CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Indian English Literature has a reasonablv a long period of growth. It began in early nineteenth century and has continued since, acquiring much newer and much larger dimension after Independence and particularly in the last two decades of the twentieth century it got integrated with the development of Indian languages and came to be considered as one of the major Indian language literatures for all purposes. The real respect of Indian English Literature had not acquired much credibility and not sufficiently considered at par with other Indian language literatures. But after most seventies the acceptance factor of English language began be larger and larger and got well established in areas other than strictly literary that is in matters of communication and administration as well as in journalistic writing essays and biography etc., in short mostly non-fiction prose.

The first ever history of Indian English literature entitled “Indian Writiing in English” by K.R. Srinivas Iyengar had a daunting job to do: in this connection “A History of Indian English Literature” by M. K. Naik also did great job. A literary history published as recent as 2003, entitled “An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English” ed. By Arvind Krishna Mehrotra while referring to its subject arrangement maintains that it is “conceived as a comprehensive and wide-ranging whole” and “takes up not only the canonical poets novelists and dramatists of the past two hundred years but also scientists social reformers, anthropologists and naturalists who have by consensus enriched the body of Indian writing in English”
M. K. Naik in his "A History of Indian English Literature Lists about eighty such writers, both man and women and short than 'one' hundred and fifty novels published in a period of about thrity years after Independence. The writers came from all communities and places in India, as well as by many who had migrated abroad, particularly England. The novels, written dving this period, gave distinct and substantial shape to Indian English fiction that came to be reckoned as a major body of fiction writing along with fiction in major Indian languages. The Sahitya Akademi Awards also came hanoy, Beginnng from 1961, when R. K. Narayan got the first ever Akademi Award for his novel "the Guide" till 1988, when Vikram Seth got the Award for his verse novel "The Golden Gate" there were other writers who got the award for novel at different times. These novelist: got nourishment for their novels from many sources including the world of Indian living that had got settled by that time and had enveloped the mind set of all writers but in no less measure in their attitudes of self realization and indipendance from all external influinces in their desire to shike on their own and grow on their own not only in terms of motivations and prints of view, but also in form what the novelists demonstrated, say shy in form what a mala A. Narayan and Jon Mee:

"Was a command of the dominant forms of the English novel and sight of the Indian novel lists to be taken seriously in terms of the criteria of western novel-writiing"1.

In the climate of literary practice where the emphasis seems be predominantly on imagining the nation, through the retrieval of histories under erasure and foregrounding in the attempt, a self reflexive awareness of the set of narration Seth marks a departure in several ways. He is perhaps the only Indian writer today to experiments with so many genres of literature; poetry in metre and shyme that eschew current practices of Indian.
Poets who largely use free verse a travelogue, a verse novel in sonnets a classically realistic novel a inoderemnt novel and a biographic memoir. Though several India writers and novelists locate the themes of their works in other geographical areas in addition to India, which then leads to luminal and hybrid representations that have view because the connections of the academic world, Seth's changing locales – India, China, America and Europe-do not exhibit these preoccupations. Moreover, Seth's realism does not question on minds of representation is to some extant a representation of Diasporic spirit such as British Diaspora California (American) Diaspora, China Diaspora and Indian Diaspora.

For instance his novel entitled. A Suitable Boy, being an Indian Diaspora, asserts in question of ingly ideas of development and progress of the nation towards a desired secular and modern vision. The Golden Gate, remains confined to the conditions and environment in California, A Suitable Boy, to that of India, and An Equal Music to that of Europe. His movement in his poetry from America to China to Indian is also indicative of that. It is not only the involvement with the life style and the mindest – available to locally at the particular place and particular time. It is a continuous foray to the past to the past conditions of living, to the past heritage the way structure of life has grown from the past to the present that Seth exhibits is not so much a 'world view' and awareness of what is happeing in the world as a whole, a life one remains stuck to ones place or time or trying to realize the universal conditions of living in ones specific areas of operation what W.K. Wimfart long ago termed as concrete universal.

The world and its affairs interest Seth and this is discernible in al his works, whether verse or prose. Being throughly cosmopolitan n his outlook, Seth takes much interest in
the specific features of the culture whenever or whenever he comes in contact with it. With fall honesty and sincerity he always endeavours to portray the outer reality only ruthlessly becomes impartial in the affair. This is why an American landscape, a Chinese experience or an incident at home is ready to show its realistic picture through his pen. Seth’s cosmopolitan attitude goes with the prevailing liberal humanism of his works that see:

“all men/(were)"brother within enclosing seas”

He has deep sympathy for the individual. This is the source of his dislike of all totalitarian ideologies expressed in his poetry in his critique of Mao in the travelogue, in the espousal of nuclear disarmament movement and homosexuality in The Golden Gate and in his parsonate speaking out against Nazi Germany in Two Lives. The liberal humanism of Nehruvian politics is seen as the dominant political perspective in A Suitable Boy. The family retains a very special focus and figures in all his works; either his representation of an support for this social institution seen in the decisions which his characters make or in representations of his own family seen in the travelogue poems, the biography of his aunt and uncle and in the biographic elements of A Suitable Boy. Music is a recurrent preoccupation; besides the libretto Arion and the Dolphin; it forms a major stand of the plot in his two early novels The Golden Gate and A Suitable Boy and is the theme of An Equal Music.

The documentation of Seth’s work does not easily give a structured picture since he has radically changing genre and milian with nearly every book he has written. And in addition to varying dramatically in from all his books have been set not only in India but in China, California and in his latest book London and Venice, each carrying diasporic
potential. Some critics have pointed out his uniqueness in this category on the basis that Seth does not show a strong since of nationalism or angst towards imperialism, and that he is restrained and reticent in style and temper unlike many of his contemporaries. ON this issue Seth himself has said that,

“my influences are very general.my reading is also scattershot. I have been most inspired by some one whom I haven’t read a single word of in the original-Pushkin-because he wrote in all sorts of different forms he didn’t succumb to the temptation to repeat himself simply to please public or a publisher and at the same time he didn’t mind repeating the same form if he was inspired to. He wrote so wonderfully that even in translation, or at least I certain translations his vision comes across. I really admire him. And I suppose he give the courage to experiment with form. Of course, other writers like Tagore for instance, or Goeth- have written in very different forms. But Pushkin is very close to my heart because I like his mixture of liveity and deep serious-ness” 3

In a television interview with Akash Kapoor Seth has said that he is just a writer not an Indian or a common wealth or any other writer. He says:

“normal human interest makes people look for or explore worlds outside their own whether in literature or in person”4

And although his books are set in different countries, it does not make, him one of those stereotypical casino puritans who have a sort of mixed cultural experience in every book and feel they have to lay their ethnicity on thick. Seth further adds,……..

“I think that the characters are so much more important than the writer. To be brought up short by the ethnicity of a particular writer theory it out each book-that’s not my styles.”5
His dislike of academic preoccupation is reflected in a number of ways. The innovations with forms show a daring disregard for current academic fashions. Not only does he go back to unfashionably traditional forms such as the verse novel or the realistic novel he mixes with aplomb the popular with the serious and shows confidence and independence in his interest in the quotidian and the the ordinary. Though he may be termed the first international writer in terms of the locatios of his works and the genres they use themes of diaspora and exile or post colonial perispectives on the experience of being Indian find no answering interest in him. It is still quite clear that Vikram seth betrays a remarkable degree of independence in his choice of form and theme, which are an achromistically conservative. The curious blend of conservatives and independence, experimentation and orthodoxy in modes of form and thought and the weaving in of the popular and commercial with the high classical make Seth. A literary puzzle the academician. Seth is highly loved by the lovers of literature because he narrates experiences with charm and poignancy and handles the ordinary and serious aspects of life very intellectually. It is safely concluded that in world literature today Seth has a special place and his books have the fullness of life and they portray an intellectual brilliance that is rare in Indian writing in English.

Not only is he at home in the world, he has also placed Indian writing on the larger map where we don’t have to go looking for translators. But these have been partly possible because people-those who would read these works in Britain, America or Australia or China – now travel more, see Indian movies in London and Pan’s frequent- Indian restaurants and are familiar with the famous. The cross-pollination has imparted character and substance to Indian writing with wasn’t there before. And most certainly it
speaks of the self confidence of Seth and his contemporaries so far as the language concerned. Be it Seth Salman Rushdie or Arundhati Roy, they are all citizens of the world and also the representatives of diaspora and their writing show all this. And so far as Seth is concerned, his narrative has a stylistic flourish that one can always rehash. Besides all this, Seth’s control over linguistic structure and its concomitants and the pleasure that a repeated reading of his books provide, make him one of first writers in the post 1980 Indian English Literature.

The travelogue includes the autobiographical elements of Vikram Seth from his familial background of his childhood experiences spent in Patna and the discourses of economics, art and philosophy. The protagonist of the work is an economist and a cultural theorist. The writer focusses attention upon the democratic rights of freedom of expression and action which is lagging behind in China. India consists of a cultural baggage in which we find diversity of culture, language, food habits, clothings, but there is a sense of motherhood towards the nation and democratic freedom which bind each other. On the other hand, China enjoys the lion’s share of economic growth and development in the world market on account of strict and stern rules and regulations imposed upon the common people. In this way, Vikram Seth on the one hand favours Indian democratic mode of life; on the other hand, appreciates the radical growth and development of China.

Actually, the work focusses attention of the readers upon the acclaimatization of intertextuality, transnationism, multiculturalism, post post-colonialism, psycho-analysis and so on. Now, the tension and turmoil which the travellers used to face during the colonial period can never be perceived by travellers of the age. Most of the times, they
travel for the sake of pleasure or for better prospect. So, they can easily adjust in the adopted countries. As far as Vikram Seth is concerned, he is the representative of multiculturalism and post-coloniality. His *From Heaven Lake* is a travelogue dealing with the milieu of China which is supposed to be a Buddhist country of non-violence but at practical level, the nation is dominated by atrocities, ruthlessness and reservation of the politicians for proper growth and development of the nations at every level.

To conclude, Vikram Seth carries the baggage of the nation and culture of his root nation, that is, India and gets success in his trip on account of the cultural baggage of the root nation. Secondly, Vikram Seth does not encounter any conflict and tension in this travelogue because of his liberal approach in his life. He accommodates and adjusts in all situations because in the 21st century, it is the dire need of time and space to adjust in any situations. Vikram Seth is an individual but the representative of a successful man who can easily acclimatize in any situation irrespective of caste, creed and culture. The title denotes MansarovarLake exists in the range of the Himalayas which encounters the trajectory of India, China and Nepal.
Notes and References

1. Quoted from Mehrotra, 2003, P-23.


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.