



Portrayal of Alienation in Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate*

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Abstract:

The golden gate is a novel by Vikram Seth published in 1986. He wrote many novels such as *A Suitable Boy*, *A Suitable Girl*, *An Equal Music* etc. In an interview Seth says we are all accident of History. Seth has been able to span geographical and national barriers and played a major role in bringing the Indian writing onto the stage of world in literature. Alienation means a state of separation between person and groups. A defense mechanism in which memory of an acceptable act is separated from the emotion originally associated with it.

Key words: Alienation, loneliness, heart broken

Indian English Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who writes in the English Language and whose native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Through foreign is its origin English has been adopted in India as language of education and literary expression besides being an important medium of communication amongst the people of various regions. The beginning of Indian literature is traced to the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century by which time English education was more established in the three major centers of British power in India, Madras and Bombay.

John Brow, the hero of the novel is a Silicon Valley computer professional. John is an emotional Non-entity. Nobody needs him behind his work and this irks him no end. He has the basic human need to

be loved by somebody. His only female friend is Janet Hayakawa. They two share a friendship that is shielded “from all passions”. When they two meet for lunch, John shared his problems with Janet. He knows that he is lineless, no spouse or siblings/ no children[the golden gate] Janet takes matters into her hands by advertising for John. Out of the letters that arrive John selects three but nothing comes to an end. More letters arrive later and of these John selects one he likes that of Elizabeth Dorati. They two met and they fall in love. The story now shifts to Phil Weiss, a college friend of John and he was a fellow computer professional. He has a son Paul whom he is raising alone because he has become estranged from his wife Claire.

Phil runs to John and Liz at a music concert in which Liz's sister Sue is performing. Phil gets invited to John and Liz's house warming party, where he meets Ed, Liz's brother. John proposes Liz, she does not immediately accept. But he decides to give more time. John when he sees a letter from Phil in Liz's hand he concludes that she is cheating on him and ends their affair. Phil and Liz now get married. John is alone again. He rediscovers his friendship with Janet but Janet dies in an accident and John is left heartbroken. Now John is alienated and estranged. Alienation is a recurrent and predominant theme that finds an overpowering place in Vikram Seth's novel. In this novel one of the most alienated characters is John Brown. The novel contains a strong element of affectionate satire, something occasionally missed by Seth's more earnest critics. Trilling says, the individual is not only alienated from society, he is alienated from everyone he knows, even his own love partner.

John Brown was alienated from Liz because Liz cheated on him and married Phil. His intimate friend Janet died in an accident he met with alienation. Thus he is alienated from everyone he knows, even his own love partner. John is lonely but it is not his mother, or his father that look out for him but his close friend Janet. Seth remarked about this novel as with such a large cast of characters, a strong voice would have been too much. Easy writing makes damn hard reading and I think the opposite is true as well. The book is not more difficult to read than it has to be.

John has all he could want in terms of material acquisition, is handsome, smart, well-mannered, will read in essence and yet he is lost and lonely. Seth presents the pathology behind this; in his carefree youth John has not given love the attention it deserves preferring the freedom that bachelorhood connotes to most men to the shackles of matrimony. Every major character in the novel is involved in a private odyssey,

the quest that special , and earth shattering love John has many flings in his day ,but what he really wants is to settle down with somebody he truly loves . The novel thus traces the trails and compliments of john and his circle of friends as they come to terms with their loneliness and several aberrations. The Novel ends on a note emphasizing the importance of friendship.

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