CHAPTER 3

BRITISH SIASPORA: MAPPINGS

Vikram Seth is at all times a poet of good sense and even temperament. There is no wildness of feeling or extremes of elation and depression. He spaces out feelings sensations and experiences with the result that the work suffers from none of the tortured sensibility so apparent in post colonial writing in English. As Donald Davie observes:

"Vikram Seth’s poems are above all well mannered and graceful. Yet they should have an impact far beyond much noisier pieces: for when did we last see a Volume in which the poets eye is on what is objectively before him, Rather than on the intricacies of his own sensibility "1

The slythm and mellifluousness of Seth’s verse may hide strong imotions held in check by the controlling form:

“Propelled by the nuts and bolds of his craft someone reading Seth for the first time could easily miss the strong under tow of feeling.”2

In the understatement of emotion, in the refusal to strike an intellectual stance and in the use of shyine and metre Seth’s closest ancestors on terms of period and style seem to be the movement Poets, especially Philip Larkin:

“If I renued from Donald Davie that skill and form were not by themselves enough what I learned from Timothy Strele was that passion and inspiration by themselves were not enough either I learned this though work on my own poems of course, but an equally effective less on came from the work of other living poet who used form. Trim introduced me to the poetry of Philip Darkin whom again, ignorant
economist that I was I know only as the compiler of the Oxford Book of Twentieth Country English Verse. But as I read Larkin (whose poem beginning "The Trees are coming into Leaf." Like something almost Biro Said “has a very similar formal shape to the very different poem that goes : The Fuck you up, your mum and dad/They may not mean to but they do)" I began do realize the flexibility as well as the power and memorability of good formal' verse.”

The refreshingly different quality in Seth’s work, is his interest in the world outside and not in the working of his own sensibility. Secondly the pleasure in the geography and Culture Outside is threshed out in astonishingly balanced metrical and rhythmic structure. Meaning there by that he look as an insider at the different sets of geography and Culture and gives them a solid and proper shape of a beautiful poem. Seth really speaking is a product of his time even through his craft suggests older fashions. His way of negotiating with the contemporary world is to shape an aesthetic that represents the individual consciousness preoccupied not with the self but small things of significance and charms and so lend some possible meaning to life and existence. To protest the loss of meaning would militate against the controlled good sense of his approach to the world. And so, though the individual is forced to be lonely there are yet occasions when one may be eased transiently into fellowship and love an find expression in the pleasure of shymed and metered verse.

In his Introduction to the Poems 1981-1994, Seth, posed three questions to himself in connection with poetry. Number one question was “How did I begin to write is?” Number Two, “Why do I write so much of it in shyme and metre?” And the third one, “Do I see myself as an Indian or American “Common Wealth” writer and as a poet
or a novelist?” In an answer to the first question he informed that he started composing poems when he was a University student and earnestly in love with the job of writing. To his mind, the poems were “exaggeratedly sentimental” and easily memorable for their “banality.” As an answer to the second question, most agreeably informed that he wrote most of his poems in “free verse.” He very sincerely learned the art of writing in “free verse” from the champion poets of free verse like Walthhilman of America and D.H. Lawrence of Britain but when either “to delight orerved or suggest or console” the lines of poetry came to his mind, then he wrote in metre and shymes according to him:

“It was difficult to explain ‘He emotional power’ of such poetry and said that; since verse ‘inform’ is what I usually find myself reading or recolling it is what I almost always find myself writing.”

In answer to the third question he said that despite, such imaginative categories, being alluring and fascinating, were found not to the point and relevant in so far as their final analysis was concerned. He, being an Indian and basically a poet very emphatically says that no one with an earnest wish for writing, can check him or her from writing and also it the same time cannot be government by the notions of ‘subject or geography or genre’

With the poems collected in Mapping as both himself, says that he begins his literary cover. Then he was in his twenties and wrote these poems sometimes studying in English and sometimes in California as a student. Mappings is a very slim volume but quite appreciative. The poems of this volume are, according to Seth, “the first fruits of my self determined genius.” No able to find a publisher adventures enough to take on the musings in meter and shyme of a young unknown writer he published it himself in 1980.
Seth typeset, published these stapled poems among his friends and relatives in San Francisco where he lived as a research scholar. Afterwards after about 10 years when the book was considered for a reprint by Penguin India he was not willing to publish. He called his poems as his "Juvenilia" and considered them as "embarrassingly callow." He agreed only when his friend assured him that his "voice in" Mappings was much more poetically effective than that of his later volume of poems. Never the less, everybody agrees with the fact that his poems of this collection adorned with a distinct voice and attitude - a voice tender and youthful and a fine sensitiveness the objects of life around.

Later on, this volume was also published by P. Lal for the writers workshop. This collection consists of more serious poetry light quirky almost limerick like verse. Chirita diverse and electric in subject matters this volume describes the influences on Seth's life in England, California and India. This volume of Seth contains translations from Urdu Chinese and Gernas a historical poem from the Memoir of Baber. First Moghal Emperor of Hindustan and so many other poems writer on the simple happy and contented life of ordinary people. Not only this, Mappings also is a volume containing a large number of sonnets creating a preparatory ground to Seth's the Golden Gate to be published later in future years to come.

Mappings is a collection of only twenty three poems including two translations. Rest twenty one poems, written on varieties of subjects presents a very delightful and interesting combination for the lovers of literature. For example: "Pampat" Departure Lounge" "Home thought from the Boy", "Gand Cangon", "Aubade", from mount "Tamalpais", "Quakina Bridge", etc. are the poems that reminds us of various places with the typical traite. "A writer World", "Rain", "At Evening" The yellow Cricket"
"Moths," "Tomatoes", "Moonless Night", etc. are the poems that are written especially on the changes of various seasons taking place in nature, Poems like "From the Momoires of Babur First Moghal Emporer of Hindustan", "Kakhiee", "Sea and Desert" the walker, "The tale of Melon City", "Party for the Retirement of the oldest serving British Museum Reading Room Book Attendant" "Divali" etc. are based on the controls of particular persons and occasions. "To A Fellow Traveller" "To Manijeh" etc. are addressed to certain individuals of special note for the poet. Poems like "Mappings" "Progress Report" "Close of Play" "The Sultans Turret" "Switching Off" "Time Zones" "After Three years" "Sonnet" "The Balcony" "Distrusted Homonyms" "Six Octets" etc. are surely reflective in nature and results of poets study of time and relationship.

In fact the poet's intention in most of the poems of Mappings is to focus on human relationship. Here in this poem his objective is to understand and identify it. In some of the poems, parental relationship is vividly presented but most of them lay emphasis on amorous or love relationship between two individual tried his level best to create curious blend between two contrary set ups of life- attachment and adjustment on the one hand and bitterness and emptiness on the other.

"Strong sensitivity to native and nature's beauty understanding through to me and change across time, references to routine things of life and attachment to life, sense of distance and nearness personal and imperial assessment relationship a knowing sense of pain hidden by levoty changing mind set linked by different places, incapacity to fight time and counter death awareness of final extinction and how that can be avoided a strong social awareness about misery and how people are deprived and about life, and about hope and uncertainty- these are various strands that provide the poetic structure"
In a few poems of Mappings, one can note autobiographical elements quite against the romantic and modernist influences on Indian poetry in English. It is the world and its doings that hold the poet’s attention, and at a remove the self as out more phenomenon, which he is able to see with a remarkable degree of dispassion. It may seem as if the themes of diaspora and exile preoccupy the poet in this volume. For instance the often cited example of the poem “Panipat” that’s depicts the poet confronting his perpetual feelings of exile as he plays on his flute at home or elsewhere, may seem a case in point:

“Family, music, faces, Food, land, everything drew me back, yet now to hear the Koel sing brings note of other birds, the nightingale the wren the black bird; and any hearts’ barometer turns down I think of beaches, elms, and stare at need tree my cousin slices a mango and offers it to me, I choose slice with the breed and learn from the sweet taste well known and alien I must be home at’ last.”

Actually Seth’s poem “Panipat” shows his concern for two worlds- the one his own, the present world and the other his past, his foreign and the poet’s attempt at proper adjustment with both. The first world is detailed with aunts “Gossiping” in the courtyard parrots “Cockling” in the neem trees, sitting place nears wall covered up to make a “septic tank”, besides other such objects: “pondits”, “panir”, “paan”, “Koel singing” and “family”. “music”, “faces”, “land” everything. The second world has birds too but different ones- “nightingale when black bird” and the trees are also different from “neem”- “beeches elms”, the adjustment takes place at two levels. First as a transition in the mental state through music-
"I sit Amy flute near the place — "I glide from stop to stop", "Its mournful meditative/Mood moves into a time".......... And music takes the poet from the local time and place:

"Leading me god knows where- In to a universe Beyond- beyond Panipat."7

The poet's description of music in this poem is a true reminder of words worth in his poem, "The solitary Reaper" which speaks of a song of "melancholic note" sending the poet into a different world of delight and pleasure. The second level concerning the sense-perception taste of eating a slice of mango leads the poet to an awareness of both familiar and foreign.

"Familiar domestic scenes and natural phenomenon to which the poet has come home bring in memories of other homes, 'To hear the koel sing/Brings rotes of other birds/ the nightingale the wren". It records his dual feeling of nostalgia” for home after being away for several years and the ‘continuing attraction for other locations and settings.”8

Another poem of this collection, entitled “ Divali” also refer directly to the theme of alienation an important ingredient of diasporic theme in a rather jerky fashion. This is connected with colonization and emphasis laid on the study of English language in India.

"English Six-armed god, key to a job, to power snobbery, the good life, this separateness this fear.”9

The people of India, belonging to the middle class, get prestige and power if know the colonizers language i.e. English "........ The whole world means exile....." The surrounding cultural life of the country and its economic hardships are only experienced at a remove:
“I know the whole world means exile for our breed who are not home at home and are abroad-abroad.”10

The poet finds himself nowhere at home as is expressed in the lines mentioned above. But an awareness of “home” remains strong with the poet an equally strong social sense— a picture of great debility and misery - a sense that sprouted from the surrounding.

“He died last week my boys are starving daily we dig the ground for sweet potatoes

Or

“Who will take care of me when I am old? No one is left.”11

But this is one, direction- the direction in contemplating on ones own home and homeland and the feelings of joy and happiness they promote. The other direction is one of loss unhappiness and uncertainty and of detractor force and unwholesome changes. It first begins in a probe into history how generations ago the poet’s “father’s family” lived; how also generations ago, somewhat closes in time, the family adjusted with the new dispensation, particularly the British; and how the foreign culture undermined the home culture.

“And Kalidas Sankaracharya, Panini, Bhaskar, Kabir, Surdas Sank, and we welcomed the reign of Shakaspereare”12

Almost ironically at his own cost the poet calls it “the cyclic shadow-play/under the sinister sun.” Even then he is ready to accept it as home, almost as a matter of strength:

“This may as well be my home because on other nation moves me thus?” 13
Despite the sense of exile and footlessness, despite the awareness that everybody is the product of a diverse culture, the trend eventually continues towards an implied joy, acceptance and adjustment:

"And when an alap of Marwa swims on slow, flute-notes over the neighbour's roofs at sunset wordlessly like a lover it holds me" 14

One of the finest poems of Mappings under the title "Departure Lounge" is about parental relationship especially between father and son. Departure Lounge is situated on the Cusp of parting as the title of the poem indicated but the tone is cheerful and the perspective goes further back in time. The poem analyses the poet's chining feelings for his father, from the fear and antagonisms of his younger days to the present melons camaraderie that he finds reciprocated. In a sense the poem also suggests that the physical distance, which separates him from his father contributes to the mellowness and it is in the so touches that Seth seems least inclines to view his self-imposed exile with any degree of romanticism. Very marvelously he expresses his diasporic feelings in the flowing lines:

"I have moved on, my life twelve thousand miles from your, my ways safe from paternal strife paternal judgment and-how can I tell- paternal love as well?" 15

Here is this poem too, we have both the sense of newness and distance and two different times are involved- the present and the past one through available realistic details and the other through memory. The present context is Boston Airport:

"Among the lobsters and push carts at Boston Airport we walkup and down, father and son" 16

And again the same:
"Your arm around my shoulder we shall through the lounge. The hand arcs round the clock; flight" 17

The past that comes through the memory has also specificities, first, how is father’s condition when he escaped from the house:

"Orphaned at two you ran away from Baojo at fifteen the tin shack the Mussourie store hunger, the freezing rain......."18

Secondly, the father’s dream of a habitation,

"Your paradigm for paradise- greenery and a small river; Delhi politics" 19

In fact, change in attitude comes eventually along with the passage of time, and this is what exactly is expressed in the following lines:

"Or that those clear-edged sense of boyhood are less focused now; since I no longer hate,‘the self they made me’ I can free the myths that bore the freight of self dislike, self-pity and despair." 20

On the one hand the poem shows a deeply trouble spirit that slowly comes to grip with an increase realization of the factors of relationship. In the other it records human pre document against with the value of parental relationship is assessed and judged. A kind of diasporic spirit is expressed in the following lines:

"To live with happiness, in what is an unfinished state till we die, you posses what was not there then when I was boy, this univerisve joy” 21

The poem entitled “A Morning Walk” by Seth expresses the feelings of being rootless and in exile this poem infact captures the awareness of being disconnected from the physical and emotional aspects of objects and landscapes particularly the gull of being
privileged and dissociated from home. This feeling is well expressed in the following lines:

“How fine it is to share the world and not its need when these are those who weep for food.............food shelter, health are mine, interests loves; the time to walk through avocado groves.Living abroad, I have lost sight of home, locked in my web I have grown happily blind and blindly happy, .............a clod is washed away, the world is less; but why disturb my quest for happiness?............a web hunr from the avocado tree, the spider rested in the dew and sun and looked about the groves contentedly awaiting visitors.” 22

Initially the poet feels disgusted at the spider being an outsider (foreigner) on the scene ans as he wishes it to be away (foreigner, hence) his contemplation moves from a Californian spider to Indian spider (“Om spiders”) that are thin “spindly”, “starved” “and” seem perpetually anxious about dinner”, and to the sudden realization that he too, is like a foreigner (“...... Betrayed the web of joculadity/I had spun sound me here”) and also like a spider:

“I draw my easy non-consumptive breath think life sweet, spin rhymes eat my daily” 23

thus, the present poem entitled, “A morning Walk” is an astute analysis of the poet’s own self and a disturbing one too and the conditions of living in which he is bound i.e.e social inequality and differences. Actually this poem is based on the theme of the search for one’s own self, desires and rootedness—a kind of diasporic theme.

In fact the structure of the poem is based on two opposite elements. One is connected with the real condition of affluence and the other with that of misery in India his own country which is far away from the place where he is now living. The first one is all good
but the second is not so its misery hits as is quite clear from the following lines of the poem; A morning Walk."

"To wonder through the streets of Calcutta is to force the whole world’s misery on the heart children on broken stumps, staring with eyes white and opaque, begging with hardened art" 24

Seth’s another poem under the title, is corporately based on his deep contemplation on life and its problems, loneliness and distress, joy and happiness and uncertainty of human existence. As the title of the poem suggests it is apparently about death which classes all times of life. At the same time, this poem focuses not only the death occasioned by time and place but also the kind of death caused by the nuclear explosion which is more full of horrors and terrors than that of natural death. The poet concludes his thought in the following lines:

"In common lifelessness, circling around their mother star in deepening entropy.

we are the last generations, Surdas Bach rembrandt, Dufie, all life, love, work and worth will end in the particular rain.............life’s sap may permeate a crippled grass, but we will be defunct."25

The most significant perception that the poet makes very minutely in the poem is nothing on which no one can escape or avoid. This idea is very clearly seen in the lines of the poem quoted above. The following lines also denote the same idea in most realistic way. The poet again writes:

"The apple-blossomed earth will nurse its deed or tortured and denatured crust and our strain for all its promise, power and prayer, will die."26
For this fatal and fearsome situation as the poet express in the following lines: man himself is responsible to a great extent man is destroyed to the credit of his own undoing:

"...... Too late we perceive our playthings, grown autonomous, knowledge and use thins practical that ideal good at last rear dootoys that will undo nine tenths of us leaving the leaving dead we call survivors on a radiant waste"27

According to a critic, the earlier strain of death and extinction remains as the most dominating strain in the poem and "close of play" is both an exposition and a satire of the great peril that faces mankind which is their own doing and from which they can escape by their concerted will and effort.'

Another poem of Mapping under the title "To A Fellow Travellor" Seth lays much emphasis on human relationship. Here he talks of a person with whom he travels in an aeroplane and stays with him there only for seven hours. He expresses his attachment with him in the following lines in an effective manner:

"I had always hoped, somehow, sometime somewhere" I'd meet someone like you I also deemed such visions built on Vodka and on air." 28

Immediately after it he becomes serious and ruminative and reflective in nature and considers human relationship as an inexorable type parading among all created things of the globe. This thing is well expressed in the following lines:

"......I remember you with love richer than I believed seven script hours could ever wake, perhaps some semblance of the love that moves the sun and other stars."29

The poem, on the whole, presents a curious blend of both the past and the present very effectively the past is featured in the following lines:
"The pilot is obtuse the plane is late, the flight attendants flighty and the seen menology of a sedentary state maintained for seven hours ..........fluffed chloral terrain heavy with evening light.......... and the darkening flare.................the short shard of rainbout above the cluds the layered sky above......" 30

The acuities of the present are beautifully expressed in the lines below:

".........dep my Pepperidge form cookie into my tea and think of you and how you laughed and held me by the arm on Shattuck when I left."31

This is an amalgamation of excitement and relaxation of differ out moods and different states of mind of a tone which is both detached and into are and an approach which has wit, hum our and logic.

Seth's poem "Rakhi" almost diasporic in tone; expresses fully will the relationship between brother and sister. According to Hindu custom, it is a social occasion on which a sister ties a thread indications the knot of affection on the wrist of her brother who promises her a lifelong protection. It is believed that it is a bond which survives distance, time and individual:

"It was a contract of trust with more than you I know I left my home too many years ago." 32

This poem also admits that there is change through separation and time and also attitude sometime. The admission of change is clearly seen in the lines given below:

"your rakhi came, showing how things' have changed..... ........ And your brother too will be strange when next we meet each other."33
This kind of change as the poet opines, is more integral at the mental level. The poem, in a nutshell is about a feeling of distance as well as if intimacy and also of the permanent stay of custom.

“How we must both have changed only the custom stays, educing from the past the undying days.”34

Fitterald’s poem “Omar Khayyam” titled, “The Sultan’s Turret” herein this collection of Seth is also the reminiscent of the same mood mind and feeling. It depicts very beautifully the close physical intimacy of two persons through the image of love associated with down and sleep:

“Dawnlight, I wake; and wait for you, uneasy with early dreams......... but I’m content, wobbled in the quilt with you to let the car-hurns, chirrups ticks and tocks and your soft breathing holds me.”35

Seth’s poem “At Evening” is thoroughly a poem Of contemplation containing a diasporic spirit of lonelinesss beneath its Depiting the beginning an uncertain mood the poem take a sudden turn to an awareness of one’s own feelings of being left alone when the poet writes in the following manner:

“I am alone; you cannot read these lines, who are with me and cannot hear my voice and take my hand and abrogates the choice.”36

In fact the poet gives a kind of diasporic theme of relationship a greater importance in the poem, “Six Octets” a group of six short poems dealing with the relationship of mixed feeling- feelings of companionship, pleasure and bliss on the one hand and feelings of bitterness, failure and emptiness on the other. The poem begins with an appreciation of a woman’s beauty both physical and mental: “Levelier/Still is that gold-shot hair that
mouth those eyes,” and “That blend of gentle whim and forcefulness” and hence the request for companionship: “May I request a glass”. Thus initially it is a desire to establish relationship: “Hands held in friendship, hands caressed in love” and it gets linked with the joy in nature seen in the flight of birds: “While above the patio red winged black birds sirl in flight.” But it moves further to a serve of bliss and pleasure: “Even this instant coffee tastes delicious it’s drunk with pleasure and lim drunk with bliss.” 37

At the same time there are other trends, first a hesitant awareness of failure: “You don’t love me’ at all? 8 God, O shit” and secondly a sense of bitterness at one’s incapacity to sustain oneself in balance:

“Why is it true my ample self affection/will not suffice to buoy me in rejection?” Slowly relationship thins and the sense of failure deepens:

“... We talk only of us only of us and what went wrong unions, I suppose to note how our rich strong companionship has thinned to this lament”. 38 the poem concludes with a sense of emptiness: “I have spoiled your mood, I,m sorry yes, I will keep clear of you..... .....but I know” too well that these diminishing chords of light will be resolved to soundless and night.” 39

In the last poem, numbering six there is an attempt at assessment to understand the structure of companionship containing both, love and bitterness, sweet and wild, accepted and rejected.

“If bitterness there is still there was love what you and I have shared reminds me of these plums that we will separately eat for all their sourness they are wild and sweet.” 40
In the title-poem, "Mapping" there are brief references to the poem’s locations ("I breathe the chilled gold of late afternoon") and to nature as well ("Mallards man oeuvre through/ the weedclogged crack. The hills state into blue"). But what dominates the poem is a contemplation on self-its composition, identity, development etc. The composition is wide ranging:

".....As I scan my mappings of these selves-despondent, witty calm and uncalm, lost in self doubt or pity...... the courtier, soldier, scholar- I check the pieces."41

The identity is specific and pointed and the lost goes from the youngster to the grown-up:

"That was a younger self. I want to touch his shoulder make him smile...... .... What remains when we no longer animate the Geography a self and sense the unassuageable urge for ecstasy and knowledge, parting; age."42

The conclusion of the poem is specific, though the reference is to development to a developing self, yet in essence it is a continuity where all things combine together, "inhere in seamless me."

"....... my wake, the wine, my breathing, the recovering stars, venus, bright as a plane, Jupiter, Mars, my pulse my vagrant selves, my poetr, see in here to inhere in a seamless me” 43

Here the search is for self and realization. What is anatomized and established is a total identity. Actually, this poem is remarkable for its self revelation.

Vikram Seth’s poem “Bagatelles” is truly speaking an indicative of British Diaspora and it comprises a group of five short poems with an interesting variation. These short poems deal with mans mental physical and social incapacity in various ways and manners. They concentrate on life’s purpose with a touch of pungent irony. There are only few who
really understand the basic purpose of life. The fifth section of the poem consisting of only eight lines under the title ""Mere Invocation" is all about sea. The epithets and words with which the sea is addressed remind us of earlier poets such as Homer Shakesheare and Yeats. Here in lies the fact about British Diaspora. The whole description has two layers of meaning- one an overt description and the other a covert description with an ironical attitude.

"O Luminous, dark and sea pent hunted Sea" in an etithet already once used by Homer, the ancient poet. Actually this kind of description reminds us of Homer a true’

Sense of the term. The second epithet

"In cannadined and multitudinous sea” already used in Macbeth one of the tragedies of William Shakespeare: takes us back to the melory of Shakespeare, the next one, O dolphin-torn O gong-tormented sea” already used by W.B. Yeats in his poem in titled “Byzantium” do reminds us of this twentieth century British poet. Two more terms of address used for the sea in the poem are frivolous as compared to them such as “O snot green sea, O seriatim tightening sea.” The poet concludes the poem with a touch of irony focusing not on the sea but on the people who generally describe the sea in the following manner:

“How weary of description must thou be”44

Seth’s poem “From the Babur-Nama: Memoirs of Babur, First Moghul Emperor of India” is interesting for its intertwining of history and geography, time and space with the individual being at the centre. What comes over strongly is a sense of the first of Moghul Emperors discovery of India, its cultureal and geographic differences and his relationship
with his son, Humayun stationed for away from him. Babur narrates his experience in India:

"Hindustan is a land of meager pleasures the people one not handsome, not have they the least conception of the charms of friendship they have no spirit, no comprehension, kindness or fellow feeling ......... no good flesh or bread in their bazaar, no ice, cold water must-melons, grapes, no horses..... ....... No candles, no torches..... than bulk, is the peacock..... the frogs of Hindustan are wortyy of notice ..... they with run seven yards on the face of water"45

Seth presents with extra ordinary finesse, two the historical and contained within it the spatial and caught up in both the social being. The new notes Seth’s attempt to see India from the other point of view: the individual exposed to a foreign culture and terrain and his intitial reach. This poem is interesting because the biographical framework Babur not as a creative of history but as an individual.

"Mappings" Seth’s first volume of poems actually records ‘his dual feeling of nostalgia for India and continued fascination for other cultures and countires. The poems included in the volume don’t exhibit any kind of romantic excess at normally happens to young poets. Seth is very much in control in his craft and as Bruce King maintains:

Many of the poems are very anti romantic proceeding from a national Ledonist philosophy that as this life is all there is you might as well enjoy what you can whether sex experience travel or game of Scrabble.” 46

Comic shymes used to keep feelings under control and ideas in prospective contribute to an effort that is traditional and modern. In fact, some of the poems here parodies.
However, Seth maintains a distinctive aesthetics in the sense that he consciously rejects high elitism of modernism and moves into the post modern preference of pastiche while attempting to collapse cultural barriers in an art that comes very close to popular culture. Actually, Seth knows better than others how to organize his creative experience that veers round a sophisticated and sensitive creative sensibility. As a poet he exhibits a consciousness forever in transit among different cultures and orders of experience. It is as if Indian, Chinese and American cultures were all available to him by virtue of his transparency of thought and poetic craftsmanship. This poetic habit of Seth is seems has been an attempt to moved sinuously between countries and continents and note down the differences while trying to pin down a sensation into its exact formula of words.

As regards "Mappings" it includes poems that have evidences of youthful zest and restlessness revealed in the playfulness of the subject and in the comic rhythm. Seth writes about natural beauty with grace and felicity. At the same time he is careful not to succumbs to romantic impulses. The poems of this volume show traits of anti-romanticism that is a characteristic feature of Seth's later works. The combination of shame and meter with a contemporary urban idiom makes for humor and a different kind of aesthetic that is neither romantic not high modernist.

Indian English poetry though by definition open to more that one language, and therefore culture has tended to be self-reflexive, exploring the poets own consciousness of his peculiar historical dilemma. This is also a kind of attitude that is recognized by the theorists and critics as a typical poet colonial mind set. But Seth is different in the sense that he is not self reflexive on the whole and that his hybridity is not a reflection of his emotional bind. Seth's hiosidity has to be balance against the largely conservative form
the uses to hones the point, the representation of migrancy in Seth is not the sort of political statement is say, in a novel by Rushdie. Seth's affiliations with different parts of the globe are not used as a jumping off points to examine his home culture. In other words, Seth offers neither offence nor self defenses neither is he self introspective, a voiding close examination of his feeling at together, neither angry nor cynical. His migrancy reflects an interest in the world an unrest ending that is not just historical but also spatial. Places seem to be earth meet water pebbles trees and human beings first and last, they are not mistaken for symbolic orders and never for psychological states of mind. This understanding of the world is retold in the balance of his poetic structures. Whether post colonial theory recognize the importance of geographical spaces or not any reading of Seth cannot, dismiss it out of hand.

The choice of language and the use of metaphors in the poems of Seth speak of cultured artistry. Seth's craftsmanship takes note of the set of integrating thought and emotion into perfect rhythmic effect in an effect achieve a balanced power. Seth, like Ezekiel is at home in mastering English rhyme schemes. Behind the intoned musicality of the poems and the singularity of the metaphors. Seth moves in these poems in renewing his faith in the soul of art that is tradition. To say that Seth is typical traditionalist may sound unconvincing because his poems do take note of the postmodern situation of our times.

The post modern to him has always been true with us in the form of the ludic the negatives and the absences which have not figured in the traditional discourses. To understand life in its varrid manifestations one needs to understand that nothing exists as autonomous and imminent but only in connectedness of things, happenings events and acts for they signify a move in time and space with its moments of sufferings and joys.
However Seth is not with them who perpetrate suffering on others. He believes in sharing and in a relationship of empathy which generates love is sumum and bonum of life and of every creature that lives on the earth below the blue i.e. sky and sun.

Technically speaking, Seth might have succeeded in a few poems in the volume and failed in other. But the fact remains that his is an effort to present himself as a poet of a different order. In his Endeavour, Seth might have prized the reader with a feeling of concerned felicitations while mispricing himself not being oblige and impersonal techniques that characterize not only good poetry but great poetry few Indian poets in English have tried their hands at light, witty poetry preferring generally to deal with more solemn emotins where the poets self dominates. Seth is not deterred by the ordinary or banal nor does the ordinary impose on ironic posture on him as a poet. He has produced some of the best casual and humorous verse in contemporary Indian poetry in English.
Notes And References

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3- Quoted from Vikram Seth, 1988; 18

4- Quoted from Vikram Seth, 1988; 20

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6- Vikram Seth, Panipat, Mappings Writers workshop, Calcutta, 1981

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9- Vikram Seth, 'Divali' 'Mappings, Writers Workshop Calcutta, 1981

10- Ibid P-68

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18- Ibid P-10

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27- Ibid, P-42


29- Ibid- P-19

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36- Ibid- ‘At Evening’ P-36

37- Ibid- ‘Six Oets’ P-55
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