal life also, the death of his wife deals a big blow to him. Mahesh Kapoor has to languish in loneliness and solitude in the absence of his wife who used to be of great help to him. For all his good qualities, he is unable to be happy. The plight of Maan also worries him a lot.
Maan, despite being the son of the Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh and his rich upbringing, is not serious about his life and career. His father has arranged cloth business for him in Banaras and a bride has also been seen and almost fixed for him there in Banaras. But he spends all his time with Saeeda Bai at her residence. He is given to drinking too much as well. At the same time, what is to be noted here is that he is not wicked, vicious and cunning. Unaware of the nature of life he leads, he loiters around. When he goes to Dabaria Village in Rhudia District along with Rasheed to learn urudu, he reaches out to the minds and hearts of people there. He has managed to carve out a niche for himself among the rural folk. Even his father is amazed at his popularity there. He seems to be good for nothing but he is not venomous. He moves with all in a friendly way. But at one point, he ends up stabbing his own friend Firoz in inebriated mood mistaking the relationship between him and Saeeda Bai. Later, since Firoz chooses not to give evidence against Maan in the case, Maan is acquitted of the charge. Still, he is in low spirits after this incident. He finds it difficult to come out of this nightmare. He has lost his exuberance. How he is going to lead the rest of his life that too in the absence of his caring mother seems to be a big question. His future looks dark, uncertain and indefinite.

And Saeeda Bai is a singer whose life is based on the income she derives from Landlords and kings visiting her frequently. She has her daughter Tasneem whom she projects as her sister in order to safeguard her from the scourge of prostitution. With the introduction and imminent implementation of Zamindari Abolition Bill, her patrons will be reduced to poverty because all their estates, lands and other assets will be seized from them by the government. Her living and livelihood is in peril. Barring her profession, she is also harmless. She is a beautiful singer who enjoys a massive fan following in and around Brahmpur. But, time lands her in deep crisis.

Apart from Kabir, who is a casualty in broken love, others such as Mr and Mrs Mahesh Kapoor, Maan and Saeeda Bai also have to languish a lot.
Tragedy has hit them hard. Even if they are innocent and harmless and not given to wrecking others, they too have to take on sorrows sufferings, torments and tortures. In every work of Seth apart from the protagonist, a section of others are also left to plunge into eternal gloom and melancholy.

In Seth’s next novel, *An Equal Music* Michael is the victim of love. His love affair ends up in a fiasco as in the case of John of *The Golden Gate* and Kabir of *A Suitable Boy*. He hails from a place called Rochdale in England. His father runs a butcher’s shop. And his mother merely helps his father in running the shop. Both of them dream of their sons’ university education. His father’s friends from education circles advise him to send Michael to university to study either law or languages. But Michael’s wish is otherwise. Much contrary to the wishes and expectations of his parents, he wants to study only music. Michael’s insistence on studying music caused a rift in the family. His father is much annoyed and irritated by his idea of making music as his career. His father questions him how Michael will be able to look after his mother with the pittance he will earn in his career as a musician. In the end, Michael wins and Mrs Formby, a widow and childless woman, rendered all possible help to Michael. She only infuses in him a sense of zeal in the music when he is a boy. At first, she is the one who takes him to hear Mandel’s Messiah in which a niece of hers sings in it. This concert only impacts him to an extent where he wants to build a career for himself in the realm of music. And Mrs Formby also gives her violin to Michael who goes to Manchester to study music, Mrs Formby is kind and generous to permit him to use her violin.

Michael, then proceeds to Vienna to pursue his higher studies under professor Carl Kall. He meets Julia two months after he arrives in Vienna. At a student concert, when she plays a Mozart sonata, he is stunned to hear such quality performance. He goes to her and lauds her playing of Violin. This is how they get introduced to each other. Later, they became so close that they have talked about their backgrounds education and parents and it steadily strengthens their bond. It is an advantage that both of them hail from England.
When Micheal tells her that he is a native of Rochdale, Julia gives him lots of information on Rochdale which he himself is unaware of. Their relationship, by degrees, bloomed into love.

“From the moment of our first meeting
I could think of nothing but her. I don’t know
what she saw in me other than my desperate
longing for her, but within a week of our meeting
longing for her, but within a week of our meeting
we were lovers. One morning, we tried to make
music together. It did not go well. we were
both too nervous. Later in the week we gave
it another try, and were taken aback by how
naturally how responsively to each other to the
music-we were playing (EM 80)

Julia is five years younger than Michael. Although she had spent all her life only in England, before her arrival in Vienna, she speaks German well. She has been brought up in a world where art and literature and music are absorbed without effort or explanation. Since Julia’s father is a professor of history with the Oxford University, she has had a sophisticated upbringing, whereas Michael’s father runs a butcher’s shop. Both of them are from completely different backgrounds. Still, music unites them. Julia is of great help to Michael in learning to enjoy art and improving his German. Besides, Michael is passionate about music but it is she who channelizes his interest in music and shows him things about music through her playing. Later, he realizes he has learnt more and more about music from her than from anyone else. Julia thinks that Michael is different from other students in terms of a sense of resistance, of scepticism, roughness and impulsiveness.

In the course of his education in Vienna under Carl Kell, at one point, Michael’s third finger begins giving him difficulty. It responds slowly and becomes only after effective warm-up. Carl reacts with fury and impatience at
the slow movement of Michael. His slack trills are yet another insult to him and his anxieties are reflective of his fecklessness.

“It was as if one of the potential diamonds on his crown was proving it self to be merely carbon, convertible to its ideal form only under intense and continuous pressure. He applied it and I crumbled” (EM 82)

When Carl Kall gets tough on Michael for his seeming slackness, which is in actuality the result of the problem with his third finger, he is unable to put up with the harsh treatment from his professor. He takes the decision to leave Vienna, on an irrational impulse Julia persuades him, as much as she can, not to leave on bitter terms with the professor, but her words do not bring about any change in his heart. She attempts to convince him stating that what he first saw in Carl whose playing goes deeper and farther than his virtuosity and whose music conveys the nobility of spirit in every phrase. When Julia is seen supporting Carl Kall in strong terms, Michael considers it to be betrayal on her part against him.

This is the apple of discord between Michael and Carl Kall which has its impact on the affair between lovers. Michael abruptly leaves Vienna for England, without even informing Julia. Much later, he realizes the merit and substance in the statement of Julia. He understands how honestly and justly she has acted in the issue between him and the professor. Then, he makes many telephonic calls to Julia in her hostel and keeps writing many letters to her. But he is unable to communicate with her and he feels by that time that Carl Kall did not drive him from Vienna but only his unyielding younger self did that. He realizes the mistake he has made and also thinks if he had not met carl Kall on an occasion in England, he would not have gone to Vienna to study. Also, he would not have met Julia.

The hard reality of loosing touch with Julia haunts him very badly. And it drives him to despair. He is in low spirits. The fact that he has two- thirds of
his life to live further wounds him. In the meantime, he joined Maggioroe Quartet, a music troupe, comprising Piers, his sister Helen and Billy. His position as the second violinist in the troupe assists him to some extent to overcome the sense of loneliness as well as the pain of separation from Julia. In addition to being a member of the music troupe, he handled classes on music for music aspirants. Regarding this Shuba Tewari in her article entitled *If Music be the food of love* comments as follows:

“The plot of the novel is short. Michael and Julia are students of Music at Vienna. They have an animated and reciprocal relationship. But due to vague and obscure reasons, Michael finds himself compelled to leave Vienna as well as Julia. He intensely regrets his decision later; and tries to make amends but in vain. He starts playing violin in a music band. About a decade later, he meets Julia in London. By this time she is married and has a son. She also gets deaf. The relationship is revived but not heading anywhere. At last Julia prioritises her family over Michael who is left alone” (77).

Virginie, a girl student from Nyons, France, learns music from him. In the course of time, the relationship between them reach a stage where they share not only lessons of music but bed as well. Virginie is sixteen years younger than him but she is quite passionate about her affair with Michael. She becomes very possessive of him and cannot bear him sleeping with other women. Although Michael frequently sleeps with her, he can not think her as a lover or a life partner. And the intensity of his attachment and affection towards Virginia is much less than what it is towards Julia. Michael’s affair with Virginia is devoid of intense passion and love. He considers it an arrangement that benefits both. Nevertheless, Virginia’s passion for him is so strong that she wants to live all her life with him.

Michael is forced to live a life full of emptiness, loneliness and lovelessness. He thinks to himself that he is paying the price for leaving Vienna and Julia in haste. Sense of fulfillment is elusive to him and his life is
characterized by constant gloom and melancholy. Frequently immersing himself in the memory of Julia, he leads his life. Even though it has been 10 years, since he left Julia she is so solidly present in his mind and heart. His love for him is so strong that he does not wish to think of any other woman in the place of Julia. He attempts in vain to communicate with her aunt in klosterneuburg through whom he hopes he will be able to have some information on the whereabouts of Julia. Pradheep Trika in *An Equal Music: Rehearsals of Liberation* comments on Michael in the following manner:

“Michael’s life has very little room for anything else other than music. He seems to share his fascination for music with Seth, his creator. Michael teaches music to Virginnie who proposes her love to him but in reality does not leave any impressions on his consciousness as Julia does. On the other hand, Michael Julia relationship has intense emotional density” (169).

Once, Michael wants to have opus 1 number 3 Beethoven’s trio and he visits many places to get it. As part of his efforts to get it, he pays a visit to Henry Watson music library in London, his second home. On his way back by bus, he happens to spot Julia in a bus. He vainly endeavours hard to draw her attention towards him. He even hires a taxi to trace her but he is unable to do it. With regard to his financial status, he is not sound. He has only hand to mouth existence. Other protagonists of Seth, Kabir in *A suitable Boy* and John in *The Golden Gate* are completely opposite to Michael in this regard. Kabir, son of a university professor and John well placed in a nuclear firm do not suffer any financial difficulties. But for Michael, to own even a violin seems to be beyond his reach. He has to seek help from all quarterz. He uses the violin which, Mrs Formby has given him.

Maggiore quarter performs a musical concert on Mozart and Beethoven at whigmore. After it is over, many in the audience come backstage to appreciate them for their splendid performance. Surprisingly, Julia turns up there to greet Michael. The revival of love between them commences here. It
is absolutely incredible and unbelievable for Michael to see her there after ten years.

“Michael”, says Julia as my eyes fall on her
“Julia”. The name forms on my lips, but I speak no sound, no whisper.
She looks at me, I at her. Some sort of dark – leafed lily is on her right and she is wearing green.
It was her: it is her” (EM 92).

She comments that it is a wonderful concert and asks if he is with the Maggiore Quartet. And he replies he has been part of it for the past few years, thinking whether this is what they are to talk about. He gets completely excited. He cannot believe what is happening in front of him. He asks her for her telephone number. And she responds she is not good at her telephonic conversation without any elaboration on that. Julia is introduced to other members of the troupe such as Piers, Billy and Helen. She seems to make a rush and Michael writes down his telephone number on her palm. She does not object to it though astonished. She leaves stating that they can meet the next day.

She keeps her word on meeting him the next day. When they were together, Michael who is immensely joyful articulated his experiences in London and tells her about his co-performers in the quartet. Then he feels sorry for the demise of her father. He also explains to her the effort he made in tracking her down in the bus. Later, they proceed to a picture gallery where they completely immerse themselves in the enjoyment of portraits there. Since both of them are musicians they have enormous interest in Art as well. When they have heart to heart discussion with each other, their long suppressed emotions and passion surface. Although she seems to be bit cautious and careful about her association with him and moves with him in a measured way, she is unable to prevent her attraction towards him. In the course of their
interaction. Michael informs her Maggio quartet’s upcoming trip to Vienna and Venice. She replies that she will ask her mother to watch out for it.

The second meeting is followed by third one at Kensington Gardens, after a few days. They dwell on Carl Kall. Michael tells her that he received a letter from him but he did not respond. Julia is very cautious about her talk on Carl Kall because it might provoke Michael. Having touched on other topics, she starts talking about her personal life. When she senses that the situation is conducive, she discloses to him that she has got married to James Hansen, an American Bank official and has a son by name Luke. It leaves him shell-shocked. His lady love Julia who is so solidly present in his mind and heart and for whom he has waited for ten years without turning towards any other women in spite of his Parents’ Persuasion and insistence on his getting married and settled in life, is there in front of him and says she is the wife of James Hansen and has a boy as well. Slowly controlling himself, he asks whether she is happy with her married life, she replies in the affirmative. Besides, She charges him with deserting her in Vienna without even informing her about his departure. She further tells him she had been left in the darkness.

Then, again their relationship steadily grows to an extent where Julia begins frequenting the residence of Michael which is called Archangel court. On an occasion, Michael is stunned at her ability in playing the piano without even testing the sound of it. It is slow movement of Mozart’s sonata in C Major K 330. Michael sits with his head in his hand and Mozart gets dropped note by note in his mind. This is the one she played in the student concert at first when they met. Since both of them are musicians, it is much simpler for them to strengthen their bond, after a gap of ten years. They find themselves on the same wavelength again Michael driven by emotions, says, “I love you” Julia.

“I love you, Julia. Pointless to say it, Perhaps, but I do – still”.

She sighs, not from happiness. Her fingers massage an imaginary ring. Falling back in love with her, whom I had never forgotten, is expensive
for me. For her, who had succeeded in putting me out mind, whose very
name has changed to another’s, it could be costly indeed.

“I you” she says at last in a voice so full of
regret she could almost be saying the opposite” – (EM 136)

Michael manages to retain the love he lost in Vienna though it cannot
fully belong to him. When Michael touches upon words like ‘betrayal to her
spouse and kid’, she opines that she is scared of such terms. Then, both make
love there in Michael’s apartment. He tells her he has never really recovered
from losing her. On account of their unquenchable thirst for learning more and
more about music, they become very intimate to each other again at a fast pace.

Once, Michael meets Julia in a park nearby Luke’s school where Luke is
introduced to Michael. He gets along with Michael very fast. Luke is shrewd
and asks Michael if he has known his mother before his father knew her.
Replying in the affirmative, Michael adds that he and his mother were students
studying music together in Vienna. At one point, Luke says he has to speak in
such a way that the deaf can understand because his mother is deaf.
Immediately after he says about his mother’s deafness, he shouts it is not true.
Luke feels he has betrayed his mother. On a spur of the moment, he says it,
later he regrets it most. Julia can sense what her son has told Michael.

After this incident, she writes a letter, detailing how she lost her hearing
capacity and the treatment she underwent for that which hugely shocks
Michael. She furthers that in spite being deaf, she does not lose her ability to
make music. She articulates all her feelings in the letter.

I do want to share my life and my music
with you in some way. But, Michael, I don’t
see now our love can reach any sort of full
expression. Years ago, perhaps it could have
but how can’t now? I can’t live two lives.
I am afraid of hurting everyone all of us. I
don’t know how to proceed or even retreat (EM 154)
She has ambivalent feeling towards Michael and James Hansen. On the one hand, she is unable to forsake and forget Michael who has managed to meet and revive their affair after a gap of ten years. Their common interest in music and their previous relationship prevent them from being disunited again. On the other hand, she feels guilty of betraying her husband James Hansen and the kid Luke. She is unable to forget how her husband stood solidly by her when she underwent treatment for her deafness. Despite this regret, her relationship with Michael continues until their Vienna visit.

Michael, when he comes to learn about Julia’s hearing impairment, wants to equip himself by reading books on dealing with deafness so that he thinks he can move with her better. After Michael becomes cognizant of Julia’s hearing deficiency, he attempts to sound considerate and more affectionate towards Julia, who laughs at his attempts and adds that if he is by himself, that looks nice. In the meantime, Virginie interferes and asked Michael if he sleeps with any other woman. Unable to bear the displeasure she causes with her enquires and approach, Michael vents his anger on her. To another question from her pertaining to his love, he says he never loves Virginie who, on hearing this, burst into anger states that she being young will have a good time and he will regret his decision later. Michael spoils the career as well as the heart of a young girl, He could have treated her only as a student without using Virginie for his desires. When Michael continues her relationship with Julia even after her marriage he has regret whether he draws Julia apart from her family and he causes a split among them. Besides, he also thinks whether his activities are amounting to adultery and sin. But, no such questions arise in his mind, when he moves with virginie, who deserves sympathy.

Michael, who carries on his affair with Julia with some regret ruminates that Julia may have believed in ‘forgiving god’. At regular intervals, Julia frequents the residence of Michael and they make love every time they meet. Both of them seem to be very pleased and happy with their renewed and revived affair. It means much more to Michael and he greatly respects the
relationship. As far as he is concerned, Julia is synonymous with future, career, happiness and all the brighter aspects of life. His joy knows no boundaries in her presence.

This type of boundless joy and sense of fulfillment derived from his relationship with Julia takes him to a stage where he becomes more and more possessive of Julia. The view that Julia belongs only to him begins to flash in his mind forgetting the fact she has a family with husband and kid. Julia is also equally passionate about him. Once she came to Michael’s Archangel court apartment and asks him to get ready to go for shopping. When Michael enquires her whether there is anything special to go for shopping she replies she wishes to buy sweaters for him since he repeatedly puts on only worn out ones. Then she reminds him about his birth day which he himself has completely forgotten. This episode indicates Julia’s love for him is not less than his attachment towards her. After buying sweater for Michael, when they have coffee together in a restaurant, Julia surprises him by saying that she also will join their quartet when they leave for Vienna and Venice to stage music programs.

Even though Michael is part and parcel of Maggiore quartet, he is not intimated about the inclusion of Julia in the quartet for its Vienna and Venice programme which upsets him. His sense of anxiety is attributed to the hearing impairment of Julia. He wonders whether Julia can live up to expectations with her hearing deficiency and she should not end up as a laughing stock. He makes a call to Piers at once who explains to him that Otto Prachner who is supposed to be part of them for playing piano falls ill and he suffers a heart attack. And Piers furthers that since the possibility of his recovery and playing piano is less, he has to look for a substitute and Luther, Otto Prachner’s agent recommends Julia. Piers questions Michael why he is anxious and dissatisfied with the inclusion of Julia. Michael not answering him directly sounds only restless about Piers’ decision on engaging Julia for Vienna and Venice tour.
Maggiore quartet holds rehearsals for the upcoming tour of Vienna and Venice. During rehearsals, Piers can sense something odd and wrong with Julia. He fired questions to Michael to find out the truth. Unable to withstand the pressure put on him at one point Michael tells him Julia is deaf. He inwardly thinks that when other member of Maggiore quartet become cognisant of Julia’s deficiency it will be easier for them to cope with the situation in Vienna and Venice. Otherwise, Michael fears that they will end up in a mess and Julia might be humiliated. In order to make things easier for Julia to comfortably play with others, he has to disclose it to them. He does not wish his lover to be embarrassed or to cut a sorry figure before others in the course of the music programme. As a precautionary measure, he has to apprise others of it. Having said it to Piers, he regrets with every fibre of his being. He feels that he is unfair and unjust to Julia. In the meantime, Piers also charges him with suppressing the fact on Julia’s impairment. Even though he is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, he chooses to priorities Julia’s compatibility over other things. Michael has to incur the displeasure of Piers.

“You should have told us before,” says Piers with a touch of contempt in his voice, “How could you have kept this from us? you owe it to us –and to yourself” (EM 202)

Later, when Julia comes to learn Michael has told Piers about her hearing impairment, she is not pleased with this. She responds with heavy heart that her father used to say that academic world is leaky but the music world also has turned out to be like that.

My father used to talk about the academic world being leaky, but the music world is worse. (EM 204)

When time passes on, Julia comes on to terms with other’s knowledge of her deficiency. Besides, she has to move with other members of Maggiore Quartet when they stage rehearsals prior to their departure to Vienna and
Venice. At this point, Julia invites Michael to her residence for lunch with her husband James which makes Michael nervous and anxious.

Right from the start, Julia seems to be just and fair towards Michael. When there arises a difference of opinion between Carl Kall and Michael, she tries hard to prevent it from getting deteriorated further, by convincing Michael with the substance and merit in the statement of Carl Kall on him. Still her efforts at reconciliation do not materialised and Michael leaves Vienna without even informing her. Michael failed to realize he not only leaves Vienna but unbearably wounds Julia and lands her in deep trouble as well. She is left in the lurch, after his departure. Ten years have passed on. Still it is Julia who again comes to whigmore Hall to commend the performance of Michael. And the love affair between them gets revived through this meeting. She does not seem to find fault with him by thinking he is the one who abandons her for no fault of hers and she does not have to meet and commend him. Without hesitation, she says that both Michael and music form important part in her life. Besides, while she invites Michael for lunch she does not fear that her husband, James Hansen, might mistake the relationship between her and Michael.

After this, Maggiore quartet leave for Vienna. And Julia is part of it. Michael’s temperament of getting restless with people in key positions surfaces during their flight journey when he enters into an altercation with a stewardess over a petty and unimportant thing. It is his temperament when he happens to come into contact with people in uniform or position he can not move with them with ease and comfort. Psychologically, he appears incompatible with those with formal position. This is one reason why he can not get along with Carl Kall though initially he has great respect and regard for him. At times, he sounds ill-tempered. He is given to getting emotional as well. Only this attribute of his takes away Julia from him, finally leaving him to languish in solitude and loneliness.

As scheduled and planned, their concert goes off well in Vienna where Michael asked Julia to stay with them in lodge but she chooses to stay with her
mother at home and, she asks him to come to her home and stay there but Michael does not agree to it because he cannot be confident to meet Julia’s mother who is still of the opinion that he did injustice to Julia. When their programme gets over in Vienna, they leave Venice. At first, Julia does not consent to come along with them to Venice, later on second thoughts she joins them leaving for Venice. It signifies the magnitude of her love for him. She goes to the extent of requesting her friends in Vienna Meria and her husband Marcus to tell her mother that she stays with them at their home, in case Julia’s mother in Vienna asks after her. Maria herself is not pleased with this arrangement.

Julia prefers her stay with Michael in Venice to her returning to England and being with James Hansen and Luke. She prioritised her presence with Michael over being in England with her spouse and kid. When she chooses to put Michael above James, Michael ought to have realised her depth of attachment towards him. But he falls short of this realisation during their stay in Venice resulting in their separation.

Other members of Maggiore quartet Piers, Helen and Billy stayed in Plazzo Tradonico in Venice whereas Michael and Julia stay together. They spend time by joyfully recollecting their early memories in Vienna. Their student days the places they visited, the friends they spent time with and happy moments are fondly remembered. Further, their stay in Vienna is marked by frequent love making. Michael is very concerned, affectionate and attached towards Julia. He pays careful attention to Julia when she shares with him the disadvantages of being deaf. They have a heart to heart talk with each other regarding advantage of deafness, she states to him that when she is in a room with the view of street without the noise and din of traffic she can enjoy them.

Julia seems to be so cheerful in the company of Michael. She appear to have overcome her fear and shyness and with so much passion she indulges in love making.

“She holds me through the night, and from time
to time says my name she has taught me the alphabet of touch, so that in the darkness she can read from my fingers a work or two of love enough to laugh at my mis-spellings I find it difficult to sleep, being held” (EM 277)

When Julia does not show interest in informing James Hansen about her stay in Venice, Michael suggests that her spouse can be intimated about it. Later, an incident which evokes restlessness and anxiety in Julia takes place when they head for a picture gallery. Having had a look at the collection of portraits being placed there, they rest for a while sitting on bench in a private and lonely place. Being under the impression that they are away from surveillance, they indulge in acts of romance. At that time, an old man comes there, surveys them coldly and goes back. Later they come to learn that their activities have been monitored through a television camera which shrinks Julia into shyness. Unable to bear the thought that she is seen indulging in acts of romance, she burst into tears uncontrollably. It becomes a huge difficulty for Michael to cope with Julia uncontrollably weeping. She begins to fire questions to him, Venting her frustration and anger on him. She starts thinking only because of him, she is to suffer this type of affront. It slowly awoke her against the relationship she has with him.

“Why did you leave me? – this cannot go on
I hate it and now the cipriani – James stayed – Her once-
I make out incoherent words and I
speak words incoherent to her but mostly just
wait for her sobs to diminish (EM279)

The occurrence of this incident sparks thoughts of her betrayal against James Hansen and Luke in the mind of Julia in whom a transition starts to take place. She senses the unjustness and unfairness of the affair. Mulling over the
unfair nature of her relationship, she wants to cut short her stay in Vienna and prepares to leave for England. In the meantime, to make things worse for Michael, another event occurs. When Piers, Billy and Helen get ready for a rehearsal at Scuola Grande di san Rocco for their upcoming concert, Michael and Julia are also there. Michael, at this point, happens to witness and read a letter Julia has written to James Hansen. Michael who becomes very possessive of Julia cannot endure her showering love and affection on her spouse. Michael, by this time, finds himself in a position where he thinks Julia belongs only to him. And when he reads the letter, his emotions run high, forgetting the fact that even if he causes massive damage to her by his sudden departure from Vienna and inspite of that Julia is still very passionate towards him. The reading of this letter by Michael, his subsequent outburst of anger and charge of betrayal against Julia and Julia’s just reaction to his unjust charges drive a wedge and a permanent split between them. The significance of this letter can be known from the fact that only this letter split them once for all.

Dearest Jumbo,

I miss you terribly – both of you. I am longing to see you again. Jenny sends her best wishes. She’s house bound for much of the day so we haven’t spent as much time together as we’d have liked to. It’s tough on her. I think I mentioned her kids have measles.

I have been having a most wonderful time in Venice. I am so very glad I came. Vienna was becoming too stressful and if I had gone with Maria to Karnten, with her husband and their little son, I’d only have made myself miserable.

I needed this break. I feel so refreshed I walk miles every day. But I miss you both and can’t bear the thought of being away from you for another week, which is why I am returning early. The other Jenny and I had lunch at the Cipriani and I thought of you, staying there without me and thinking of me. Tell Luke that if he forgives me for going away for
so long, he will get two surprises, one small and one big, from Venice, together with a present from his Oma. A huge hug to my little Benetton bear. Not that with his grandmother fussing over him and spoiling him rotten, he will even remember me when I return.

I’ll be back tomorrow (Tuesday) on the Alitalia flight arriving at Heathrow at 7.25 in the evening. I’ll look out for you, but please darling, don’t bother to come to the airport if you have work or something else on. I know I haven’t given you much warning. I’ll get a taxi. I don’t have too much luggage.

I love you so much and think of you all the time. I hope you haven’t seen overworking. It is so hard not to be able to phone you. One of my first Jears is that I will lose the sound of your voice.

Lots of love
Julia (EM 273).

Reading this letter, Michael gripped with sense of possessiveness and inability feels sick at heart. Julia seeing him in gloom, and despair asks him about it. She showshim the biting marks on her shoulders, arms and neck. Michael brutally responds to her remarks.

“Poor Jumbo, I wonder what he’ll make of them when he meets you at Heathrow. Do you think he’ll bring the Benetton bear along, or will it be past his bed time?”

My tongue is as brutal as my teeth. She stares at me and cries out – a horrible sound of rage and hurt and disbelief and violation. Then covers her face with her hands and her hair. I try to touch her. She slaps my away. She begins to cry with fury (EM 292)

This occurrence irreparably damages the love affair between the duo. The relationship between the two starts slipping into darkness again. Michael to himself.
“What I did was unforgiveable – but nor am I in a forgiving mood. The night before she gave me the book, we had mode love, more at her desire even than mine. Yet, just a few hours later, such a latter to this other man yes, yes, her husband, yes”


She asks him with extreme fury how he could have said such things to her. She adds she will have to suppress something and keep lying to James. And she furthers that she has to tell him that she is visits someone or doing something. She is bent upon parting from Michael.

After both of them return to England, She strictly asks him not to write to her. But, Michael visits her at her residence in the absence of James Hansen and Luke and begged her to forgive him for the remarks he made on her. Inspite of his profuse apology, Julia is firm, obstinate and stubborn in not yielding to him. She fixes her mind on her own family comprising her husband, husband’s mother and Luke. She recalls that they all stood by her solidly when she was going through a rough patch. To continue her affair with Michael will mean betraying the caring family. Michael proceeds to the music room in Julia’s residence where Michael pleaded her he can not sleep without her. She responds he has to and Michael should ponder over her plight as well, she adds. She goes on to add that Luke had to be given healthy upbringing which ensures all round development in him. She wants Luke to grow in academic, artistic, musical social spiritual, physical and moral stature. She firmly said they have to part.

After what happened, why should I deceive you as well? Julia asked (EM 304)

Julia is keen on getting rid of Michael from her life, though it is painful. She who had put Michael above her family reversed her priorities then. The
decision, she takes leaves him demoralized and shell-shocked. In the meantime, James Mansen invites Michael for the birthday party of Julia which makes Michael anxious and restless. Michael wonders why Julia’s husband again invites him to his residence and if he will enquire with him anything about his relationship with Julia. At the party, Julia warns Michael that her husband has sensed their affair and to add strength to her statement, she points out James Hansen to Michael that from a distance her husband watches them. When Michael, in turn questions her how he knows it, she replies that she might have spoken in her sleep. Further, she adds that in the last couple of days he has not been himself.

With James Hanson’s knowledge of the affair between Julia and Michael, there is no other go for Michael except to leave her. Julia, on her part, is hell bent upon delinking her affair with Michael. She does not like to drag things further and she makes up her mind with a heavy heart to put an end to the affair at once. Citing the unwanted, negative and adverse consequences of the continuance of their affair and how it will further damage the plight of James and Luke, she writes a final letter to Michael as follows.

My dear Michael,

I said I would visit you but I can’t. I can’t take the strain of it any more. I can hardly play the piano these days. It seems as if my heart stops when I play.

Things are pressing down on me. Please don’t reply to this or see me or ask me to explain. I won’t say I will always love you. It will sound too false. It’s not false at all- but what good will it do you or me to know it or say it?

I feel as if a prisoner in my mind and in this room. You have seen it now so you can imagine me at my desk or at the piano. I wanted you to see it but now you are too much here as everywhere also in my life. I have to learn peace again, for my own sake – and for Luke and for James, who looks lost and tired. I have become restless with you and uncertain and
afraid, and guilty and unsustainable stupidly full of joy and pain – none of which is anyone’s fault but my own. Don’t ask me why or how because I don’t know myself. I know that I cannot cope with seeing you or knowing that it possible to see you.

I of all people, who have a before and an after should have known that you can’t relieve your life. I should never have come backstage that night. Please forgive me and if you are as little capable of forgetting me less often with each day and each year.

Love – yes, you know what I feel. I may as well set it down again.

Julia (EM 310).

Once for all Julia is determined to disconnect her affair with Michael. After this, the efforts Michael makes at reconciliation go in vain. When he approaches her son on an occasion after this incident, she puts it bluntly that her son Luke feels lonely being a single child at home and She and James are to alleviate his handicap of being a single child by giving birth to another one. She furthers that she has to sweat and toil for the welfare of her child and it will not be proper on her part to carry on her affair with him. Michael, who makes a final attempt at preserving the relationship, is left shell shocked. And hence. That he plunges into gloom and melancholy again becomes inevitable. It is really an irreparable loss to him being in passionate love with her for over ten years without even iota of wavering mindedness and distraction of heart towards any other women even in Julia’s ten years of absence. Though he is steadfast in his love for her, he is at a grave loss. His love was lost, found and again lost. With regard to Michael, R.K.Kaul. in his article *Music lovers sealed of from the world out side* comments in the following way:

“The narrator protagonist is a violinist. He once loved Julia in Vienna when they studied together under the same master. Then, on an irrational impulse, he decides to sever his relations with Julia and Vienna. He joins a Quartet called The Maggiore Quartet. At one point Julia after ten years meets him and they revive their relationship. But it does not last
long. The affair disappears at the pace it appears. In the end, Michael is left languish in loneliness” (22).

Other characters who are struck by tragedy along with Michael are his mother and Mrs. Formby. Both of them are very concerned about Michael. His mother wants him, with every fibre of her being, to pursue higher education in university and get employment according to his qualification, because none from their family has had the opportunity of pursuing higher education. Much to her disappointment, Michael chooses to study music first in Manchester and then in Vienna. His father is used to asking him how Michael will be able to look after his mother with a small income he will derive from his profession as a musician. Michael’s father was down with ill – health and so he poses this question to him. But it is Michael’s mother who passes away leaving her spouse to be taken care of by his sister Auntie Joan. With her demise, Michael loses a truly caring heart. Michael’s mother is an innocent woman but when the fiction ends she is not alive.

Mrs. Formby is the one who is very attached and affectionate towards Michael. It is she who instilled in him a sense of interest in music at first. She lends him her Violin which he has used ever since he studied music in Manchester and later in Vienna and for his career as well. She also passes away which is a blow to him. His favourite cat zsa- zsa also dies. Thus Michael becomes under attack from many quarters which left him hopeless and demoralised. To come out of the crisis he is in, he even goes to the extreme of visiting a whore but it also does not comfort him in any way.

Michael is responsible for the gloom and despair he suffers. He is an evidence to prove the dictum that character is destiny. That Julia is a married woman with a husband and a kid is not a deterrent to her when she revives her relationship with Michael after ten years. It is indicative of the magnitude of her passion and love for him. His being possessive of her beyond all limits lands him in trouble. His excessive possessiveness can be attributed to their separation.
In *The Golden Gate* the protagonist John on account of his suspicious nature loses his lady love Liz who marries John’s college classmate Phil. Neither others nor society is responsible for the failure of John’s love. He alone is responsible for this. And in the same way in *A Suitable Boy* Kabir has to forgo his lover because of his lack of boldness. When Lata suggests to him that both of them can go elsewhere and get married, he turns down her suggestion on the ground that he has to pursue his higher studies abroad. And he adds that this rather improper and unbecoming on their part to resort to elopement given the family background they have hailed from. His unpreparedness and unwillingness to leave Brahmpur without the knowledge of the members of their family indicates his lack of boldness which is the reason for his fiasco in love. Lata is completely different from him. Even though she hails from an orthodox Hindu family and having been given traditional upbringing, she is ready to break the shackles of family and enter into wedlock with him. Still, diffidence and timidity on the part of Kabir makes Lata also lose her love. In the same way in *An Equal Music* Michael’s possessive nature deprives him of his lover Julia. Even though she has become the wife of James Hansen, she is still keen on continuing her affair with Michael, who mistakes a letter she has written to her husband. Michael cannot bear Julia even writing a letter to her husband which finally results in their separation. She finally puts her family life above her love life with Michael which, at one stage she begins to consider to be immoral, illegal and unfair.

Seth’s Protagonists alone are responsible for their failures in love. His heroines Liz, Lata and Julia are far more confident and gutsy than their partners respectively. None of them get married to their lovers and all the three marry only others, plunging their lovers into eternal gloom. And John, Kabir and Michael have become the victims of broken love.