

## Chapter - III

### Some Theoretical Considerations

After placing Vikram Seth into the tradition of Indian fiction writers in English, an attempt has been made, in this Chapter, to look into the thematic patterns and narrative technique of the novel as an analytical procedure. Therefore in the light of Forster's Aspects of the Novel and other critics like Cleanth Brooks and Austin Warren's Understanding Fiction, an outline has been drawn. According to their Criteria for an analysis of the novel the theoretical base has been formed. Accordingly, the aspects like theme, plot, characters, dialogue, setting, point of view have been discussed. After discussing the theoretical aspects the analysis of Seth's novel, A Suitable Boy is given immediately after each concept as a practical exercise.

#### I

##### **Thematic Patterns :**

Creating patterns of themes is a popular device through which the writer probes the contemporary society for various purposes. Therefore, themes like love, marriage, familial relationships etc. become recurrent making thematic patterns—the way in which something happens, develops is arranged systematically. For example, we see that Vikram Seth probes the miseries and agonies of mothers of many daughters in A Suitable Boy. At this point it is useful to look at some of the opinions of the writers and critics regarding 'theme'. Theme seems to be the central concern of fiction writers. According to Lawrence Durrell, "The theme of art is the

theme of life itself.”<sup>1</sup> The theme is usually the basis of the book. The theme is the subject of the novel, For example, loneliness, revenge, betrayal, self discovery etc. Theme can usually be expressed in one word, or at least in one sentence.

Critics like Cleanth Brooks and Robert Warren express their opinions regarding theme in the following way :

Theme is natural and inevitable. We cannot consider the action or the characters of a story without coming to same concern with theme, for, ‘a story is an organic unity in which all the elements have vital inter relations.’<sup>2</sup> Each element implies the other elements, and implies them in a movement toward a significant end. They further say that the theme of a piece of fiction is not to be thought of as merely the topic with which the story may be taken to concern itself - though the word is sometimes loosely used in this sense. For instance, we can say that two stories, “The killers”, by Ernest Heming way, and, “I want to know why?” Sherwood Anderson, have the same topic - the topic of growing up, the initiation into manhood. But in the two stories the meaning of the initiation is very different. Or to mention another pair, when we come to “love”, by Maupassant, and “love’ by Jesse Stuart, eventhough the titles proclaim the same topic, and though there is a considerable similarity in treatment, we shall still find significant differences in meaning and differences in the very “feel” of the stories. The theme for them is ‘what is made of the topic. It is the comment on the topic that is implied in the process of the story.’<sup>3</sup>

The theme is not to be confused with any ideas or pieces of information, for instance, Herman Melville’s novel Moby Dick gives a full and fascinating account

of whaling, but that information is not to be confused with either the topic or the theme. The life of whaling is simply the world in which the human experience works itself out meaningfully.

The theme is what a piece of fiction stacks up to. It is the idea, the significance, the interpretation of persons and events, the pervasive and unifying view of life which is embodied in the total narrative. It is what we are to make of the human experience rendered in the story. And what we make of such human experience always involves, directly or indirectly, some comment on values in human nature and human conduct, on good and bad, on the true and the false, some conception of what the human place is in the world.

We like to observe a story working itself out to a unity. Just as we instinctively demand the logic of cause and effect, the logic of motivation, in fiction, so we demand that there must be a logic of theme— a thematic structure into which the various elements are fitted and in terms of which they achieve unity. In other words, it is not any moralizing aspect of theme that comes first to mind; it is the structural necessity. If there is no satisfactorily necessity developed theme, all our other interests, no matter how intense they may be tend to evaporate. If we want a story, we are forced by our very psychological make up to demand a theme : No theme, no story.

In a successful piece of fiction out of the sense of an independent world, as the characters act and are acted upon, as one event leads to another, we become more and more aware of the significance of the whole. That is, we gradually sense a developing theme. We seem to be caught up in a vital process in which meaning

emerges from experience. And, in the end, that makes our own lives interesting to us; the sense of deepening discovery, the satisfaction of learning and achieving, the growth of awareness and appreciation, the fuller understanding of our own experience. Thus 'fiction is never the "illustration" of an idea. It is a created image of our very life process by which significance emerges from experience.'<sup>4</sup>

If we reject a story because the theme offends us, we are appealing to the truth of correspondence " the theme does not correspond to what we take to be the truth about life and human values. If we reject a story because it is not convincing, we are appealing to the truth of coherence : the story does not hang together in its own terms, and therefore, whatever meaning it may claim to possess does not really come out of the experience of the story.

At the same time we can also look out what kind of characters, and what kind of world is presented. This is a starting point, for it tells us something of the interest of the writer and his range of experience. We can ask what problems the characters confront, what is at stake for them. Or if the story is one of the type of developing awareness, what discovery is being made. We can look at the pattern of plot and try to see what significant repetitions appear. We can also look at the end and ask, first, if it is logically follows from the body of the story; and second, what is the intended significance. We can ask what is the tone of the story - Is it comic, ironical and cold reportorial, pathetic, or what ? We can ask if the author has tried to evoke emotional responses for which there is no justification. We can ask about the speech of the characters and the style of the author are they in keeping with the rest of the story? All in all, we ask how fully and deeply coherent is the story. As

we try to answer these questions, we usually find that we have defined the theme, and have accepted or rejected it.

In the case of theme, there are two important considerations :

First, to see how the theme of a story necessarily develops from the experience as rendered in the story. To do this means that we must inspect the coherence of the story. Second, to see how the theme is uniquely developed, and to do this means that we must try to see how a theme - even though we suppose we may be able to state it in general terms - is, in fact qualified and modified by the actual treatment in the story, so that what the story "says" finally becomes something more or less unique.

The stories employ various methods in the presentation of their themes. There may be a general statement. There may be allegory and symbolism and parable. There may be a realistic dramatic situation. But always we must remember that the total story, including the general atmosphere is the embodiment of the theme. We must think of the whole story as an image, however shadowy, of the meaning of experience.

In the light of the above discussion on theme the patterning of the themes of A suitable Boy may be broadly classified as theme of love and marriage, theme of familial relationship, theme of politics and religion as theme.

Love has been considered as a many splendored thing. Love has become so universal a theme because of the remarkable variety of its world, Love creates a marvellous degree of mutual consciousness. Love plays a very vital and important role in human life. According to the Indian concept of "Love", love is something

more than a thing of mere pleasure. It is not merely sexual attraction between two people, but it is the essence of human life. It is deepened by hardships and sufferings borne for the sake of love. It grows a hundred fold in its intensity when there are obstacles in its realization. Even in the absence of fulfilment, the yearning gives all the joy that love means. There are different interpretations of the theme of love like 'emotional', 'romantic', 'platonic', 'love at first sight'. 'Romantic - sexual' love is an ambivalent concept of love. And then there is transcendental or spiritual love. All this shows that love is an extremely complex concept.

All the Hindu scriptures consider marriage to be a religious bond rather than a contract. As Giri Raj Gupta points out, "The traditional Hindu marriage has for greater significance than the unification of man and woman in the matrimonial state. Through the Hindu marriage an insight can be gained into the complex of kinship ties, the entanglement of religion with the social structure... the cohesiveness of the extended family - unit. Marriages reinforce and refurbish the socio - religious structure which has existed in India for centuries".<sup>5</sup> It is believed that marriage is essential for woman because that is the only sacrament that can be performed for her. The husband and wife after marriage have to adjust their tastes and temper, their ideals and interests. Demands of personal gratification and pleasures are subordinated, and every individual is called upon to make marriage a success by means of compromise and adjustment. In the Indian context of "Love", love is supposed to be developed after the marriage.

In the traditional Indian way of life what is normal is the existence of love in the post-marriage state and not in pre-marriage state. The love between husband

and wife is considered as normal and healthy. Any deviation from this is either romantic or an aberration.

### **Pre-Marital Love :**

In A Suitable Boy we find what seems to be the futility of 'romantic love' or 'pre-marital love. Here, three young men, Kabir, Amit and Haresh, are in love with Lata simultaneously. The first one to fall in love is Kabir, a Muslim, whose love is love at first sight. They met at an Imperial Book - Depot. He begins to talk to her and is eager to continue the conversation though Lata does not take interest in him. Afterwards when Lata is upset about her poor performance in the examination it is Kabir who tries to console her saying that there are more important things in the world than exams such as friendship. Now she also finds that her initial nervousness at Kabir's presence has ended though in a sense of confused warmth. Gradually Lata starts taking interest in Kabir and she talks to him freely which makes him very happy.

Both Lata and Kabir feel happy in each other's company and are eager to meet again. But when Lata comes to know that Kabir is Muslim she becomes very sad. She decides to cut herself away from him. At that time Kabir invites Lata to show the reflection of Barsaat Mahal in the water of Ganga at six in the morning. He also warns her to wear a sweater as there will be river breeze and permits to take ten friends to accompany her if she wants. Lata collects her courage and goes alone and finds Kabir waiting for her, Kabir thinks that both of them love each other and that is all that matters.

Afterwards when Mrs. Rupa comes to know about Kabir, she scolds Lata. But Lata grows emotionally strong and tells confidently that she wants to marry him. Now she tells herself again and again that the path of true love never runs smooth. She persuades Kabir to take her away somewhere leaving everything as she does not care for anyone. But Kabir does not accept and asks her to wait for two years. She feels heart broken and humiliated. To avoid Kabir Mrs. Rupa takes Lata to Calcutta. Kabir sends letter to Lata complaining about her disbelief in him. He is upset because of Lata's coldness towards him. He has become restless because of her absence. Kabir thinks that his meetings with Lata are always illogical, incomplete and insubstantial. Afterwards when Kabir asks how Lata knows Amit, it makes her angry sensing jealous tone in Kabir's question. Then she tells that she used to exchange letters with Haresh whom she will marry as per her mother's wish. Kabir's face becomes faint by the news. Coincidentally, Kabir and Lata meet again at Imperial Book-Depot. He asks about her sincerity in writing to Haresh. Lata tells that she likes Haresh and she will marry him. Kabir is jealous and so insults her. They both part. Though Lata is deeply involved in Kabir, marries Haresh as an adjustment in life. We notice that Kabir and Lata's love for each other is emotional. It is unfulfilled love. The initial attraction for each other melts in the end.

The second phase of Lata's love - life and her growth begins with her stay in Calcutta where she spends a lot of time with the Chatterji's. Amit the eldest of the Chatterji children, starts taking interest in Lata. Both Lata and Amit like



classical music and poetry Amit offers her to show a few places of poetic interest. Lata finds him so cheerful, sincere and sometimes cynical. Amit thinks that she is quite sincere in her judgements and wonders what will she say about his poetry. For him she is the nicest girl he has met for a long time. Lata thinks that the Chatterji children bring her out of her stupid, self-created misery. In their company it becomes possible for her to enjoy. So she feels grateful to the Chatterji family and mostly Amit.

Amit has promised Lata that he will send her one of his books. So after thinking a lot he decides to send The Fever Bird (collection of poems) and writes inscription, a poem for her which shows his love for her. Now Lata comes to know about his love for her, first time. Then Amit asks Lata a question directly whether she will marry him. Lata does not answer 'yes' or 'no'. Then Amit again makes the proposal of marriage through a poem as she has said she should take him seriously only in black and white. Lata does not accept his proposal. Because she likes him only as a friend, a guide but it is absurd for her to convert him into her husband. She does not see herself as his wife at all. Thus this phase of Lata's love is only an opportunity for her to know men and grow further. Her love towards Amit is rather Platonic kind of love. There is no involvement from her part.

In the process of her growth she meets the third young man, Haresh not by her choice but by arrangement. Lata meets Haresh because of her mother's wish and Kalpana's recommendations of Haresh. Mrs. Rupa tells Lata about Haresh as 'a very suitable prospect' for her. Lata's first impression of Haresh is not very good. But afterwards both Haresh's and Lata's interest in each other grow more

and more with time. Now Lata also has good opinion about Haresh but she does not reveal whether she likes to marry him or not.

When he asks about her thought in marrying him Lata explains that they should meet and talk more and more before taking the final decision of marriage as it is most important in her life. On the other hand Haresh wants to marry Lata as early as possible because his love, feelings for her have been growing with time. He assumes Lata that he will improve with her instruction. But he becomes upset when Lata uses the phrase 'do not be mean'. She does not mean to hurt his feeling seriously but he takes its real meanings and goes away angrily.

Afterwards he writes Lata a letter explaining apology. Now Lata finds Haresh generous robust, optimistic and responsible. She feels that there is something adventurous in losing herself entirely in a world of this man whom she has trusted and has begun to admire as he cares for her so deeply and steadily. He gives her time to learn to love him. So she accepts his often repeated offer of marriage with gratitude and warmth.

— After the marriage Haresh looks very happy and satisfied. Now he is even more considerate to Lata than before. He appears relaxed and happy that makes Lata happy. This is the love bond that they both develop after knowing each other well. The bond grows stronger only after marriage. Seth shows that the integrity of the married persons is the bed rock of marriage. The patterning of love that is weak in the beginning and it grows stronger with time and persistence. Moreover, he uses the same pattern with the love affair of Maan with Saeeda. Maan and Saeeda meet on the eve of Holi while listening Saeeda's ghazals Maan feels that he is

falling irresistibly in love with her but she does not show any interest in him. Maan tries to forget her but cannot do that. Afterwards at home she welcomes him and sings for him. He thinks that she will sing for him sometimes definitely. He is deeply involved in her whenever she avoids him he becomes restless, frustrated and uses to drink and gamble a lot. Once he gambles his money and wanders around Saeeda's house and sings :

‘It’s just a heart, not brick and stone, why  
should it then not fill with pain ?

Yes, I will weep a thousand times, why  
should you torture me in vain?

He has also attempted suicide to prove his passion for her. But she thinks that she cannot afford to get emotionally attached to the light—hearted, light headed young man, Maan. She thinks of love as ill-natured thing that makes enemies even of friends. Afterwards, when Maan wants to know Rasheed's address as he wants to meet him as he has to talk to him regarding elections. Saeeda gets very much angry at the mention of the word 'election' and insults Maan asking why is he lingering there? As he cannot get any vote in her house. And when Maan mentions the Nawab Sahib's promise to help his father, Mahesh Kapoor in election she is again disturbed and ask Mann to go away. Afterwards Maan is misguided because Saeeda Bai does not explain the reason behind her upsetting at the one or the other thing. Maan tries to express his love for her that he will not be able to think of anything but her, she advises him to think of many things and not to place his happiness in one person's power and to be just to himself. Afterwards

because of the prejudice Maan takes it that Firoz has come to see Saeeda herself as she does not explain herself. His hands reach Saeeda's throat thinking that the woman he has loved has betrayed him. So when Firoz comes to settle the matter, Maan hits Firoz.

Maan is put behind bars.. Even in the midst of repentance Maan feels that he has to see Saeeda. And now Saeeda also realizes that she loves Maan very much. But when Maan is free on bail he finds that he has inexplicably lost his eagerness to see her. She is frustrated by seeing his indifferent attitude towards her. When she complains that he does not love her he shows his fury over the word 'Love'. When Maan is finally realized Saeeda thanks God for keeping Maan safe. She accepts Maan with all his faults, but cannot cut him off from her life. Perhaps, for the first time in her life, that Saeeda herself has loved. Thus we see that when Maan loves Saeeda Bai very much she does not take interest in him and when afterwards she realizes that she loves him very much she finds that he has lost his eagerness to see her.

There are three young men who take interest in Tasneem, Saeeda Bai's sister : Ishaq, Rasheed and the Nawabzada, Firoz. Ishaq Khan is a Sarangi player and a companion of Saeeda Bai. He loves Tasneem. Once he has bought a parakeet and thinks that it will delight the heart of young Tasneem. During the conversation Tasneem calls him Ishaq Bhai to tease him and he frequently tries to tell her that he is not her brother and she will not say so. He also tells that the parakeet has taken his hours and he has bought it specially for her. Thus he tries to

prove that he likes her truly. Here we find the love at one end. Saeeda Bai rejects Ishaq who, according to her, is not a bad man but has no future.

Rasheed uses to teach Tasneem Arabic lessons. It is Tasneem who first expresses her feelings for him through the letter to him. In the letter she tells that she is writing without the knowledge of her sister and guardian, Saeeda. She also admits that she has realized the value of his teaching method after his departure. Rasheed has been surprised after receiving letter from Tasneem. Rasheed is troubled by Tasneem's feelings for him. And perhaps now Rasheed starts to look at Tasneem with love. He is also disturbed because he has accepted his late brother's wife, a widow, as a wife as he was given such promise to his dying mother.

Afterwards Rasheed writes strange letters of offensive nature to Tasneem taking into his head that Tasneem is in love with him, that she is going mad for his love, and that he owes it to her to marry her. Saeeda Bai does not want Tasneem to be in love with some village lout. She makes it clear that Tasneem will marry a boy whom she herself will choose and it is not for admirers to choose Tasneem. With the time Rasheed's thought are blurred with hunger and confusion. So now he wants peace. He thinks that sleep is better than pray, so he ends his life.

The third one who loves Tasneem is Firoz. Firoz stores at her, transfixed when he meets him first time. He feels strongly disturbed and also feels that they have not met on this mortal plane, they have met in some former life. Tasneem has, in a few short moments, made the most profound and unsettling impression on him. Tasneem has amazed Firoz with her beauty. Firoz does not explain to anyone about his attraction towards her. After that meeting Firoz tries again and again to get an

opportunities to see the lovely girl Tasneem. Then both involve in each other. Saeeda Bai's maid servant does the duty of exchanging the love letters between them. But after a long time he comes to know the horrible truth that Tasneem is his sister.

Kakoli and Hans take romantic interest in each other. Hans keeps inviting her to all the diplomatic functions as he is a second secretary at the German Consulate General. He even pretends to love Rabindrasangeet to make Kakoli happy. Kakoli thinks that he has a lovely baritone voice, and it makes her swoon. She too has suddenly evinced an interest in playing the piano parts of Schubert songs, which Hans adores. Kakoli likes Hans singing when he sings about heart break. It sounds her very professional. Although Hans is expert he has not kissed Kakoli yet. He thinks that she will not approve it but in fact it is wrong. But when the marriage between Kakoli and Hans is fixed Kakoli starts thinking that what does she do with Hans as he can not bear Bengali food, i.e. fried neem leaves and where will she live after marriage, Whether to live in India or Germany, which she does not like. Thus the love between Kakoli and Hans seems to be superficial.

To sum up, we can say that through many love entanglements of pre-marital stage, Seth wants to emphasize that such love relations are essential to develop understanding between people. However, he does not advice pre-marital sex as a part of development of understanding within individual's relationships.

### **Post - Marital Love :**

Savita marries Pran Kapoor chosen by her mother. She has met him for only an hour in her mother's company. After wedding they go for a week's honeymoon in Simla, and they have descended from Simla to the plains in love. Mrs. Rupa so thinks that Pran is first class husband of Savita who takes care of Savita very well .

Pran is westernised but Savita is traditional .Pran has no good opinion about Savita's brother and uses to show that. But when Savita complain about his criticising attitude, he apologies to Savita to make the situation normal. Lata's friend, Malati thinks that Savita must talk to him as he will listen to her only. And now Savita becomes the boss. Pran's tenderness causes Savita anixity, She wants Pran to take her advie now and then Pran's health deteriorates. He suffers from "severe right vetricular strain". Because of such condition he is admitted to the hospital. Savita inists on living with him. There are no quarrels between them like other young couples. Savita is admited in the same hospital for her delivery and gives birth to a girl. Both are impatient. They want to talk to each other but are not allowed because of their present condition. As per Imtiaz's suggestion both express feelings and enquire about each other's health through notes.

Thus Pran and Savita, different though their backgrounds, are a happy couple. They recognize limits and possibilities. Their yearnings are not stretched beyond their reach. They love each other - or, rather, has come to do so. They both assume that marriage and children are a great good. Through Pran and savita Seth

is depicting a warm home and understanding couple. The house becomes 'home' because of such homely wife like Savita.

**Love out-of Wedlock :**

Arun and Meenakshi meet at cocktail party. They fall in torrid, rapturous and elegant love and get married within a month, to the shock of both families. Because Arin is a Hindu - Khatri where as Meenakshi is a Bengalo Brahmin.

Arun cares for Meenakshi's likings and uses to scold his mother if she takes any objection to Meenakshi's doings. But Meenakshi does not give so much importance to Arun's feelings. Once she melts his father's medal, which has given to her by her mother-in-law, to make ear-rings for her and a chain for her daughter. Later Arun discovers it through a casual conversational slip and becomes livid. Meenakshi sighs saying it is pointless talking to him when he is as cross like that. And she complains that he behaves quite heartlessly. Meenakshi pretends to have been dreaming of Arun whenever she wants him to go with her to attend parties or something else even though he is tired. She is a vicious, selfish woman with illicit relations and the least care for her husband and home. Therefore Arun and Meenakshi are quite on opposite of Pran and Savita.

Seth has shown the love between many characters either pre-marital or romantic, post - marital or out - of - wedlock.



### **Familial Relationship:**

The joint family is the bedrock, on which Hindu values and attitudes are built. Members of the joint family normally reside together under the same household. In the patriarchal joint family usually the eldest male member exercises authority. His commands are normally obeyed by others. The head considers it as his privilege to arrange the marriages of the members in the family. The younger members rarely challenge their decisions and arrangements. But now-a-days, the feelings of younger ones are given due weightage. The head acts as the guide for other members. The joint family provides psychological security to its members. By creating a harmonious atmosphere in the family, it contributes to the development of social solidarity. Social and religious ceremonies that take place at the family bring the relatives together and tighten the ties.

The joint family system of the traditional type has given way to the nuclear type of families. Due to the stresses and strains of time it has undergone drastic changes. It is slowly tending towards disintegration. Vikram Seth has described the phenomenon of families which are disintegrating but still hold on to some of the values of the old joint family systems like marriage rituals. Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy is the four-family saga— the Mehras, the Chatterjis, the Kapoors and the Khans.

The Mehra family is a Hindu-Khatri family. It is led by Mrs. Rupa Mehra, a widow mother of four children, Arun, Savita, Varun and Lata. Being the head of the family she takes care of her children. Though Arun does not take care of her feelings in order to keep Meenakshi happy, Mrs. Rupa wishes for his good health. She also

takes care of her grand-daughter Aparna. Mrs. Rupa worries about Varun's studies. She gives advice to Varun from time to time to study hard and not to wander with his 'Shamshu' friends drinking and racing. Because of her control on Varun, he studies hard and as a result becomes an I.A.S. officer.

Mrs. Rupa being the head of the family considers it as her privilege to arrange the marriages of her children. But Arun has married Meenakshi, a Bengali Brahmin, in the opposition of Mrs. Rupa. Mrs. Rupa's main concern in her life is the marriages of her daughters. She has chosen a decent and intelligent young man, Pran Kapoor for Savita as a husband. Savita being traditional accepts her mother's decision. And now Mrs. Rupa is persuading Lata that she also will marry a boy whom she herself will choose. Meanwhile Lata wants to marry a Muslim boy, Kabir but Mrs. Rupa does not accept that. She makes Lata to see Haresh and further tries to increase the attraction between them. Finally Lata marries Haresh, the boy chosen by her Mother.

Because of the death of Raghubir Mehra the responsibility of the family is on Mrs. Rupa and especially on her elder son Arun. Therefore, he has the tendency to bother all the members of the family. He uses to bother Varun mostly as he does not like Varun's behavior, his preference for Indian cloths, his Indian thoughts and most of all is that he does not help in running the household. Varun is suppressed under Arun's botheration and therefore he is upset. The clash between them is of modern and traditional. Varun is Lata's favorite. So she advises him not to be bullied himself by Arun. Lata does not like Arun's botheration in everything. When Arun tries to

force Lata not to choose Haresh as her husband, disregarding his advice Lata chooses Haresh as her husband.

Arun uses to accuse his mother for her objections to his wife, Meenakshi's doings and wearings, which makes Mrs. Rupa, upset. Being upset sometimes she starts crying and Arun uses to say her, 'Ma, don't start the water-works, you are always making a fuss over nothing'. (310) Besides Meenakshi is her disrespectful daughter-in-law. Mrs. Rupa, a traditional one, has always different opinions from those of Meenakshi's who is modern. Meenakshi does not care for her feelings. Once she says to herself, 'I can't always tread softly around her feelings.' (381) The clash between them is of traditional and modern. And that is why, perhaps, Mrs. Rupa spends her more days at Savita and Pran in Brahmpur. Lata also lives with Savita and Pran as she is studying in Brahmpur University.

Savita and Lata love each other. When Savita comes to know about Lata's relation with Kabir, she advises her to be careful. Further she decides to make up Lata's mind to marry Haresh as Lata herself is not certain about the matter. Lata also takes care of Savita during her pregnancy and also of her baby afterwards.

Arun and Meenakshi love modernity. They have met at Cocktail party and have fallen in love and get married within a month. It seems that Meenakshi dominates Arun. She does not take much care of Arun as well as her daughter Aparna. She also has secret relation with Billy Irani. The love between Arun and Meenakshi seems to be superficial.

The Chatterjis is a Bengali Brahmin family. It is led by Mr. Justice Chatterji, judge of Calcutta High Court and his father, a retired judge of Calcutta High Court,

five children and Mrs. Chatterji are his protégé. Mr. Chatterji inspires respect in court and a sort of obedience even in his eccentric family. There is always clash between Mr. and Mrs. Chatterji, i.e. between traditional and modern. Mr. Chatterji gives his children an abundant freedom. Being a traditional one Mrs. Chatterji does not like such freedom given to the children. She thinks that because of such freedom the Chatterji children have become mischievous and have the habit of making jokes and couplets on serious matters. So she once complains to her husband: 'If you had spent more time with them instead of going to the club every day, they wouldn't have turned out this way.' (412)

Mr. Chatterji uses to criticize Amit for his interest in writing poetry instead of practicing law. He has modern thoughts and likes Western way of living. He uses to arrange parties and invites the people in wide range. He has not taken any objection to Meenakshi's marriage with Arun, a Hindu-Khatri. Now he is also ready to marry Kakoli off to a foreigner, a German to whom Kakoli loves. In contrast to Mr. Chatterji, Mrs. Chatterji has different opinions. She supports Amit's writing of poetry saying that he has a special gift of writing. She has not liked Meenakshi's decision to marry Arun not only out of caste but also out of community. That time she has told Kakoli to dissuade Meenakshi from her decision. Now she is also against Kakoli relation with a foreigner. She tells Meenakshi to dissuade Kakoli from marrying Hans. She says, 'I should never have let her learn that brutal language from that awful Miss Hebel.' (397)

There is love and intimacy between the Chatterji children. All of them use to take each other's advice. They take most of all Dipankar's advice and he also helps

to solve their problems. Once he plays an important role in solving Tapan's problem. He sees that something is bothering Tapan. He takes Tapan into confidence and comes to know that Tapan has been bullied by his senior and therefore he wants to leave Jheel School. He consoles Tapan psychologically. Then he intellectually makes it clear to Mrs. Chatterji that it will be good if Tapan gets admission in St. Xavier. Meenakshi and Kakoli know about Amit's interest in Lata and so they try to prepare the ground for their marriage. Thus we see family togetherness in the Chatterji family.

The Kapoor family is a Hindu-Khatri. It is headed by Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, The Revenue Minister in Purva Pradesh. His wife, Mrs. Kapoor, is deeply religious and conservative. His daughter Veena is married with Kedarnath Tandon. His elder son Pran, an asthmatic lecturer in English at Brahmipur University, is married with Savita and his younger son Maan is a vagabond. Mahesh Kapoor being the head of the family thinks that his commands must be followed by the family members. He does not like his wife's religious attitude. He looks at her always as inferior to him. Yet she gives him respect and takes very much care of him. He cannot understand her throughout her life. And after her death he comes to know about what he has lost.

Pran is a decent and quiet young man. He gives respect to his father. Because of his success in academic field Mahesh Kapoor is proud of him. Pran has married Savita, the girl chosen by his father. Though Mahesh Kapoor loves Maan, there is always a clash between them. He does not like Maan's wandering here and there doing nothing. He is so much annoyed with him because of his drinking and

gambling and his visits to Saeeda Bai's house and therefore, he asks Maan to leave the house as well as the city. Afterwards he sees Maan's popularity in Rudhia District and he is surprised. Now he shows faith in Maan and asks his advice in the task of canvassing. Maan becomes happy because of kind treatment by him. Thus the relation between them is maintained. Mrs. Kapoor takes care of all the members of the family. She prays for the good of all them. Her children love her very much and also take care of her.

There is intimacy between Maan and Veena. Veena always worries about Maan. She advises him time to time. He used to visit her house often. Her son, Bhaskar is Maan's favourite and Bhasker also likes Maan very much. Maan also loves his Savita Bhabhi. So when she mockingly says that she does not love him, he becomes emotional and tears come to his eyes.

There is also good relationship between mother-in-law, Mrs. Kapoor and daughter-in-law, Savita. Savita gives respect to her mother-in-law and used to visit her whenever she gets the time. Mrs. Kapoor also becomes happy to see her. She does not bother Savita as mother-in-laws use to do. Once she does not mind when Pran denies to come to live at Prem Nivas because Savita does not want.

Pran and Savita, husband and wife love each other. They take care of each other. They both have the tendency of making adjustment, therefore, there are no quarrels between them. Both live happy married life. Though Pran and Savita live apart, they retain regular contacts and the feelings towards to Prem Nivas. They use to visit Prem Nivas whenever possible and also to celebrate festivals.

The Khans is a Muslim family. It is headed by the old Nawab Sahib of Baitar, an aristocrat and a landlord. Before the Nawab's two brothers, their wives, his aunts, his wife and children were living together. Now this joint family is disintegrated. His one brother has died, another one has gone to Pakistan leaving every thing in India and that brother's wife, Begum Abida Khan wants freedom. She cannot bear the restrictions in the Khan family, i.e. to live in purdah and in zenana. So she leaves Baitar House. Now the Nawab Sahib lives with his two sons, his two old aunts in Baitar House. His daughter is married and has two sons.

Earlier in married life the Nawab hardly known his wife. But late in their married life, she has won his heart. After her death he becomes less sociable and uses to spend his time in reading in his library. He wants to spend more time with his two sons but they are now in their twenties, and incline to treat their father with affectionate distance. Imtiaz practices medicine and Firoz law. Both have their own circles of young friends, their love affairs of which the Nawab has heard little. All that draw them outside the orbit of Baitar House. We see the Nawab's fatherly feelings when Firoz is stabbed by Maan and is in danger. He keeps vigil by the bedside of his son. He wishes Maan to suffer as he has made his son suffer. When the rumors about him and Saeeda Bai spread he hopes to save his own children from his sins. His sons understand his agony and therefore, they continue to be outwardly as respectful towards him as before.

Zainab is the Nawab's dear daughter. She used to visit Baitar House rarely. When she sobbing quietly with misery tells him that her husband goes out he feels very sorry. It is unbearably bitter to him that his son-in-law has injured his daughter

so deeply. He does not at all like to be disturbed when he is reading, but his grandsons are given a free run of the house. They love visiting Baitar House because much is made of them by everyone from Firoz and Imtiaz (Mamu) to the old servants and the cooks. And mostly because their mother seems much happier there than at home.

The family togetherness is shown by Seth in each of the four families in the novel. There is an intimacy between the members of the family.

### **Politics :**

According to Agarwalla, "A suitable Boy, is all encompassing, 'a magnum opus' of social comedy....interlaced with the political realism."<sup>6</sup> 'After the independence, all of a sudden, agitators converted into rulers, bureaucrats into public servants, the lathi-wielding police into friends and ruled into rulers. After the deaths of Gandhi, Patel the socialists drifted away from the congress, one by one. Nehru became the supreme boss of the party and of the nation. The Nehru Age arrived. The early years of the Nehruvian age started with a bang full of bubbling optimism, robust vitality and great expectations. One of the chief factors was the presence of leaders of proved integrity, the other being the continuation of the services of "steel frame" bureaucracy. Nehru had wide choice in choosing able and trustworthy counsellors. He has a heart but it was always ruled by his head. He chose "men of stature, both in New Delhi and in the provincial capitals, who could not be lightly paused aside. They were not the sort of men who would offer challenges to Jawaharlal Nehru's power; but within their own domains or bailiwicks, they would jolly well do what they liked".



Nehru aped the British and his followers and supporters aped him. Instead of following Gurdhian austerity and simplicity, Nehru aped his political predecessors. Nirad C. Chaudhari in The statesman says, "The crude Indian political leaders were no match for the sophisticated officials, who had also reached the lowest depth of sophistication, corruption". Nehru was the spiritual heir of Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, the world statesman, the Congress President, the voice of the newly-independent third world countries, the great writer and poet, the darling of the masses of India. In A Suitable Boy Mahesh Kapoor, Revenue Minister, walking around his fields in Rudhia, ruminates about Nehru :

Nehru sought to protect his policies as Prime Minister from any possible onslaught by the activist Congress President by proposing party resolutions on each of his main policies, all of which has been over-whelmingly passed by the assembled party. But passing resolutions by acclamation was one thing, controlling the personnel of the party-and the selection of candidates-another, Nehru was left with the uneasy sense that the lipservice that was being paid to the policies of his government would change once the right-wing got its own state of MLAs and MPs into parliament and the state legislatures. {954}

Therefore, Nehru wants to have a pliable and non-interfering President but Tandon as President “Proved to be a formidable opponent in his own right ....And on every important issue his views were diametrically opposed to those of Nehru or his supporters-men such as Kriplani and Kidwai or, closer to Brahmipur Mahesh Kapoor”.(954) So Nehru resigns from the “membership of the Congress Working Committee and the Central Election Board.”(988) Tandon is an organisation man, seven years Nehru’s senior and like him, from Allahabad, a conservative, a man determined to impose “discipline and unity”(954) on recalcitrant party men. Nehru is a leader of the masses who “loved him and would almost certainly vote for him, as it had done ever since his great tour in the 1930s, when he had travelled around the country, charming and stirring up vast audiences”.(955) Tandon is a brick-layer; Nehru is a pied piper. Both of them are the products of the national Movement, at the feet of Gandhi. Both are “vying with each other for power on the national stage”.(991) In a noble gesture and knowing fully well “the impropriety of Nehru’s tactics,”(992) Tandon resigns from the Congress Presidency Nehru takes over the Congress Presidency. “It was in effect a coup; and Nehru had won”.(992)

The word ‘coup’ means a notable or successful stroke or move. The non-inclusion of Kidwai, Minister of Communication and Kriplani in the Congress working Committee by Tandon is a strategy, an oblique way of attacking Nehru. But it has given ample opportunity and advantage to Nehru to decry those who “wished to drive out from the Congress who did not fit in with their views or their general outlook”.

Vikram Seth treats in a most sophisticated way the manipulation of power in a poker game between the Tandonites and the Nehruties where the stakes are exceedingly high. The essence of this game percolates through the centre to a state, i.e. purva pradesh. In purva pradesh Mr.L.N.Agarwal, Home Minister, is a Tandonite whereas Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, Revenue Minister, is a Nehrunite Mr. S. S. Sharma, Chief Minister, is half Tandonite and half Nehrunite. He votes for Tandon against Kriplani, for the Congress Presidency. Afterwards he says, "we can not do without him (Nehru), the country can not do without him".(978) Mr. Sharma remarks "The Congress, after all, is the party of Gandhiji, the party of independence".(975) Mr. Sharma, a traditionalist, hitches himself to Nehru, grasping the truth that Nehru has future. Mr. Agarwal, a Tandonite holds a contrary opinion on Nehru and his indispensability for the nation and the pasty. When Mr. Sharma Reminds him of Nehru's charm and indispensability he explodes: "Panditji why should everyone whimpering and pleading for everything to Nehru? Yes he is a great leader but are there no other great leaders in Congress?(978) After a bout of political fight with Nehru for Congress Presidency, Tandon accepts the membership of the Congress working Committee. Nehru is the name of 'ism' is out to wrest the seat of power from his formidable opponent, Tandon.

Political corruption is also the abuse of power. A delegation of ten students, Resheed among them, go to see the Home Minister. He refuses to concede their demands. Nor does he budge an inch from his stated stance that he will maintain order in the town at any cost.

'Does that mean you will shoot us if we get out of hand?' asked Resheed with a Malignant look.'

'I would prefer not to,' said the Home Minister, as if the idea was not entirely unpleasant, but needless to say, it will not come to that.' At any rate he added to himself, the legislature is not presently in session to take me to task about it.'

'This is like the day of the British,' continued Rasheed furiously, 'staring at the man who had justified the police firing in chowk, and perhaps seeing embodied in him the image of often arbitrariness and authoritarianism.(816)

The man, who has opposed tooth and nail the policy brutalities in the British Raj then waxes eloquent on the inevitability of a lathi charge on the students, at Brahmapur. Agarwal arrogates to himself the power of the chief Minister (who is away in New Delhi). He knows that "it was not a portfolio that could be given to anyone else, especially it now that it was an open secret that Mahesh Kapoor was about to announce his registration from the Congress Party and the government".(822)

Power has a built in element which may corrupt its possessor. Compared with the revolutionary promises of the pre-independence era with the accomplishments of the 1947-52 by Nehru one can say that power corrupts. But there are many men who want neither to enlarge their power nor to perpetuate it. One such man is Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, Revenue Minister of purva pradesh. He pilotes the Zamindari Abolition Bill in the legislative Assembly, sacrifices his friendship with the Nawab sahib 'For the

greater good of millions of tenant farmers (264), and sacrifices his family happiness for the sake of his state. His work as Revenue Minister of purva pradesh is the only period in the early fifties in Indian history of 51—52 in which the happiness of a great people is the sole object of government on secularism he says : 'The basic problem is how the two religions will get on with each other in Brahmipur'. (326) When the political tussle between the Tandonites and Nehunites have become hot at Patana, he says to his wife : 'Everyone who is decent leaving.... They are accusing us, rightly enough, of 'corruption, nepotism and jobbery'....And your own husband feels much the same.... This is not why I spent years of my life in prison. I am sick of the congress party, and I too am thinking of leaving it. (753)

First of all, Mr. Kapoor resigns from the congress party and, therefore loses ministerial berth. Then he joins the KMPP, led by Kriplani. Again he rejoins the Congress Party. Now he once again, is contesting the Assembly seat from the Congress Party. His main rival is waris who is crude. On the day before the election, when it will be too late for any effective refutation, a handbill in Urdu appears. It announces 'Firoz had died the previous night.... The murderer even now walked the streets of Brahmipur, free on bail, free to strangle more helpless Muslim Women and slaughter the Flower of Muslim manhood'.(1244)This is a 'Fatal Filer' (1244) which is spread by waris but the Muslim population, has voted. Waris rejecting a secularist, Kapoor. And the tragedy is that Kapoor, like Nehru fails to see how men can be roused by something as metaphysical as religion. Kapoor is destroyed politically not because he is corrupt but because he has failed to come to terms with forces of corruption.

L.N. Agarwal is a good manipulator. Kapoor says to his wife : “Agarwal is in Patana, yes , Agarwal, Agarwal who should be clearing up the Pul Mela mess he’s in Patana, manoeuvring endlessly, giving as much support to Tandon and as much trouble to Nehru as he possibly can. (753) Agarwal hails from the trading community and the caste consciousness never deserts him.

Once some Jatavs have picketed before the shopkeepers in Misri Mandi. A part of Misri Mandi lays in his assembly constituency. Agarwal is in dilemma. These Jatavs have doubtless been stirred up by union leaders. L N. Agarwal himself has come from a shopkeeping family and some of the traders are his good friends. Some supply him with election funds. He has received three desperate calls from them. It is not merely a question of law but of order, the order of society itself. But because of the self-interest, Agarwal sacrifices orders the District Magistrate to fire if the Crowd does not disperse, to maintain order. The D. M. suggests him an alternative to solve the problem of picketing but Agarwal overrules the government officer because he used to lock-up Agarwal in British jails. Thus the Indian politicians, in A Suitable Boy, are all honourable public servants, at least what they call one another.

Vikram Seth has merely written about a period, 1951-52 and has neither exoticised nor criticised it. Therefore, the utter helplessness of an average India finds suitable expression in a piece of doggerel, written in the eighteenth century England.

**Religion as a Theme :**

A Suitable Boy being a novel of lower-middle class representation, Seth describes many festivals like Holi, Kartik Purnima, Rakhi, Janmashtami, Bakar-Id, Moharram, Dussehra, Karva Chauth etc. performed by the people of both religions, Hindus and Muslims. There are a few characters such as Mrs. Kapoor, Mrs. Mehra, Dipankar which are like pilgrims. They piously, religiously and dutifully devote their time to reach many goals- peace of mind, renunciation, passion in religion. According to David Myers, "It is not sexual passion but the passions for religion, for politics, for domestic and public power- lust, and for careerism which are given fulsome treatment in A Suitable Boy." He further comments that " Passion in religion is perceived by Seth as fanaticism, bigotry and murderous hatred of other religions."<sup>10</sup>

Seth has chronologically described the festivals performed by the people in India. In the novel first comes Holi. On the day of Holi the Nawab, Firoz and Imtiaz come to Prem Nivas to wish Mahesh Kapoor and Maan happy Holi. Maan, Firoz, Imtiaz, and Savita, Lata, Pran play Holi. To celebrate Holi with guests in the evening is an annual ritual, which has been going on at Prem Nivas for a vary long time. So a number of guests gather at Prem Nivas as usual in the evening of Holi. Saeeda Bai Firozabadi is the singer to celebrate Holi. She has been coming for the last two years.

Then comes Ramanavami, which is about the birth of Lord Rama. On that day the recitations of Ramacharitmanas are arranged in the houses or in the temples

or at public places. Mrs. Kapoor wants to arrange the recitation of Ramacharitmanas at Prem Nivas but Mr. Kapoor take objection to that.

It is believed that Ganga is 'the sage Jahnu's, child. When the Ganga came out of Jahnu's ear and fell to the ground, that day is Ganga Dussehra, and that is why it has been celebrated even since.' (722) Three or four days later, on the full- moon night of the month of Jeth, another sage who has been separated from his ashram went across on the pipal- pul, the bridge of pipal leaves. That is why that is the holiest bathing day of the Pul Mela, at Ganga. The people from all directions come to take bath in Ganga at that time. Some sing bhajans and some holy songs. The tents of different Babas' are erected there. The people come there to purify themselves and to get peace through meditation. The people take bath five or six times a day thinking that 'Mother Ganga washes all your sins away.' (713)

Dipankar being religious has gone in search of Truth in Pul Mela. He is introduced to Sanaki Baba. In his tent the young man gives sermons. For instance,

— We are coloured by its colour without effort. As the world is, so we become. 'We go blindly through the world, as is our nature. It is easy.' 'But for knowledge of God, for knowledge of truth, we have to make an effort....' (707)

According to Sanaki Baba, ' Sannyas itself is peace.' (710) Now in the camp of Sanaki Baba at Pul Mela, he has come to realize that the " spiritual source of India is



not the Zero or Unity or Duality or even Trinity, but Infinity itself.”(717) But finally he finds the place for him not in spirituality but in a materialistic world of hurly-burly and money.

Mrs. Kapoor is very religious. She goes to Pul Mela to see Ramjap Baba to get blessings for all the members of family. She is symbolically identified with the harsingar-tree, which ‘flowered, but kept nothing for itself.’ (1042) It is stolen from Indra’s heaven by Krishna as a present for his wife Rukmini. In her private “puja”, Mrs. Kapoor worships Krishna, Shiva, Lakshmi and Ganesh, Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman, and several others. This over-abundance of gods may all be disturbing for a Christian or Muslim and is even presented with light humor by Seth. But Mrs. Kapoor’s puja-prayers are certainly not ironized: “She prayed to them, and she asked for comfort from them: nothing for herself, but health for her family, a long life for her husband, blessings on her two grandchildren, and ease to the souls of those no longer there. Her mouth worked silently as she prayed, unselfconscious of the presence of her daughter and her grandson.” (984) This kind of religious piety is affirmed by Seth because he perceives it as providing soul of family togetherness and a bulwark of altruism against the selfishness of the materialistic passions.

Two days after the flag-hoisting and oration of Independence Day, the most unsettling of the five that India has so far celebrated come. They include the full-moon of the month of Shravan, and the tenderest of all family festivals, in which brothers and sisters affirm their bonds to each other. According to Mrs. Kapoor, it is typically Punjabi festival. Her daughter Veena has been celebrating Rakhi ever since Pran was born. On the day of Rakhi she comes to Prem Nivas to tie a rakhi around

Pran's wrist. She feeds him a laddu and blesses him, and receives in exchange his promise of protection, five rupees and a hug.

Janmashtami comes just over a week after Rakhi. It is the day of Krishna's birth. It is to protect the innocent, whether man or beast, to cure the recurring ills of the world, and to establish righteousness that Krishna had come down to earth. He had revealed his glory in the Bhagavad Gita on the battlefield of the Mahabharata. On that day Mrs. Kapoor worships the harsingar –tree and the gods in her puja-room. Then she goes to Radhakrishna Temple.

Then comes Bakar-Id. On the day of Bakar-Id, early in the morning there is a prayer at the Idgah. It is located in a village, Sagal. The men, women and children, from all surrounding villages come to Idgah, wearing festive attire. When the Imam begins the prayer the people stand and kneel down as required with awesome unanimity of the Islamic service. It is the day Muslims celebrated to remember the sacrifice of Ibrahim and Ismail. After the prayer the goat or occasionally, the sheep is sacrificed in each house of Debaria. It is the animal that symbolized God's merciful replacement for Abraham's son, Ismail.

In the novel, Moharram and Dussehra are coincided. During the ten days of Moharram there are small gatherings in which there is chanting of marsiyas and performing of soz. The marsiyas are laments for the martyrs of the battle of Karbala: especially for Hussain, the grandson of the prophet. The soz is a sort of musical wailing. Saeeda Bai arranges such small gatherings at her house and during these days does not allow herself to entertain her customers. On the ninth day of Moharram the tazias carry to the city Imambara, where they display overnight and

the next morning. Then in the afternoon of the tenth day they carry in a grand procession to the 'Karbala', the field outside Brahmipur specially designated for the burial of Tazias. There is also, just outside the Imambara, near the wayside shrine of a locale saint is a busy fair.

During the days of Dussehra there are processions of performing different scenes from Ramayana, which are called Ramlila. Everyone comes out in the lanes to celebrate Ramlila. Along the western edge of the square of Shashi Darvaza, there are erected three huge figures of Ravana with ten heads, Kumbhakaran and Meghnad to show their death, in fact to show the destruction of evil, and the triumph of good. But before that can happen, the actors playing the parts of these figures have to meet their fates in due order before the public eye. On the day of Bharat Milap when this scene is going on one tazia procession disturbs the Ramlila procession. The religious Hindu people feel that this atrocious and violent interruption has made a mockery of the enactment of Shri Ramachandra ji returning to his home. The actor playing the role of Rama is also attacked and it gives the birth to riot between Hindus and Muslims.

In human terms, Seth's moral contrivance against religious fanaticism in A Suitable Boy reaches a climax in the horrifying scene when Muslim Firoz and Hindu Maan are attacked by a murderous Hindu mob. The counterpoint to this disgusting mob is the enduring, inter-religious friendship between Firoz and Maan, and also the similar friendship between their fathers the Nawab and Mahesh Kapoor.

On the day of Karva Chauth women use to fast until moonrise for husband's health and longevity. It is believed that on that day the touch to needle even

unconsciously will be disastrous. Therefore, needles on Karva Chauth are fearfully inauspicious: ‘ Touch a needle and lose a husband.’(1074) Savita is fasting so Mrs. Rupa locks up her knitting needles together with any sewing and darning needles that are laying about the house.

For Brahmipur one festival is observed much more devotedly than almost anywhere in India, that of Kartik Purnima. The full moon of Kartik brings to an end one of the three especially sacred months for bathing. As the Puranas say: ‘ What fruit was obtained in the Perfect Age by doing austerities for one hundred years, all this is obtained by a bath in the Five Rivers during the month of Kartik.’ (1080)

Seth has shown how the people in India are deeply religious. Seth’s moral and aesthetic ideals are combined in the modesty, the private “ puja” and the well-tended garden of Mrs. Kapoor. She is the moral center of the novel. But at the same time Seth shows his amused distaste for the fanatical ascetics and Swamijis at the Pul Mela festival; he emphasizes this distaste by viewing the scene through the eyes of the gentle religious seeker Dipankar and showing Dipankar’s alienation when he realizes that the charade of saintliness masks vanity and power-seeking egoism.

## II

### Narrative Technique :

The technique becomes specially significant in evaluating a writer like Vikram Seth. His evolution as a writer is characterised by its starts, deviations. In A Suitable Boy he has been very experimental with technique because he himself mentioned (in the interview quoted in the introduction) that he allows, 'flexibility'. Moreover, the term 'technique' itself is too nebulous to assign any single meaning to suit the need of fictional analysis. Therefore, a brief and discussion regarding narrative technique is provided. Narrative literature provides opportunities for a narrator because there is a story.

By narrative we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two features - the presence of a story and a story - teller. The term 'novel' in itself is a summary of the two conflicting aims in fiction, requires, at the outset a brief historical and descriptive definition. In the past, for a verse narrative approaching closer to the manners of real life —its intrigues and jealousies,— the Provençal poets had employed the word novas; for a like narrative in prose, always short, Boccaccio and his contemporaries were using the cognate word novella. During the two centuries following. Boccaccio the Italians continued to compose books of novelle, and that too in very great numbers. In the age of Elizabeth they come into English in shoals, and with them came the word 'novel', as applicable to either the translation or an imitation. It was a particularly felicitous make— believe designation, for it conveyed the notion of that incidents and the treatment were

new. It was at the time of Scott, about him the Scottish Romance writer, that the word 'novel' became the generic term for English prose fiction - that prose fiction which deals realistically with actual life is called, in criticism and conversation, preeminently the novel. However, many scholars give different definitions. Some of them are mentioned here. :

- i.—“A novel is an extended fictional narrative in prose”<sup>11</sup> —J. T. Shipley.
- ii. “A novel is an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting”<sup>12</sup> - Webster.
- iii. “Any fictitious prose work over 50,000 words will be a novel”.<sup>13</sup>-E.M.Forster.

The novel has been historically viewed as formless because it has no classical sanction like other literary forms such as the epic or the tragedy. This leads us to probe into the genre itself. According to Wellek and Warren, historically speaking, “there are three ultimate categories of literature— fiction, drama, poetry”.<sup>14</sup> The novel and the epic are traced to the first category. These two forms are described as ‘compound Forms’ because they both are narrative stories and use, more or less, the same pattern or ‘narrative techniques.’ In both forms we see life or experience of life. And there are ‘straight narration’ and “narration through dialogue’. So three ultimate categories of literature fiction, drama and poetry - become narration, dialogue and song. Therefore, we can say that the novel is an ‘unacted drama’.

There should be form, design and composition in a novel as in any other work of art. According to Percy Lubbock, 'Form in fiction is something to be put in or left out of a novel according to the taste of the author'.<sup>15</sup> The novelist narrates his ideas or experiences which he wants and tells those in the way which he likes. He does not bother whether the readers like his opinions, ideas or not, he writes whatever he wants or whatever he likes. While Edwin Muir says, 'The most simple form of prose fiction is the story which records a succession of events generally marvellous'.<sup>16</sup> In the novel, the novelist narrates the story of his own or of something which he has experienced. His story may be truth, a fact or may be imaginative. But story-telling is the fundamental aspect of the novel. Without story it cannot exist, story is the highest factor common to all novels.

Percy Lubbock gives importance to life or content than to form or structure of the novel. Therefore, Lubbock says, "a novel is a picture of life and life is all known to us; let us first of all 'realize' it and using our taste, let us judge whether it is true, vivid, convincing—life like—in fact".<sup>17</sup> Sometimes when we read a novel, a story—series of events, we find that such events same or little different, happen in our own life. We also find that the characters in the novel are like us. Therefore, we like novels and read them with interest.

Mr. Jonathan Carruthers says, we must believe in "Organic purpose".<sup>18</sup> According to this, life has a pattern; therefore, a novel must have a pattern. The novelist believes that while shaping his creation into organic pattern, he is working in the very spirit of life itself. Secondly, he finds the 'globed compacted' things, which he makes, contain the some kind of truth, as he can find all round him in the

world of hard, unadulterate. Therefore, Mr. Jonathan Carruthers says, “all novels, no matter what their subject - matter, their aim or their style, should have a clear and definite pattern”.<sup>19</sup> Similarly Mr. Forster thinks ‘the novel must give us life because life does’.<sup>20</sup> Thus we see that there is an intimate relationship between the life in the world and the presentation of the life in the novel.

Secondly, novel has an intimate relationship with the technique of narration the writer uses. Therefore, it is essential to look into the term ‘narrative’ to understand its essential meaning. Many scholars have tried to define the term ‘narrative’ some of them are mentioned here :

- i. “Narrative is the general term for a recital of events, true or fictions”.<sup>21</sup> - J. T. Shipley.
- ii. “Narrative is a form of discourse, the Principal purpose of which is to relate an event or series of events”.<sup>22</sup> - Harry Shaw.
- iii. “By narrative we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics : the presence of a story and a story - teller....”<sup>23</sup>- Messers Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog.

Looking into the above definitions we see that there is a great importance for the story and its teller in the novel. The word ‘narrative’, as applied to fiction, says Wellek and Warren, implies “the contrast of enacted fiction, i.e. drama. A story, a fable can be represented by mimes or it can be narrated by a single teller, who will be epic teller or one of his successors”.<sup>24</sup> The epic poet uses the first person and can make that a lyric or auctorial first person. The nineteenth century novelists using the epic privilege of comment and generalisation made it an



'essayistic', first person. But as Wellek and Warren point out the chief pattern of narrative is its inclusiveness : it intersperses scenes in dialogue (which might be acted) with summary accounts of what is happening".<sup>25</sup>

The novelist employs some methods of representation, but he does so in the form of a narrative. There is a narrator in drama also but here the representation of life is through the medium of acting, done by actors with the help of lighting and setting. While the novelist may achieve the same effects through a sequence of word - pictures, scenes or descriptions as part of the narrative technique.

Percy Lubbock appears to understand 'narrative' in the sense of a 'mere tale', pretentiously told with far-fetched circumstantial realism. For him the novel is not the comprehensive art of fiction : "...the art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself".<sup>26</sup> Thus we see that there is emphasis on dramatic technique of narration as against mere narration of facts. It shows a tendency towards impersonal narration of a story, an objective method of presenting the story material which is indeed a modern concept. In spite of the fact that the terminology and definitions to be used with regard to the novel are vague, critics have attempted to define technique in the novel. Some of the definitions are as follows :

- i. Technique is 'the way in which a creative artist, a writer uses the technical elements of his art to express himself'.<sup>27</sup> - Webster.
- ii. Technique means 'the manner and ability with a writer employs the skills of his craft...' <sup>28</sup> - Harry Shaw.

- iii. "Technique is not one of the living qualities and the novel is primarily concerned with life. The core quality of the born novelist is human, not literary".<sup>29</sup> - Q. D. Leavis.

The novelist describes life or experience of life which is the content of the novel. Therefore, the content or the life which is presented in the novel is important. Comparing to the content, technique - the way to express his experience by the novelist is subordinate. However, when we examine different aspects of the novel, technique becomes, in the words of Mark Schorer, "...the only means he (the novelist) has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject of conveying its meaning, and finally, of evaluating it".<sup>30</sup> Therefore with the help of technique, the novelist can find and develop the story. With the help of technique only he can fulfil the demands of a perfect novel. Indifference towards technique may lead to unbalanced tendency towards this aspect. So when the nineteenth century novelists' looseness of the form was noticed by contemporary novelists like Henry James, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, they tried to invent new methods in techniques, both grammatical and linguistic. Therefore, the form or structure of the novel became something more than a means of literary entertainment. In this connection Mark Schorer says : 'Technique at last is measure'.<sup>31</sup>

After looking into both the concepts 'narrative' and 'technique' independently, one obvious feature one finds regarding narrative technique is that it is the way a novelist gives a detailed account of a number of connected events, the experiences, which may be true or fictitious, by using skill.

The novel as an art form is supposed to be the modern descendant of the epic, with drama, one of the two great forms. Though this world of fiction is known to be less strange and more representative than truth, there still is a charge that verisimilitude in detail is a means to illusion which is used as a decoy to entice the reader into some improbable or incredible situation which has 'truth to reality in some deeper than a circumstantial sense'.<sup>32</sup> However, it is believed that a work of fiction offers a 'case history' - an illustration or exemplification of some general pattern or syndrome. The novelist offers less a case - a character or event - than a world. The great novelists all have such a world - recognisable as overlapping the empirical world but distinct in its self - coherent intelligibility. As mentioned by Wellek and Warren, this world or Kosmos of a novelist consists 'Plot, characters, setting, world-view, tone'.<sup>33</sup> They further point out that if we want to judge a novelist's work, one has to 'scrutinize' a novel for these aspects.

In the foregoing section an attempt is made to illustrate the novelist's work for the purpose of scrutiny by analysing the following aspects of the novel :

- i. Plot
- ii. Characters
- iii. Dialogue
- iv. Setting
- v. Point of View

**i) Plot :**

A novel, to be a work of art needs unity; and unity; in a novel involves the imposition of the logic of 'plot' on the material of the 'story'. Plot is a much higher aspect of the novel than mere story. The idea of plot entered into fiction slowly and hesitantly after the long tradition of plot in drama. Fiction remained more or less a matter of story throughout its early history, upto the nineteenth century. Don Quixote is an example of the story-novel in a pure state Defoe and Smollet followed the same methods. Thus in the nineteenth century, fiction writers at last achieved a thorough command of plot.

The Russian writers of the nineteenth century, however, had avoided an overdependence on plot and one notices their influence now rising considerably. The tendency to minimize plot in favour of other values can be seen clearly in such novelists as Joyce and Virginia woolf. Today, plot has regained a certain respectability, but most serious fiction writers employ it with a sense of moderation; they realize that it is only one of the means toward their end.

Many writers expressed their opinion as to what is plot Some are mentioned here :

- i. "Plot refers to the arrangement of events to achieve as intended effect. A plot is a series of carefully devised and inter- related actions that progress through a struggle of opposing forces (conflict) to a climax and a denouement"<sup>34</sup>-  
Harry Shaw
- ii. "The plot being an imitation of an action, must imitate an action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if anyone of them is

displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed.”<sup>35</sup> -

Aristotle.

- iii. “The author always loads his dice, but he must never let the reader see that he has done so, and by the manipulation of his plot he can change reader’s attention so that he does not perceive what violence has been done to him”<sup>36</sup>-

Somerset Maugham.

- iv. “Plot must further the novel towards its object. Plot is the knowing of destination”<sup>37</sup>- Elizabeth Bowen .

Each of these commentators is looking from a different angle, the principal thing that distinguishes fiction from the artless chronicle of events. Thus : plot is an artifice. It arouses and directs the readers expectations. It has the sense of predestination. It imposes a unity on the narration so that all of the happenings interrelate, in the end, to make a whole. In fact, the application of this kind of strategy is what has made the art of modern fiction possible.

A plot is different from a story or story line (the order of events as they occur). E.M. Forster has given a useful description of the differences between story, which is the most ancient and fundamental element of any narration of events, and plot, which is a sophisticated invention of later date. According to Forster, ‘a story is a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality’.<sup>38</sup> He gives an example to show the difference between the two; ‘The king died and then the queen died’ is a story. ‘The king died, and then the queen died of a grief’ is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it. Or again : ‘The queen died, no one knew why until it was discovered that it was

through grief at the death of the king'. This is a plot with a mystery in it, a form capable of high development. It suspends the sequence, it moves as far away from the story as its limitations will allow. If the death of the queen is in a story we say: 'And then?' If it is in a plot we ask: 'why?' That is the fundamental difference between these two aspects of the novel. Forster says, "The interest in pure story, is a primitive one that depends on curiosity alone as to what happens next. In contrast, the ability to grasp a plot requires memory and intelligence".<sup>39</sup>

Memory and intelligence are closely connected, for unless we remember we can not understand. The plot - maker expects us to remember, we expect him to leave no loose ends. Every action or word in a plot ought to count; it ought to be economical and spare. Even the complicated plot should be organic and free from dead matter. It may be difficult or easy, it may and should contain mysteries, but it ought not to mislead. Mystery is essential to a plot and can not be appreciated without intelligence. To appreciate a mystery, part of the mind must be left behind, brooding, while the other part goes marching on.

It is the matter of character where the main dissent comes. It is possible to say that the plot scheme of action has often been able to mobilize character in a brilliant way - even if purely for its own uses. As Frank O'Connor says, "Intrigue [i.e. plot] has the great advantage of enabling a novelist to make his characters show their paces, to submit them to a variety of tests and to develop them in unexpected ways..."<sup>40</sup> Even so, plot probably never would have exercised so much fascination for authors had it been only a way of organizing the material of life into a scheme of action. Its ultimate aim, which is the outcome of the technical

performance, is a moral solution of all the issues. It offers the writer a ready-made and efficient way of articulating his ideas. Right and wrong, blame and amnesty, punishment and reward, guilt and innocence, celebration and condemnation - these are all possibilities of the denouement.

Vikram Seth admits, "Unlike his predecessors in India," - he has made use of linear plot structure partly because A Suitable Boy is multilinear".<sup>41</sup> A Suitable Boy, in its elephantine size and movement, has many plots and sub-plots. The main interest is divided between four families - the Mehras, the Chatterjis, the Kapoors and the Khans. Each family has a plot and therefore, there are four plots and there are some sub-plots to help those four plots to advance slowly and steadily towards the main plot - the search for a suitable boy. The sub-plots - Saeeda Bai and Maan's love story, the political Parallellism between Nehru and Tandon, on the one hand, and the political the other and the third one is rift between L.N. Agarwal and Mahesh Kapoor, on the academic skulduggery all help the main plot to stand on surer and firmer footing.

The main plot of the novel is the search for a suitable boy by Mrs. Rupa Mehra for her younger daughter Lata. Lata, the protagonist of the novel, is the student of English literature at Brahmapur University, a city on the Ganges in the state of Purva Pradesh. She has three main suitors - Kabir, Amit and Haresh. Lata's first suitor, Kabir Durrani, is a fellow student of History Department and a Muslim. Though a "non-Khatri non-Hindu", Lata falls in love with him, thinking him, to be a suitable husband but Kabir's insistence on marrying her after two years clinches the issue. Lata's second suitor, Amit Chatterji, is a poet who falls in

love with her but Lata thinks of him as a friend and a guide. On the other hand advances made by Amit towards Lata are abruptly stopped in midway by her mother who has instantly taken a dislike for the Chatterjis. She says : 'I have no intention of accepting things as they came'. (482)

On the contrary, Mrs. Rupa finds out 'a Khanna (Haresh), he was bound to be a Khatri'. (556) And the greatest advantage that he has over the other two, in the Nehruvian period of the fifties is "a dowry, he is not the kind of the man to ask for it, and there is no one to ask for it on his behalf ".(562) The caravan of the matrimony of Lata and Haresh moves slowly but surely to a point when Haresh visits Mrs. Rupa and Lata. Mrs. Rupa immediately likes Haresh but Lata does not. "Her first impression of him was that he was shorter than she had expected. The next - when he opened his mouth to speak - was that he had been chewing paan.... In fact paan did not go at all well with her idea of a husband ". (569) Afterwards Lata finds him generous, robust, optimistic and responsible. She feels that there is something adventurous in losing herself entirely in a world of this man whom she has trusted and has begun to admire because he cares for her so deeply and steadily. So she accepts his often repeated offer of marriage with gratitude and warmth.

Both Amit and Kabir seem to be impractical lovers for Lata and she rejects the way of their "outer" life of matter-of-factness in favour of the "inner" life of personal relations, actualities of material life of personal relations, actualities of material life, represented by Haresh. To help her in making up her mind, Haresh gives up his habit of Chewing paan. He proudly asserts : "I am a practical man, and



I am proud of it".(1290) Seth beckons us 'to connect' the material with the romantic, the present with the past, the Hareshian qualities of action with Latanian sensitivity and love.

There are four main families in the novel. The Mehras are led by Mrs. Rupa Mehra (visibly) and Late Raghubir Mehra (invisibly). Savita, Varun, Lata are on the side of Mrs. Rupa and therefore, are on the side of Mrs. Rupa and therefore, are traditionalists. Arun Mehra and his wife, Meenakshi Mehra (daughter of Justice Chatterji) represent modernity.

The Chatterjis are led by Justice Chatterji, judge of Calcutta High Court and his father, a retired judge of Calcutta High Court, five children and Mrs. Chatterji are his protégé. All of them in some way or the other, are snobs and symbolize the twilight glory of the British Raj and culture. But Dipankar, in spite of being a Chatterji, is an Aurobindoite; Mrs. Chatterji, a worshipper of Rabindranath Tagore. Amit falls in love with a Mehra, Lata Mehra. So the two characters, Meenakshi and Amit, of the Chatterji plot are linked with the Mehra plot.

The Kapoor clan is headed by Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, Revenue Minister in the S. S. Sharma Ministry of Purva Pradesh, a Nehruite. His wife, Mrs. Kapoor is deeply religious, superstitious and conservative. His daughter, Veena is married into the Tandon family, with Kedarnath Tandon. His elder son Pran Kapoor, an asthmatic lecturer in English at Brahmipur University is married into the Mehra family, with Savita. With the exception of Mahesh Kapoor and his younger son Maan Kapoor, the family is, on the whole, traditional.

The Khan clan is headed by the old Nawab Sahib of Baitar, an old aristocratic, a big landlord. His sons Imtiaz, a doctor and Firoz, a lawyer and his daughter Zainab, married, have their own individual ways. Only Begum Abida Khan, Nawab's sister-in-law, is the most aggressive, modern and feudal. The plot of the Khan is concerned mainly with two characters - the Nawab Sahib and Firoz. The story of the Nawab Sahib is intertwined with Mahesh Kapoor, for they are very intimate friends and, in spite of the Zamindari Abolition Act, they remain spiritually good friends. Similarly, Firoz is an intimate friend of Maan. Though Maan fatally injures Firoz in a drunken state, Firoz absolves him of this charge, gladly.

All these four plots of families are supported by the sub-plots which equally run along with the four plots. The sub-plot of the involvement of Maan in the courtesan, Saeeda Bai Firozabadi whose patronage is dying because of Zamindari Abolition Bill, supports the main plot.

The sub-plot of L.N. Agarwal, pitted against Mahesh Kapoor, helps to highlight the political rivalry of the warring groups in India in 1951-52 between the Nehruities and the Tandonites. The main character in the political history of 1951-52 Jawaharlal Nehru and three fictional characters, S. S. Sharma, Mahesh Kapoor and L.N. Agarwal are props to enlarge the small presence of Nehru in the novel. What will be our India, externally and internally, is shown to us through the speech of Nehru at Baitar and his letters to Chief Minister S. S. Sharma, periodically. For instance, his speech at Baitar :

The world is also going through a hard time. We have the Korean crisis and the crisis in the Persian Gulf. You have probably heard about the attempt of the British to bully the Egyptians.....This is bad, and we cannot have it. The world must learn to live in peace. (1240)

This speech amply foreshadows the policy of non-alignment that India has propounded and followed in the years to come. Then we came to the second part of his speech :

Here at home also, we must live in peace. As tolerant people we must be tolerant...Disaster will strike the country if religious bigots and communalists of all descriptions get their way. (1240).

This part of speech forms part of his habit to brief Chief Minister on the issues affecting India, internally and externally.

Tandon has different views from those of Nehru's. He is traditionalist. Yet there are many similarities between Nehru and Tandon. Tandon is an organization man, like him, from Allahabad, a conservative, a man determined to impose "discipline and unity" on recalcitrant party men. Both are "vying with each other for power on the national stage".(953)

Mahesh Kapoor, Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh, is a veteran freedom fighter, close to Nehru, and is a radical socialist. He is determined to abolish the feudal system of Zamindari in Purva Pradesh. Politics for him is a means to serve his people. On the contrary, L.N. Agarwal, Home Minister, traditionalist and obscuranist, is a follower of Tandon. He, in the name of religion, uses to serve his own interests. For his self interest he can also ready to sacrifice the law.

The sub-plot of the academic skulluggery is managed by Prof. Mishra, Head of the Department of English Brahmipur University, supported by his traditional allies, the teachers, with the exception of Pran Kapoor. He is as much a traditionalist in the academic field as L.N. Agarwal is in politics. Pran represents modernity and Prof. Mishra represents tradition academic sense. The selection of Pran for the readership and the choice of James Joyce for the syllabus is something of a victory for modernity.

There is another sub-plot, which is Lata's elder brother Arun's Calcutta connection, that takes us to the rather flighty family of Mr. Justice Cahatterji, his father-in-law. This does not give us much of the flavour of the novel.

The plots of A Suitable Boy are structured around pursuit or search and this gives force and coherence to the novel. Mrs. Rupa is in search of a suitable boy for Lata; Dipankar is in search of a spiritual base; Mr. Mahesh Kapoor is in search of a political base; and the Nawab is in search of his feudal stability. All these searches are centered in the period of 1951-52, the period of a newly-freed country, embarking on the path of finding a permanent footing, internally and externally. India is searching within itself and outside it self. This historical search is interwoven with domestic searches and the novel assumes a socio - politico-historical form.

The search of India for a suitable place in the comity of nations is interwoven with the search of Mrs. Rupa Mehra for a suitable boy for Lata. The clash of the Tandonites and Nehruites, the traditionalists and the progressives has its echo, in the minds of Mrs. Rupa and Lata, whether to choose progressives like

Kabir or Amit or a traditionalist like Haresh. Finally Mrs. Rupa and Lata choose Haresh, educated in England but rooted in India - half Nehru and half-Tandon. Similarly Dipankar searches for a spiritual base, mandering through zigzag paths, through Aurobindo, through Sanaki Baba. Prior to that, his "interests in mysticism were wide - ranging, and included Tantra and the worship of the Mother - Goddess besides the more conceptual 'synthetic' philosophy he had just been expounding... Half an hour later it was Unity, Duality, and the Trinity, on which Dipankar had recently had a crash-course". (446) But in the camp of Sanaki Baba, and at the Pul Mela, he has come to realize "that the spiritual source of India is not the zero or Unity or Duality or ever Trinity, but Infinity itself". (717) Finally he finds a place for him not in spirituality but in a materialistic world of hurry-burly and money, ironically in Economics.

Like the ordinary Victorian plot full with the stories of strokes of fortunes, coincidence, sudden inheritance, long lost wills, the plot of A Suitable boy takes recourse to one such stock-in-trade story, i.e. of Saeeda Bai. Saeeda Bai plays a very important role in this novel and we are also unaware that Tasneem is the daughter of the Nawab. The Nawab Sahib has been secretly sending financial help to her. All of a sudden, like a detective story, we discover that Tasneem is his illicit daughter. The second surprise sprung on us by Seth, is that the "Banaras people had decided that Maan was no longer a suitable boy; they had informed Mahesh Kapoor of their decision".(1341) Throughout the novel, the Banaras people are mentioned but never shown in action.

We find that it is only Lata and Maan who perform some heroic deeds. Lata chooses her husband after many considerations like family prestige, the norms of the joint family demands, obedience to parents (mother), social conventions and the personal benefit. She has to make her choice after rejecting Kabir and Amit, which is not an easy task. She also mixes with anglophile Chatterjis without losing her Indianness. Normally, she should have been ensnared by the glamour of the Chatterjis, like her brother Arun. Maan falling in love with a courtesan, Saeeda Bai, his visit to Rasheed and his family at Rudhia, his youthful and zealous campaign for his father, his imprisonment on account of his alleged kniving of Firoz and finally, his acquittal by the court on the evidence of Firoz, makes him perform some heroic deeds.

Thus, A Suitable Boy has a linear plot, i.e. it has a formal logic. Some digressions are there, for instance, the long history of the political feud between Nehru and Tandon, the debates of the Purva Pradesh Assembly, the incurable rhyming of the Chatterjis and the poetry recitation at the matrimonial quest of Mrs. Rupa Mehra is connected to the Brahmipur Literary Society. But the central strand of the book, with the quest of so many characters, their lifestyles and mindsets. It is also the quest of Vikram Seth, who was born in the year 1952, to find a niche in the history of Indo-English writing in India. "A Suitable Boy has the body of an Indian theme and clothes of a Western novel."<sup>42</sup>

**ii) Characters :**

Arnold Bennett States : “The foundation of good fiction is character creating and nothing else.”<sup>43</sup> It is the human dimension which gives literature its greatest appeal. It is difficult to define a character fully. However, different scholars have interpreted it differently. Some of these interpretations are:

- i. “A character is the aggregate of traits and features that form the nature of some person or animal.”<sup>44</sup> – Harry Shaw.
- ii. ‘Characterization means making known the appearance and nature of a person.’<sup>45</sup> – J.T.Shipley.
- iii. “A character is a verbal construction which has no existence outside the book. It is the vehicle for the novelist’s sensibility and its significance lies in its relations with author’s other constructions. A novel is essentially a verbal pattern in which the different ‘characters’ are strands and the reader’s experience is the impact of the complete pattern on his sensibility.”<sup>46</sup> – Percy Lubbock.
- iv. “Fiction never deals with character in isolation, for what a man determines, what he does, and it is primarily through what he does that we who observe him know what he is.”<sup>47</sup> – Brooks and Warren.

The concept of ‘Character’ and the technique of characterization is discussed by a number of critics and in the context of different existing trends and movements in literature. These different interpretations and impressions clearly reflect the change in attitude about the character and the technique in

characterization over years. Hence, we need to refer to at least some select criticism here.

In the novel we need not ask what happened next, but we do have to ask to whom did it happen. Because the novelist will be appealing to our intelligence and imagination and not merely to our curiosity alone. Forster says, “Since the actors in a story are usually human, it seems convenient to entitle this aspect as people..... The actors in a story are, or pretend to be, human beings. Since the novelist is himself a human being there is an affinity between him and his subject – matter which is absent in many other forms of art.”<sup>48</sup>

A novel is a profitable roundabout, for it brings out the fundamental difference between people in daily life and people in books. In daily life we never understand each other. But people in a novel can be understood completely by the reader, if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed. And that is why they often seem more definite than characters in history, or even our own friends. In a novel, we have been told all about the characters that can be told; even if they are imperfect or unreal they do not contain any secrets, whereas our friends do and must keep secrets since mutual secrecy being one of the conditions of life upon this globe. People start life with an experience, they forget and end it with one which they anticipate but cannot understand. These are the characters whom the novelist proposes to introduce as characters into books.

A novel is a work of art, with its own laws, which are not those of daily life, and that a character in a novel is real when it lives in accordance with such laws. Forster defines a character, in his book Aspects of the Novel, as to when it is real,



“It is real when the novelist knows everything about it. He may not choose to tell us all he knows – many of the facts .... may be hidden. But he will give us the feeling that the character has not been explained it is explicable, and we get from this a reality of a kind we can never get in daily life.”<sup>49</sup>

The novelist has a mixed lot of ingredients to handle while dealing with the characters. There is the story, with the characters. There is the story, with its time-sequence of ‘and then .... and then...’; these are ninepins about whom he might tell the story, and tell a rattling good one. But he prefers to tell his story about human beings. That is he takes over the life by values as well as the life in time. The characters arrive when evoked but full of the spirit of mutiny. For they have these numerous parallels with people like ourselves. They try to live their own lives and are consequently often engaged in treason against the main scheme of the book. Forster says; “They ‘run away’, they ‘get out of hand’, they are creations inside a creation, and often inharmonious towards it.”<sup>50</sup> If they are given complete freedom they kick the book to pieces, and if they kept too sternly in check they revenge themselves by dying and destroy it by intestinal decay.

Forester divides characters into two types – ‘flat’ and ‘round’. Flat characters were called ‘humours’ in the seventeenth century, and are sometimes called ‘types’, and sometimes ‘caricatures’. In their purest form, they are constructed round a single idea or quality. One great advantage of flat characters is that they are easily recognized, whenever they come in – recognized by the readers’ emotional eye, not by the visual eye, which merely notes the recurrence of a proper name. The second advantage is that they are easily remembered by the

reader afterwards. They remain in his mind as unalterable for the reason that they were not changed by circumstances; they moved through circumstances, which give them in retrospect a comforting quality and preserves them when the book that produced them may decay. We must admit that flat people are not in themselves as big achievements as round ones, and also that they are best when they are comic. A serious or tragic flat character is apt to be a bore.

The round character is just opposite to the flat. It is not constructed round a single idea or quality. It shows many qualities and changes by circumstances. The round characters are big achievements in themselves. It is only round people who are fit to perform tragically for any length of time and can move us to any feelings, except humour and appropriateness.

The novelist can either describe the characters from outside, as an impartial or partial onlooker, or he can assume omniscience and describe them from within; or he can place himself in the position of one of them and affect to be in the dark as to the motives of the rest, or these are certain intermediate attitudes.

According to Macauley and Lanning, "there are two principal ways by which the writer may present his characters. He may choose to describe them either in a set piece or by 'unrolling' them."<sup>51</sup> Set-piece characterization is not often practised today by serious writers, although it is a commonplace of much popular fiction. It was certainly always a literary device to put people all on view at the beginning of a story. The earlier writers knew perfectly well that they were ignoring the common experience when they labelled their characters hero, heroine, villain, comedy relief. But the most good novels of today depend on the unrolling

of characters in the course of the narrative. This is not to say that the reader's final impression of them is always different from the initial one. He may simply have to know them a great deal better, to have had those first impressions confirmed. And now he may have to be in the position to make a manysided judgement about them.

They further discuss the conventional methods of characterization. Once the writer has decided on the method by which he is going to handle his characters he must determine on the best way to make them flesh and blood for the reader. He will want to use some or all of the following :

- i) Physical appearance,      ii) Movements, gestures, mannerisms, habits,
- iii) Behaviour toward others, iv) Speech,    v) Attitude toward self,
- vi) Attitude of others toward the character, vii) Physical surroundings,
- viii) Past, ix) Fringe techniques such as names and figures of speech.

Seth himself says to Dilip Padgaonkar that A suitable Boy is ' a character-led and story-led, novel. However, he feels that he did not know how his characters are going to go. <sup>52</sup> Many critics comment on the characters used in the novel: To Firdaus Kanga there are 'Too many characters share the same sensibility, gentle and fuzzy and slightly overemotional....'<sup>53</sup> In seth's extraordinary panorama of this novel, 'all characters are fitted on to the moral spectrum of the addition to, or the renunciation of the base possions. <sup>54</sup> Seth's admirers compare A suitable Boy with Pride and Prejudice – 'Mrs Rupa is Mrs. Bennett and Lata is Elizabeth'. <sup>55</sup>

The narrative process in A suitable Boy shuttles back and forth between numerous characters, belonging to the four large families, but mainly between Lata and Maan as being the characters who circulate more in their society. In an exclusive interview published in The Telegraph Magazine Seth has himself observed “Lata and Maan are the two main strands...”<sup>56</sup> Free spirits both of them, Lata and Maan find themselves obliged in the end to conform to the pattern of middle class life in the provincial town of Brahmpur. None except them approaches the conventional heroic type. However, the novel has many major and minor characters of which a few are discussed at length.

#### **Major Characters :**

##### **i) Lata Mehra :**

Lata is the main character of the novel. She is the youngest of the Mehra Children. She is brilliant girl. Now she is doing B.A. in English Literature in the University of Brahmpur in Purva Pradesh. She has three suitors in the novel. She rejects both Kabir and Amit for their outer life of matter-of-factness and practicality in favour of the inner life of personal relations, actualities of material life, represented by Hareesh.

Lata is nineteen years old. She is tall, not very fair but attractive with an oval face, a shy light in her dark eyes. She is smart in an Indian sort of way. She belongs to the middle – class family. She looks forward to a quiet, sober life in the future. She is a decent girl and desires to be a steady, honest and sincere type like her late father because she liked her father very much. She is a super sensitive girl

and takes interest in Indian classical music. She often finds herself humming some tune or other in one of her favourite raag. She likes love poetry and 'Maud' is one of her favourite love poems. But she does not like to talk about love or sex or marriage. She is very fond of monkeys and therefore, she uses to feed them whenever she goes for walk on the bank of Ganga. She thinks animal world is a simple and good one than the world of human beings.

Lata is angry with her elder sister Savita because Savita is ready to marry Pran whom she has met for only an hour in her mothers company and whom she does not know very well. Perhaps, Lata thinks one must choose one's life partner and both husband and wife must know each other. When she imagines Savita's married life, she says to her mother, 'I don't think I ever want to get married'. (22).

Lata's mother, Mrs. Rupa persuades to remember that she must marry a boy she will herself choose but Lata does not take it seriously. Many times she has opposite opinions of her mother's. Mrs. Rupa is searching for a suitable boy for Lata, Meanwhile she meets Kabir Durrani, a Muslim boy in the Imperial Book Depot She gradually falls in love with him. She wants to be in his company more and more. Her love for him is passionate. She becomes upset when she knows that he is a Muslim boy. But Kabir's assurance of love gives her courage and stability to continue her relation with him. Unfortunately, her mother comes to know about her wandering with Kabir and decides to take her to Calcutta. She tells herself that path of true love never runs smooth. So she requests Kabir to take

her away from everything. His denial makes her upset and nervous. She requests him,

Desert not friendship. Renegade with me  
From raptured realm of Mr. Nowrojee. (186)

Afterwards his letter comes without any commitment. Therefore, she tears the letter into pieces and thinks: 'If I achieve nothing else in life ..... I shall at least have turned into one of the world's Great Neurotics.' (460) She also decides to forget him as he has given her grief but she does not succeed in doing so. Once she cries in his memory:

Always I am weeping, weeping.  
In your heart my image keeping. (559)

She also feels jealous when she hears that Kabir is courting another woman.

During her stay in Calcutta Lata spends a lot of time in the Chatterji family. Amit, the eldest in Chatterji children, begins to take interest in her. He offers her to show a few places of aesthetic importance in Calcutta. He also takes good care of her in the party arranged in his house. Lata does not like the Chatterji children including Amit, for their habit of making jokes on heart-breaking matter. She also does not like their habit of making couplets. But she feels grateful to the Chatterji family and mostly Amit for they make her happy when she was not in good mood.

Both Meenakshi and Kakoli also like Lata and think her a suitable match for Amit. Kakoli says –

‘Luscious Lata, born to be  
Lady Lata Chatterji.’ (881)

While Meenakshi says-

‘Luscious Lata, is it hard  
Being wife of famous bard? (881)

Both try to prepare ground for the marriage between Amit and Lata. When Mrs. Rupa comes to know about Amit’s interest in Lata, she does not wish to enter the Chatterji family. She wishes to take Lata elsewhere, not to Brahmipur also. Meenakshi feels that Lata will not agree to her mothers saying but Mrs.Rupa thinks, “Lata is a sensible and a good girl, and she will do as I tell her. She is not wilful and disobedient like girls who think they are very modern. She has been brought up well.” (482) But Lata does not like her mother’s objection in many things.

There is sudden change in Lata’s thinking because of the birth of Savita’s baby. She wonders ‘what one could do to be born happy, to achieve happiness or to have it thrust on one.’ (876). Now she finds her mother who wants her happiness just as Savita wants her baby’s. Now she also thinks that a gradual, stable attraction such as Savita’s for Pran is the best thing for her, for the family and for her children too.

When Mrs. Rupa tells Lata about Haresh: ‘a very suitable prospect’ (560) in a tone of disbelief Lata says. ‘You treat me like a child.’(560) But after reading Kalpana’s letter telling about Haresh’s good qualities, Lata decides to see Haresh. Her first impression of Haresh is not very good. But she makes immediately a favourite impression on Haresh by her simplicity, good taste for dress, self-

possession, light almost British accent, attractive without make-up. According to Haresh she is a nice, quiet girl. She is intelligent without arrogance, attractive without vanity. She gives Haresh the permission to write to her, gravely, telling : 'It would really be very nice. It is a good way to get to know each other' (582).

Through letters Haresh praises Lata's bashfulness or undue modesty, frankness, the way of putting things and her personality which he likes and finds during their visits. Lata likes Haresh's praising her qualities and gradually begins to like him. She thinks, "It was pleasant to be praised by someone who did not seem practised at praising and who, for all his own abundant self confidence, clearly admired her." (900) While telling about her decision in marrying him she explains: "It's the most important decision of my life. I need to be completely sure." (1146) She does not speak easily but whenever speaks it is frank and straight forward. She also thinks of future life so when Haresh becomes angry at her use of the phrase 'don't be mean, and goes away angrily. She becomes upset and explains to Savita; 'If we do not even understand each other when we speak..... What possible future can we have together?' (1149).

After a long time she gets two letters. One is from Amit who has made a proposal of marriage through a poem. Lata rejects him as a husband. Because she likes him, feels grateful to him, finds him kind and comfortable but she cannot convert him into her husband. And the other is from Haresh who has apologized for being upset at the word 'mean'. Lata re-read that letter and becomes happy. She finds him generous, robust, optimistic, patient, responsible. She feels that there is something adventurous in losing herself entirely in a world of a man who



cares for her so deeply and steadily. So she accepts his repeated offer of marriage without consulting anyone with gratitude and warmth, though she finds that she has not ceased to feel passionate attraction to the romantic Kabir. David Myers thinks 'Her pragmatic and defiant decision is almost like an allegory of modern India turning away from stultifying snobbism and tradition and towards rational planning, the capitalist work ethic and economic productivity.'<sup>57</sup>

**ii] Kabir Durrani :**

Kabir Durrani, a Muslim is an elder son of Dr.Durrani who works in the Department of Mathematics in Brahmipur University. He is a student of History Department in the same University. He is a cricket player in University team. He is a good bowler and a fair batsman. He is a tall young man who is slim and athletic. He is fair to wheatish complexion. He has an aquiline nose and very good rether aquiline looks. He has slightly wavy black hair. He takes interest in poetry. He used to attend the lectures at Brahmapur Literary Society. He gets happiness in helping others.

In imperial Book Depot for the first time he meets Lata. Being a determined and bold he tries again and again to talk to Lata and to make her to talk though she tries to avoid him. Next time he tries to console her when she is upset. He assures that there are more important things in the world than exams like 'friendship' and further explains: 'Talking to you has certainly cheered me up'.(140) It brings Lata some consolation and finds that she is falling in love with him. Afterwords she herself talks to him which makes him very happy. He tells her that though his real

name is Kabir his friends call him Galahad 'Because they think that I spend my time rescuing damsels in distress'.(146) He asks Lata to meet him at sharp six in the morning to see the reflection of the Barsaat Mahal, perhaps to see her interest in him. He also permits her to take a friend or two with her. The boatman demands heavy price to take them to see Barsaat Mahal. He becomes angry and explains : 'We come empty - handed into this world and go out empty - handed. Do you have to lie so early in the morning? Will you take this money with you when you go?' (164)

Though Kabir loves Lata, very much, he does not accept her demand to take her away from everything. Instead, being frank and open hearted he tells her that they have to wait for two years because he has to finish his degree and then he is going to apply to get into Cambridge or may be take the exam for the Indian Foreign Service. Meanwhile there is disaster at Pul Mela in Brahmipur. He is one of the first who follows the C. M. and the H. M.'s order to the students to help in first-aid centres. He works there honestly. He also gives information about Bhaskar, the grandson of Mahesh Kapoor, by phoning at Prem Nivas. When Mahesh Kapoor asks him to bring Bhaskar at Prem Nivas immediately he says confidently, 'Minister Sahib, I apologize, but I am on duty here. You will have to come down yourself'.(746) Besides he also consoles him saying about Bhaskar : 'He does not appear to have any external injury'.(746) He helps in improving Bhaskar's state. Therefore, the Kapoor and Tandon family are grateful owe to him. Veena in front of Lata and Mrs. Rupa praises him as decent young man.

Kabir participates in the play Twelfth Night when he comes to know about Lata's participation in it. He wants the role of Duke. He learns the lines of Duke at night before the audition but gets the role of Malvolio. So Lata calls him mad to which Kabir replies : 'Some are born mad, some achieve madness and some have madness thrust upon them'.(780) Perhaps the last one suits to his present condition. Kabir finds Lata very cold as she does not talk to him though everyday meets in rehearsals. His brother, Hashim advises him not to think about her. He further says that there are plenty of girls who are crazy about Kabir then why he is persuing Lata. Kabir tells about the real fact that he does not forget her first smile which has mystified him.

While watching match between England and India on the Eden Garden Kabir complains, in front of Haresh and Amit, about women's tendency of bringing their knitting to the match saying, 'Hazare out. Plain. Umrigar out . Purl. It is like A Tale of Two cities'.(1141) Kabir takes Hazare's side towards whom he has sympathy as he himself is indecisive like him and says "I've been thinking of visiting someone ever since I arrived in Calcutta, but I can't. I find I just can't. I don't know what kind of bowling I'd have to face". (1142) He further says, 'They say he's lost his nerve, and I think I've lost mine !' (1142).

Finally Kabir meets Lata in Imperial Book Depot where they have met in the beginning. He comes to the conclusion that Lata is sincere in writing to Hashim and is going to marry him as per her mother's wish. He tries to convince Lata, that he knows people who are successful in mixed marriages. But Lata does not agree with him. In the end he becomes extremely upset and angry and talks to Lata in a

very strong voice. Lata feels insulted and goes away. In the end he is rejected by Lata because she feels that her meetings with him makes her unsettled.

Kabir is an impractical lover. He is sensitive, even vulnerable. He is quite capable of understanding the other. He also has the capacity of consoling others who are in grief. He gives preference to his duty. He is ready to accept the realities of life. He does not like to keep himself and others in illusion. He is quite compassionate in general but quite a self-centred person.

**iii) Amit Chatterji :**

Amit is the eldest son of Mr. Justice Chatterji, judge of Calcutta High Court, He is a recognized poet and novelist and as such, has 'scattered' preferences in life. He has studied at St. Xavier in Calcutta and afterwards Juris Prudence at Oxford. He is twenty nine years old and still unmarried. He is a Bengali and thinks that Bengali is the only truly civilised language in India. He takes interest in Indian classical music and of course in poetry. Amit has the habit of making couplets often and even on heart breaking matter. While making couplets and jokes he does not care if it hurts someone. He does not like to work and thinks he does not need to worry about money as he will not need more money

Though he has got degree in law he does not like to practise. Instead, on the strength of a couple of University prizes for poetry, some short fiction which are published here and there in literary magazines, and a book of poetry which has won him prize in England, he is sitting at home doing nothing that counted as real work. Mr. Chatterji criticizes him once saying : 'Amit you'd have a better claim to

criticizing others if you did something useful yourself'.(410) His first volume of poetry includes unhappy love poems. His second volume shows a kind of philosophical resignation. The poems in his collection of poems, The Fever Bird have deep feelings by no means passionless. Now he is writing his first novel, therefore, he is in the process of finding out. At the beginning it feels like a banyan tree to him. It is about Bengal Famine of which he himself has experience. But he thinks that a writer does not need to feel strongly about what he writes. Amit is reserved and finds it difficult to make the first move. Therefore, when he has fallen in love with the sister of one of his friends, he couldnot express his feelings to her. He has written a great many words but has not sent or showed them.

Amit meets Lata and begins to take interest in her. He takes care of her in the party arranged at his house. He also offers Lata to show a few places of Calcutta. Amit has promised to send Lata one of his books. So after thinking a lot and because of Meenakshi's insistance Amit decides to send The Fever Bird to Lata and writes an inscription, a poem for her which shows his love for her. Lata after re-reading finds that she is bound to the sentiment as well as the construction of the poem. After taking first letter of four lines which constructed her name LATA. On New Year's Eve Amit offers Lata to show lights on Park street. He kisses her and calls it as New Year's License. In their meeting at Brahmapur he directly asks: 'Lata will you marry me?'(1262) Lata does not answer either 'yes' or 'no'. Afterwards he makes a modest proposal of marriage through the poem. But Lata does not accept it as she cannot convert him into her husband though she likes him as a friend and a guide. As David Myers says, "The gifted, but eccentric,

self - indulgent and materialistically spoilt poet Amit Chatterji... is rejected by Lata because in his total dedication to his Muse he doesn't really need her or mundane marital responsibilities in the long run".(58) Though he is a poet and has some insight into human emotion, in general, he is far too reticent in his own life for his own happiness.

**iv) Haresh Khanna :**

Haresh Khanna is a Khatri-Hindu. He is originally from Neel Darvaza, Delhi. He has studied at St Stephens College and has acquired B.A. degree with a third in English Literature. He has a diploma in leather technology from Middle Hampton College, and he has topped the list in the exam for pattern cutting and has won some medal or other in England He is versatile in this profession. He is capable enough to handle all types of leather products, and has a job in CLFC, Cawnpore Leather and Footwear Company. Haresh is a good-looking young man. He has a pleasant, squarish face. He is well built without being stocky. He is short so he uses to treat his shortness with the irritation that befits an inconvenient but psychologically insignificant fact. His eyes are small, which almost disappear while smiling but they have a directness of gaze which is a key to straightforwardness of character.

He is an energetic man, with a great deal of optimism and self-confidence, and is not hindered by too delicate a sense of modesty. He has the habit of writing 'action points', whichever things he has done on the day and which things he will have to do the next day, in his daily diary. He likes Hardy but not.

The welt Beloved. He loves good cloths and good shoes. He also likes neatness. For instance, Everything in his room is neat, tidy, smart in extreme order. Even the volumes of Hardy on the small bookshelf are arranged alphabetically.

At St Stephens college Haresh was in love with Simran and is loved by Kalpana in whom he has no interest. Therefore, there is a complet about Haresh at college:

Closed by Gaur and chasing kaur;

Chaste before but chaste no more! (218).

He is still infatuated towards Simran and exchanges letters with her but there is no possibility of the marriage because her family objects. Sunil Patwardhan has been a friend of Haresh at St Stephens. He has tried during his college days to get Haresh to drink but without success, because he uses to be a 'teetotaller' (208).

Haresh finds his work in CLFC very fascinating. He gets success in whatever work he has undertaken. He proudly says, 'I've only been at CLFC a year ..... and I've got them orders that they didn't have the know how or the initiative to get themselves.' (554). He has enthusiasm and curiosity in knowing things. Haresh is keen on 'requisite facilities' as he is on his 'To Do' list. He also believes in 'following things through.'

In the very first meeting Mrs. Rupa likes Haresh very much. She likes the fact that he is energetic; he is independent. And one crucial point is he is a khatri. So she thinks him as / suitable for Lata. Lata's first impression of Haresh is that he is short; he chews paan and that is far from appealing. His whole mode of dressing is flashy and flashiest of all is his co-respondent shoes. His wearing of panama hat

is exceptionally stupid. His accent, which bore traces both of Hindi and of the local Midland's dialect which he has exposed to in England, is most atrocious.

When Lata feels a sudden repulsion for his work in support of this Haresh says, "I am proud of the shoes I make. I don't like sitting in an office giving orders and expecting miracles. If this means that I have to stand in a pit and soak a buffalo's hide myself, I'll do it." (577) He is a practical man and gives importance to work. Afterwards Lata finds that Haresh is lively, even if he repeats himself and optimistic, even if over – confident of his own abilities, he appears to be sincere. He can talk on various subjects, from politics to English literature to the cinema etc. He becomes happy when he gets permission to write to Lata.

Through letters they come to know about each other's good qualities and begin to like each other more and more. But Arun and Meenakshi have no good opinion of Haresh. They think he is pushy young man with too good opinion about himself. Mrs. Rupa is impressed by his kindness and consideration and thinks of him as an ideal husband for Lata.

Haresh feels completely optimistic about Lata's help. He assumes Lata that his feelings for her has grown with time and says, 'I am sure I will improve with your instruction.' (1146) But he is misguided by Lata's use of phrase 'do not be mean'. He takes the real meaning of 'mean' as non generous, and base. Afterwards he apologizes for his mistake through the letter to Lata. Now Lata finds him generous, robust, optimistic, and responsible. She thinks that he is helpful and he will give her opportunity to teach. He gives her time to learn to like and love him. So Lata accepts his repeated offers of marriage with gratitude and warmth. She



chooses Haresh because he is not only a hard-worker, uncouth, intelligent and pusher but also, as David Myers opines, a symbol of “a new India- an ambitious, pragmatic, anti-snobish, working – class, self-made Indian man.”<sup>59</sup>

He is a more a gauche but determined man, a man who impatiently storms the traditional barriers of class and caste a man who demands fair recognition of his working and managerial talents, but also a man who has the courage and the realism, as Seth sees such matters, to give up his hopeless love for his Sikh girl, and to devote himself with quiet courage and constancy to his forthcoming marriage with Lata.

**V) Mrs. Rupa Mehra :**

Mrs. Rupa is the widow mother of four children, Arun, Şavita, Varun and Lata. The Mehra family is led by her. Her husband has died eight years ago whom she worships like a God. She represents the traditional Sati Savitri cult. In the absence of her husband she is the a powerful – decision - making family head. Mrs. Rupa is good looking and attractive. She is only in her mid-forties. She loves company of any kind.

Everyone who knows her knows that she loves roses and particularly pictures of roses. Therefore, most of the birthday cards she received ‘featured roses of various colours and sizes and various degrees of copiousness and blatancy.’ (38) The habit of economical management has sunk deep into her mind, so she does not buy cards but makes them herself. In fact, she who enjoys the creative challenge of making them. She uses to recite two chapters of the Gita everyday at dawn. The lesson in the Gita does not suit her temperament. The day

on which she learns the lesson i.e. to be detached and indifferent and tranquil she will cease to be herself.

Mr. Mehra is dead and therefore is immune to Mrs. Rupa's reports, searches pleadings. But she invokes "Him", her husband whenever the situation arises because for her late husband Raghbir Mehra still inhabited the form in which she had known him when he was alive.' (3) she loves and admires her husband almost to excess so becomes very upset when her daughter-in-law has melted her husband's gold medal in Engineering. She weeps with tears of anger, bitterness and frustration. She becomes angry if anyone does not give him respect. So when Meenakshi makes joke on him she sternly says, 'If you don't have any respect for me at least have respect for my husband. (429)

Mrs. Rupa finds that Arun cares for his wife, Meenakshi's feelings than her own. So once she writes to him, 'Such is the life one doesn't often get the things one wants.' (41) She is traditional and old fashioned so she does not like Meenakshi's modernity. According to her, in four years of marriage, Meenakshi's only worthwhile act has been to give birth to her beloved grand daughter, Aparna. She also does not like her going out for parties almost every evening and coming back almost after midnight. Meenakshi who has different outlooks sometimes stares indignantly at Mrs. Rupa. So she feels that she is not wanted in the house. She also wants to stare back at Meenakshi but instead sometimes starts crying. And Arun uses to say, 'Ma, don't start the water works, you are always making a fuss over nothing.' (310)

Mrs. Rupa thinks that she has chosen a suitable boy for Savita. She gives importance to one point that Pran belongs to the right caste as she believes in caste-system. She also wants Lata must marry the boy whom she herself will choose. She decides to find her another son-in-law in Brahmpur. Meanwhile Lata falls in love with Kabir and Mrs. Rupa feels ashamed and Mrs. Rupa feels ashamed when she comes to know about Lata's wandering with a boy.

Dr. Seth calls Mrs. Rupa a worse and useless mother because she has no control on Lata. Her father advises her to take Lata to Calcutta immediately and she obeys. There she tries to get Lata to snap out of her desperate mood as she cares for her future. But Lata uses to criticize her mother. When Lata criticizes her faith in homeopathy treatment, Mrs. Rupa says, 'In your generation no one believes in anything. Except in having a good time and staying out till four in the morning.' (441) She also complains that Lata is avoiding her and says, 'It is only when I am dead and gone and you see my empty chair that you will appreciate me.' (442)

She requests Kalpana Gaur to find out a suitable boy for Lata as immediately as possible because 'She is getting involved with unsuitable boys, and I cannot have that.' (548) She rejects seven prospects for the one or other reason. Fortunately, she meets Hareh Khanna, a cobbler at Kalpana's house and likes him as a suitable prospect for Lata. She is impressed by his personality and achievements. Mrs. Rupa is torn between hugging her daughter to her bosom and giving her at least one tight slap for not having consulted her. Mrs. Rupa bursts into tears when she comes to know that Lata has accepted Hareshe's proposal of

marriage. She weeps alternatively with joy at the prospect of her daughter's marriage, concern for her daughter on her wedding night, and sorrow that the late Raghubir Mehra will not be present. She brings a copy of Van de Velde's Ideal Marriage for Lata. When Haresh's parents ask for Lata's horoscope to see whether she is Mangalik which will result in Haresh's death who is non – Mangalik. She says, 'If there was any truth in all these horoscopes there would be no young widows.' (1328) she is very happy when Lata's wedding takes place.

Mrs. Rupa plays an important role in searching like Mrs. Bennett in Pride and Prejudice. She is talkative and cannot bear suspense. She has complaining nature. She has the habit of weeping on trivial things. She is worried about her health and also about her childrens' future. She is all for the betterment of her family.

**vi) Maan Kapoor :**

Maan is the younger son of Mahesh Kapoor, the Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh. He is happy – go-lucky type young man. He is a vagaband. He does cloth business in Banaras but not with interest. He is twenty-five years old. His face is lively, fresh, strong-featured but balding slightly at the temples, which is a bit unfair considering his age. Maan has the habit of falling in love with girls. He is a 'beau' of Brahmipur, at whose feet young women of good families heedless of reputation, hasten to fling themselves like bees on a lotus. He loves swimming, not for the exercise but for the luxury, tacticity of it. He has the habit of drinking

and gambling. He enjoys life like a free-bird, without doing nothing. He does not want to be saddled with a lot of work. He uses to make resolutions but safe in the knowledge that their implementation is very far away. Therefore, he tends to be free all the time. His father accuses him for his such attitude so he does not like his father. Afterwards he admits that he has displeased his father by doing nothing or worse than nothing. Firoz is Man's best and only one friend. He uses to tell him everything in his heart. Firoz is for him more than a brother. So he has saved his life from a Hindu mob when there are riots between Hindu-Muslim on the day of Bharat Milap. He is a Bohemian.

In the very first meeting, while hearing ghazal by Saeeda Bai, a courtesan he finds that he is falling in love with her. He finds it difficult to forget her. He expresses his feelings in his message to her: 'I am the one who lives in love.' (101) Saeeda Bai welcomes him and sings for him and he thinks that she will sing for him sometimes. He is attracted by her beauty.

Maan gives saeeda Bai the book of poetical works of Ghalib with romantic pictures of men – women, and says, "Every object strives for its proper place. A book seeks to be near its truest admirer. Just as this helpless moth seeks to be near the candle that infatuates him." (125) He is deeply involved in her. He has attempted suicide to prove his passion for her. She is everything for him and he cannot live without her in this harsh world. Though Maan loves saeeda Bai deeply, she thinks she cannot afford to get emotionally attached to the light-hearted, light – headed, and probably light-footed young man, Maan. Whenever

saeeda awards him Maan becomes frustrated and used to wander here and there drinking and gambling.

When Maan declares his love for Saeeda Bai Mahesh Kapur orders him to leave the house and the city. He is ready to leave the house but is not ready to accept his mothers advice: 'Go back Banaras work hard, behave responsibly, win back your fathers heart,' (353). He is also not ready to leave the city as Saeeda lives there. But Saeeda compells him to go to Rasheed's, the Arabic teacher of Maan and Tasneem, village in Rudhia District. He is welcomed and treated affectionately in Rasheed's house. The children also love him and use to call him 'the lion.' Rasheed's Baba and father like Maan's simplicity. He is human being in real sense. So he feels sympathy towards Kachheru since he has pumped water for his bath. He feels his father is responsible for Kachheru's position as landless labourer because of Zamindari Abolition bill. Maan spends very few hours in active labour. He is not suspicious by nature, therefore he does not imagine that others will be suspicious of him. But as an outsider, as a city dweller, as a Hindu, as the son of a politician he is open to all kinds of suspicions and rumours. The villagers begin to like him. They like the fact that he likes them.

Maan's nephew, Bhaskar had accident in the stampede at Pul Mela. Maan becomes upset as he is Maan's favourite Bhaskar also delights in Maan's company. Veena has a good sense of her brother's moods. She knows that Maan has always been good-humoured unless he is both baulked and perplexed. He has a bad temper, but he is seldom irritable. Maan thinks that his father has no good opinion about him and takes objection in whatever he does.

Maan and his father visit Baitar. At Baitar fort Munshi praises Maan in front of his father as an upright, decent young man. In Debaria Rasheed's grandfather also praises Maan as a good boy; he is very respectful of their ways; he has won their hearts by his simplicity. Mahesh Kapoor is astonished by seeing Maan's abundant popularity in Rudia District. He thinks with amazement that there are too activities necessary for politician – the ability to win votes and the copacity to do something after victory – Maan possesses the first in abundant, He now says to Maan 'At any rate, even if you didn't learn much Urdu, you were not wasting your time! (1009) Maan cannot remember the last time his father has praised him. A couple of times of happiness comes to his eyes. During canvassing Mahesh Kapoor shows belief in Maan by discussings things in that constituency. Maan can understand the situation so he suggests his father to go around the constituency with Firoz as 'That will make a Hindu-Muslim pair in each jeep.' (1169) He enjoys meeting people and asking for their votes on his fathers behalf. Maan thinks, 'Certainly, I enjoy it more than most other things I've done, But even if I do manage to become an MLA, what will I do once I get there?' (1177) During the days of canvassing he is so busy. And yet he remembers Saeeda Bai. For Maan it is new expenience to be obsessed by one woman for so long, sexually and emotionally.

When Maan returns Brahmpur after canvassing he goes to see Saeeda. But no sooner does he enter her house, he finds her indifferent and rather offensive. When he comes to know by mistake that she is avoiding to see him, he becomes very much angry. He thinks that the woman he has loved has betrayed

him, so he attempts to strangle her. During this conflict, Firoz who is present with Tasneem comes to her rescue. On seeing Firoz, Maan feels jealous, and considers Firoz as a rival. So he hits Firoz with a fruit knife.

After the inquiry Maan is put behind bars. In the midst of his regret and repentance, he asks Pran to convey his bitter regret and continuing love to Saeeda Bai. Meanwhile Mrs. Kapoor has died and he blames himself for his mother's death. He thinks he will never forgive himself and also no one in the family will forgive him. When he hears the rumours floating around the Nawab and Saeeda Bai, he has fits of almost suicidal misery. When Firoz who is serious becomes better, for Maan it is as if he has come out of the valley of the shadow of his death. Firoz's danger has given him the sense of how much he loves Firoz.

When Maan is free on bail, it seems that he has totally changed. He is not very fond of reading but these days he spends whole mornings with newspapers. He receives Firoz's note requesting to visit him. It is the thing he has been waiting for all along rather than a summons from the court. Because of his mother's death, Firoz's danger, his own disgrace, his terrible sense of guilt he has begun to suffer a violent repulsion of feeling against himself and saeeda. So now he finds that he has an explicably lost his eagerness to meet her. He simply admits to her, 'I am to blame for all that has happened,(1303) Now his attitude to look at love is also changed. Finally he is released because of Firoz's statement on his side. Maan is both disturbed and amazed by Firoz's such statement. Because of all these happenings Maan has become unsociable.



Maan is basically charming, spontaneous and likable although undeniably direction less and self-indulgent. His character flow is addiction to passion, that is to his strange love for that elegant and artful courtesan – musician Saeeda Bai. We see Maan has become mature in the end than we find him in the beginning.

**vii) Saeeda Bai :**

Saeeda Bai Firozabadi is a courtesan. Her mother Mohsinabai, has settled in the infamous alley of Tarbur ka Bazaar, and Saeeda Bai is brought up in this part of the city of Bramhpur. Saeeda Bai is a woman of about thirty five, yet she is very beautiful. She has a fine, rich and powerfully emotional voice. She is certainly lovely more than her beauty and more than her clothes, jewels and even her exceptional natural talent and musical training. She seems to be both bold and vulnerable – irresistible combination. She behaves very much to suit her own inclinations. This policy or rather tendency, has done her a great deal of harm professionally if her voice and her manner has not been as captivating as they are. She is full of manners. No wonder she loves doing adaab to anyone she sees. She enjoys most of all singing the ghazals of Mir and Ghalib. She also has a taste for Vali Dakkani and for Mast. She herself is notorious for choosing a single person, good-looking in the audience and addressing all her songs to that one person. Since much Urdu poetry has been addressed by poets to young men, she finds it mischievous to find such references to male dress.

When she was seventeen she has come to the attention of many lords. But before that she was raped by Nawab Sahib in drunken state when she was only

fourteen. Now her fame as a singer has spread around Brahmipur. She is invited to sing on the eve of Holi as she is there for the last two years. Being a sensuous singer, having a strongly intellectual taste, she indulges in singing gharals of Ghalib. As per one audiences offer she sings the ghazal 'Where have those meetings and those partings gone?' Along with all the guests Maan is so much affected by that ghazal that he falls in love with her though she does not give response. She admires Maan's father as an old patron of the arts.' (110)

Afterwards Maan uses to visit her house often as she used to welcome him and sing for him. She gets the book of poetical works of Ghalib with romantic pictures of men and women by Maan as a present. She is happy and thinks that Maan is the only man she likes and has a complete control over him. But she finds that he is so passionate towards her that she thinks of keeping him away while entertaining her patrons. She thinks of love as 'ill-natured thing that makes enemies even of friends.' (354) she feels distressed in his absence and feels raptured when sees him after a long time. She tells Maan that it will be more unjust 'If the heavens had kept us longer apart.' (803)

Saeeda realizes that she loves Maan very much. She is not the kind of woman who thrives on ill – treatment or values those who hurt her. Maan's danger has caused her to realize how much she loves him. But now Maan has inexplicably lost his eagerness to see her. After sending two – three notes, he finally comes but shows no interest in her sayings or askings. She complains about his indifferent attitude towards him. She expresses her condition without him that she is ill, she is desperate to see him. She is going mad without him but in vain. She is hurt and

frustrated by his behaviour. Yet she thanks God for keeping him safe when he is released. She sees him with all his faults and yet cannot cut him off from her life. Thus Saeeda seems to be humane. She is very protective of her sister though she is not her real sister. She is a thwarted person and very sympathetic one because of that.

### **Minor Characters –**

#### **i) Mahesh Kapoor:**

Mahesh Kapoor is the Revenue Minister in S. S. Sharma's ministry in Purva Pradesh. His house Prem Nivas is large, C – shaped, cream coloured, two storey family house which is situated in the quietest greenest residential area of the ancient city – Brahmpur. He has a farm in Rudhia and cloth business in Banaras. He is very kind and gentle man. He is sympathetic to economic hardship because he himself has tested it as a veteran freedom- fighter. He has spent several years in jails for Independence and at that time his family has to struggle for economic needs.

Mahesh Kapoor is Seth's ideal politician. He is upright and law – abiding. For him politics is to serve the people. He works sincerely and endlessly. He is not corrupt like the other politicians. He does not believe in distinctions in castes. He is the one who believes in simple living and high thinking.

#### **ii) Nawab Sahib:**

Nawab Sahib is an old aristocrat, a big landlord. He lives in huge handsome Baitar House. He owns a Baitar fort in Rudhia District. He is kind and considerate. He is helpful. He is a loving father. He seems to be true friend of Mahesh Kapoor.

He is a widower. After the death of his wife he has become more religious and less sociable. He is very much fond of reading So he spends his time in his library.

**iii) Firoz:**

Firoz is the younger son of the Nawab Sahib of Baitar, a landlord. He is a very handsome young man. He is a lawyer and practices it. He is an addict to his profession. He is a true friend of Maan. So though he is harmed by Maan dangerously he saves Maan giving the statement on his side. He is well brought cheek up young man who has heart in real sense.

**iv) Arun:**

Arun is the eldest of the Mehra children. He is a brown- white sahib. He is the follower of the British thoughts and clothes. He is intelligent. He works as one of the few executives in the prestigious and largely white firm of Bensten & Pryce. He is self- conscious and self-centred. He likes an artificial life. He is snobbish. He represents modernity. In fact, he is a pucca brown sahib. He is married with Meenakshi Chatterji, a Bengali Brahmin and has a daughter, Aparna.

**v) Meenakshi Mehra:**

Meenakshi is the elder daughter of Mr. Justice Chatterji, a judge of Calcutta High Court. Now she is Arun's glamorous wife and Mrs. Rupa's disrespectful daughter-in -law. She represents modernity. She likes to enjoy life doing nothing but attending parties, dancing and playing Canasta. She can never miss her Canasta. She is expert in dancing 'tango'. She is a perfect memsahib. She is a careless mother. She has illicit relation with Billy Irani.

vi) **Dipankar :**

Dipankar is the middle child of Mr Justice Chatterji. He is a genius. He has acquired the degree in Economics. But he spends most of his time in reading about the poet and patriot Sri Aurobindo. He is a religious person and also believes in mysticism. He is indecisive by nature. He is always on a lookout for a prey. His permanent victim is Varun. Despite his mystical and religious tendencies, he is fond of even foolish young women. In fact, he is a psychotic case.

Seth's most characteristic achievement in supplying the faithful description of the India of 1951-52 has been compared to the classics of the world literature, say War and Peace and Dr. Zivago. This, Seth could do, I believe, is through his strong strokes of characterization – the very subtle but comic Mrs Rupa Mehra and the good – for – nothing Amit, the impractical lover etc. Seth successfully combines the prose of life with its poetry while drawing his major as well as minor characters.

iii) **Dialogue :**

i) “The word ‘Dialogue’ means ‘a conversation’, ‘a speaking together’.

Dialogue involves an exchange of opinions or ideas and is used in narrative of opinions or ideas and is used in narrative poetry, short stories, novels, and plays to reveal characters and to advance action”<sup>60</sup> - Harry Shaw.

ii) “The dialogue is generally the most agreeable part of a novel, but it is only so long as it tends in some way to the telling of the main story”<sup>61</sup> - Anthony Trollope.

Dialogue does more than present persons as actually speaking. Their words may reveal their natures, being adopted in rhythm, in colour, in diction - even in quantity - to their various characters. Through the dialogue, the persons are balanced one against another, thus each the more fully portrayed. At the same time it gives an air of actuality to the action - which it also carries along, growing out of and forwarding the basic struggle. Furthermore, in fiction, it adds variety, relief and greater naturalness; by the necessary shift to the present tense, it brings the action nearer, makes it seem more swift and more intense.

The novelist cannot put down everything his characters will really say in the given circumstances. He has only to listen to five minutes of true - life dialogue to realise that normal conversation will be unbearably tedious in a novel. Therefore, the novelist must prune and edit his speeches, directing them towards what is essential for the forward movement of his story and the delineation of character.

Every line of dialogue must be precisely tailored for the person concerned. In a good novel the novelist can usually tell who is speaking even from isolated sentences. Everyone has his individual choice of words, and manner of framing remarks. Good fiction dialogue contains no inessentials. The novelist must keep it crisp and entertaining. There is a kind of dialogue to which Dianne Doubtfire calls "ping-pong dialogue"- sentences are tossed backwards and forwards with mechanical rhythm as the ball never hits the net or bounces onto the floor. In actual conversation people are continually breaking off, interrupting one another, changing the subject, answering the wrong question, becoming embarrassed, losing their tempers....One

hears a great deal of what people say is designed to conceal the truth rather than reveal it.

Vikram Seth, like Jane Austen prefers even-tenored characters. Apparently they are not supposed to be transparent. To suit such characters Seth uses 'bonsai dialogue.'<sup>62</sup> According to Dileep Padgoankar, Seth, by temperament, tends to be taciturn.'<sup>63</sup> Therefore, his dialogues show flippancy, urgency and anxiety. The conversation between Maan and his father shows this :

"What is good enough for your brother is good enough for you."

"Yes, Baoji," ...

"What did I say?"...

"About marriage, Baoji" ...

"What about marriage?" (6)

Another Situation in which Savita and Lata discuss about Pran :

Lata asks Savita,

"Do you love Pran?"...

"Of course I do"...

'Why "of course", Didi ?'

'I don't know'...(173)

To show mental derangement of Amit Seth uses a small dialogue between Lata and Amit :

"How far have you got so far with writing it (novel)?"...

"I'm about a third of the way."

"And aren't I wasting your time?"...

“No.”

“It’s about the Bengal Famine, isn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“Do you have any memory of the famine yourself?”

“I do. I remember it only too well. It was only eight years ago.”... “I was somewhat active in student politics then. But do you now, we had a dog even then, and fed it well.”

“He looked distressed.”(484)

In other incident Kabir tells Lata that there are more important things in the world than exams. Lata asks :

“Like what?”...

“Like friendship,”...

“Really ?”...

“Really, ”...(140)

In another incident Maan and Rasheed’s uncle, Netaji are going on his motor cycle to Salimpur. Netaji asks :

“Can you hear me?”

“Perfectly”

“How about the flies?”

“No, you’re my shield.”

...“You must have a lot of contacts.”

“Contacts ?”

“Yes, contacts, contacts, you know what I mean.”



“But -”

“You should use your contacts to help us, I’m sure you could get me a kerosene dealer’s licence..!”

Once While saying Good-bye Haresh says to Lata :

“Au revoir, then...”

“Au revoir....”

“Why are you laughing”....”Were you laughing at me?”

“Yes”,.... “I was. Thank you.”

“For what?”...

“For a very enjoyable day”... “I wont forget it”

“Neither will I....”

As Agarwalla says,“The Novel starts like Pride and Prejudice, in a dramatic method, full of dialogues, actions and unfolding of characters, like the unfolding of flowers in the morning”.<sup>64</sup>

iv) **Setting** :

Many scholars define the term 'setting' differently. For example:

i) Setting means "the manner, position or direction in which Something is set, or the temporal and spatial environment of the action of a narrative, or the scenic environment indoors or out including all the physical surroundings within which a scene of a play or motion picture is enacted"<sup>65</sup> -Webster.

ii) "The term setting is usually applied in literature to the locale, i.e. the setting (scene) of a novel or period in which the action of a play, novel, motion picture, etc. takes place"<sup>66</sup>- Harry Shaw.

The choice of setting will obviously depend on the novelist's characters and his story. But the scenes he chooses must have such an effect on the atmosphere he evokes that they deserve very careful consideration. The novelist can imbue the reader with a sense of horror, mystery, isolation, peace, violence, sorrow, gaiety, or any one of a thousand other moods, simply by his choice of scene.

The novelist does not attempt to describe a setting or an experience unless he has first-hand knowledge of something similar. If he has not the inside knowledge, and can not see his way to acquiring it, then tries to plan things differently. As Dianne Doubtfire says, 'Lack of conviction is death to the novel.'<sup>67</sup> The novelist tries to form a visual impression of his setting, whether real or imaginary. He selects its most telling aspects for his description. He is able to see the venue in his mind's eye; if it is a garden, he will know where the gate is and where it leads. He can see the trees and the flowers, the quality of light that shines through the leaves. He knows what time of the year it is, what time of day, what kind of day.

Every scene is like a dream picture, a kind of hallucination deliberately envisaged and yet partly emanating from that mysterious source that feeds the imagination. It can grow out of actual experience, wishful thinking, fear, or perhaps simply from a sense of beauty. To the writer, it is important to plan his locations with a sense of balance. Of course, there are no rules concerning the number or variety of locations. That is, the whole novel may take place in one room, or he can have dozens of different settings. The important point for him is to give his story its own natural setting.

Vikram Seth, though educated and naturalized among many foreign soils, his locale in A Suitable Boy seems to be very Indian. It shows that he has not forgotten the years of his childhood and the surrounding in which he was brought up. Therefore, he catches the tune of the scenes around Calcutta, Kanpur, Lucknow, etc. — the places of importance so that the story becomes gripping and absorbing. Most of the action of A Suitable Boy unfolds in Brahmpur, like Narayan's Malgudi, an invented town on the river Ganga. It is a small province of India, Purva Pradesh, away from Delhi, the seat of central power. It is in this province that the vibrations of internal political conflicts are evident, just as any other part of the country. The time is immediately after the independence i.e. 1951-52. The setting also shifts in rural area in Purva Pradesh. With the help of these different settings, Seth has caught the vividness of Indian life and culture. He has achieved the effect of vastness, confining the universe in the small cosmos of Brahmpur.

The opening scene of the novel is in the great lamp-lit garden of Prem Nivas, Revenue Minister, Mahesh Kapoor's house in Brahmpur where Savita Mehra

and Pran Kapoor's wedding celebration is going on. The location of Prem Nivas is described as follows:

Perhaps this little fire was indeed the centre of the universe. For here it burned, in the middle of this fragrant garden, itself in the heart of Pasand Bagh, the Pleasantest locality of Brahmipur, which was the capital of the state of Purva Pradesh, which lay in the centre of the Gangetic plains, which was itself the heartland of India.... (15)

The ancestral Baitar House, where the Nawab Sahib and his sons lived, is one of the most handsome buildings in Brahmipur. Its interior and outward appearance is described in this way:

A long, pale yellow facade, dark green shutters, colonnades, high ceilings, tall mirrors, immensely heavy dark furniture, chandeliers, oil portraits of previous aristocratic denizens and framed photographs along the corridors commemorating the visits of various high British officials: most visitors to the huge house, surveying their surroundings, succumbed to a kind of gloomy awe....(265)

Through the description of its hugeness and vastness the author wants to show the high living of Nawab's in those days of Zamindari.

As a contrast to the aristocratic living standards of the Nawab, the residential area in Misri Mandi, crowded part of the city and Kedarnath Tandon, shoe – trader's house in a narrow lane is described:

As he entered the residential areas of Misri Mandi, the alleys became narrower and cooler and somewhat quieter....

It was a very small house: three storeys and a flat rooftop, with about a room-and-a half on each storey and a central grating in the middle of the stairwell that allowed light from the sky all the way through to the bottom. (91)

The grand houses have grand gardens in front of them. Prem Nivas, Revenue Minister's house, Baitar House, the Nawab's house, Dr.Seth's house have such big and beautiful gardens. For instance, garden of Prem Nivas in late December is beautifully described:

When the honey-scented harsingar had still been in blossom, when the roses were in their first full flush, when the sweet alyssum and sweet william had begun to bloom, when those beds of feathery-leafed larkspur that the partridges had not gobbled down almost to the root were doing their best to recover in front of the tall ranks of equally feathery-leafed but untempting cosmos....the garden had been full of birds: pond- herons, partridges, mynas, small puffed- up grey babblers in their chattering groups of seven, hoopoes and parakeets ... (176).

Seth has made the use of nature to show the feelings of the lovers in the novel. For instance, the scene near the bank of Ganga in the Brahmipur University campus is described as follows:

Half way to the house was a shrubbery of the most fragrant kamini, some bushes of which had grown as tall as trees. The air was thick with their scent, the branches full of small white blossoms against dark-green leaves, the ground covered with petals. As they passed below, he tousled the leaves gently, and a shower of fragrant petals fell on her hair. If she even noticed this, she gave no indication of it. (186)

Seth has also shown the scene on the commercial street in Brahmipur:

...Nabiganj, the commercial street that marked the end of spaciousness and the start of clutter and confusion... Nabiganj was the fashionable shopping street where the quality of Brahmipur were to be seen strolling up and down of an evening.... Bookshops like the Imperial Book Depot, well-stocked general stores such as Dowling and snapp, fine tailors such as Magourian's... the Praha shoe shop, an elegant jeweller's, restaurants and coffee houses such as the Red Fox... and two cinema-halls- Manorama Talkies and the Rialto. (88-89)

Seth has described the scenes at the shoe market, the bird market, the vegetable market in Brahmipur. For example, the location and the scene at Brahmipur vegetable market is described:

He turned towards Tarbuz Ka Bazaar, past the road leading to the mosque, then into the comparatively open area of local vegetable market. He moved from stall to stall ... It was good to see tomatoes still plentiful and at a tolerable price so late in the season. Besides, they made the market look more cheerful. It was a pity that the season for spinach was almost over . . . And carrots, cauliflowers, cabbages, all were virtually gone till next winter. Even those few that were available were dry, dingy, and dear, and had none of the flavour of their peak. (362)

The scene at Brahmpur Literary Society at the time of lecture is depicted as follows:

There was an air of great excitement at 20 Hastings Road. The stuffed chairs with their flowery prints were all occupied. Glasses of water covered with lace doilies stood on the table from which Mr Nowrojee would introduce the speaker and Amit would recite his poetry. Mrs Nowrojee's rock-like delicacies lurked in a nearby room. (1250)

The room, in Haridas Collage of Music where Ustad Majeed Khan uses to teach his disciples is described in the following words:

The room that he entered was a plain, rectangular, high-ceilinged box with not very much natural light. What few rays came in from outside were provided by a small skylight high on the far wall. On the wall to the left . . . was a long cupboard with a rack where a number of tanpuras were resting. On the floor was a pale blue unpatterned cotton rug . . . . (291)

In contrast with the developed area of Brahmipur city there is filthy area where the people of jatav caste or low caste Muslim prepare leather. For example, the scene at the spot where the jatavs are making leather:

. . . . a large open area surrounded by shacks and pockmarked by circular pits which had been dug into the ground and lined with hardened clay. A fearsome stench rose from the entire zone . . . . Some of the pits were filled with a white liquid, others with a brown tannic brew. Dark, scrawny men dressed only in lungis stood to one side of the pits, scraping off fat and hair from a pile of hides. (200-01)

The area where the shoemakers prepare shoes is named as Ravidaspur. The surrounding, in the morning, of this area shows the poverty. It comes vividly before our eyes in telling glimpses Seth gives in the novel as follows:

People in rags were moving about the lanes among the thatched mud huts . . . . a thick whitish vapour lay over the black water of the open sewer, where people were performing their morning ablutions . . . . A couple of electric wires hung casually from poles or were tangled among the branches of a dusty tree. A few houses tapped illegally into this meagre source by slinging a wire over the main line. From the dark interiors of other huts came the flicker of makeshift lamps: tins filled with Kerosene, whose smoke filled the huts. (219)



The Calcutta setting provides Seth with an opportunity to explore the snobbery and the promiscuity of the Calcutta high society, imaged, one might say, as India's vanity fair. Seth shows the elegance, the splash, and the grandeur of Calcutta. England's green and pleasant land has been washed up on Calcutta's Hooghly banks. The glamorous scene of the party in the grand drawing room in the Chatterji's house in Ballygunge is depicted vividly:

In the grand drawing room with its grand piano and grander chandelier milled scores of guests in full summer evening finery, the women fluttering and flattering and sizing each other up, the men engaging themselves in more self-important chatter. British and India, Bengali and non-Bengali, old and middle aged and young, Saries Shimaesing and necklaces glimmering Crisp Shantipuri dhotis edged with a fine line of a gold and hand – creased to perfection, Kurtas of raw off – white silk with gold buttons, chiffon saries of various pastel hues, white cotton saris with red borders, Dhakai saris with a white back ground a pattern in the weave – or (Still more elegant) a gray background with a white design, white dinner – jackets with black trousers and black bow – ties and black patent lather Derbys or Oxfords ... (388)

The picture on roads of Calcutta at different times is described. Road, late at night is depicted in the following words:

The drove by the Victoria Memorial, where the ice-cream and jhaal-muri sellers provisioned the couples and families who had come out for a stroll in the comparative cool of the evening. Chowringhee was uncrowded. Even at night the broad and spacious frontage of the street presented an impressive appearance. To the left a few late trams plied along the edge of the Maidan.

(432)

Amit offers Lata to show the Park Street on the Christmas Eve. It is seen by Amit and Lata as follows:

They had been driving along Chowringhee, parts of which were lit up- especially the larger stores, the Grand Hotel, and Firpos. Now they were at the crossing of Park Street. Here a large reindeer complete with Santa and sled was illuminated by large coloured bulbs. Several people were strolling along the side of Chowringhee adjacent to the Maidan, enjoying the festive atmosphere . . . . On both sides, multi coloured strings of lights and brightly coloured festoons of crepe hung from the fronts of shops and restaurants: Flury's, Kwality's, Peiping, Magnolia's. . . . When they got to the tall Christmas tree by the petrol pump Lata said: 'Electricity growing on trees.' (1136)

Seth has also depicted the places of poetic interest vividly. For instance, the scene at the Park Street Cemetery is described while raining:

They walked through a wrought-iron gate. The cemetery was laid out in a grid with narrow avenues between clusters of tombs. A few soggy palm trees stood here and there in clumps . . . It was a melancholy pace.

and old alike... lay buried here, compacted under great slabs and pyramids, mausolea and cenotaphs, urns and columns, all decayed and greyed now by ten generations of Calcutta heat and rain... Rich, rain-fed grass grew between the graves... Walter Savage Landor... lies buried here.... Thackeray's father and one of Dickens' sons, and the original for Byron's Don Juan. (451)

The setting has changed from city to the country again and again. The difference between the condition and life in city and village strikes us. We see totally contrast picture in case of roads, surroundings nature, houses etc. when the train passes through the city and moves into open countryside, the change in the scenes on both sides of the railway track is depicted. Maan vaguely registers this:

. . . villages and fields . . . some parched and dusty and fallow, others yellow with wheat or green with other crops . . . A mosque or a temple, a few neem or pipal or banyan trees, a boy driving goats along a dusty dirt track, the sudden turquoise flash of a kingfisher.

(500)

In contrast to the roads in the city the road from Salimpur to Debaria is shown as follows:

The rickshaw jolted and swerved along the pitted road that led from Salimpur to Rasheed's native village of Debaria. It was evening and everywhere birds were chattering in the trees. The neem trees rustled in the warm evening breeze. Underneath a small stand of straight, broad- leafed

Debaria is a typical village of India. It is not very different in appearance from a thousands other villages in Rudhia District in Purva Pradesh. Its appearance is vividly depicted in such words:

Mud walls within which people lived (often together with their cattle), thatched roofs, narrow lanes with no windows facing onto them (the conservative heritage of centuries of conquest and brigandage), the very occasional whitewashed one-storey brick house belonging to a 'big person' in the village. Cows and dogs mandered down the lanes, neem trees raised their heads from inner countryside or near a village well, the low minarets of a small white mosque stood near the centre of the village close to the five brahmin houses and the bania's shop. Only to families had their own hand-pump: Rasheed's and one other. The rest of the population – about four hundred families in all – obtained their water from one of three wells: the Muslim well, which stood in an open space near a neem tree, the caste-Hindu well which stood in an open space near a pipal tree, and the outcaste or untouchable well, which stood at the very edge of the village among a dense cluster of mud huts, not far from a tanning pit. (520)

The picture of the effect of a violent sudden summer thunderstorm on the village surrounding is drawn thus:

It lashed through the trees and fields, whipped away thatch and even a few tiles from the houses in the village, and drenched the dusty ground. Those who had looked up at the clouds – so often bringers of nothing but the occasional gust of wind – and had decided to sleep outside anyway to avoid the heat, had picked up their charpoys and rushed inside when, without more warning than a heavy drop or two, the clouds had burst over their heads. Then they had gone out again to bring in the cattle tethered outside. (528-29)

Salimpur is a town in a Rudhia District. The people of the many of the surrounding villages including Debaria have to come to Salimpur for buying things or doing anything else. Salimpur used to have the weekly market. The picture of this market is depicted thus:

The narrow, crowded streets of a Salimpur were completely packed . . . .  
. Hawkers, Peddlers, vendors of every kind, snake-charmers with their torpid cobras, quacks, tinkers, fruit-sellers with baskets of mangoes and lichis on their heads, sweet sellers, their barfis and luddus and jalebis encrusted with flies, and a great part of the population not only of salimpur but of many of the surrounding villages, had managed to squeeze into the centre of the town . . . . There was a tremendous din.

Above the babble of the customers and the shouts of the hawkers came the conflicting sounds of two screeching loud speaker, one blessings out the current broadcast from All India Radio Brahmpur, the other inter spacing its medley of him songs with advertisements for Raahat – e – Rooh or Ease – for – the – soul hair oil (617 – 18)

Seth has given vivid and precise description of the scenes at many places in the towns as well as villages. While reading we feel that we are actually watching these scenes.

v) **Point of View :**

The novelist uses the point of view as a second device for solving his difficulties. It is the point of view from which the story may be told. To some critics this is the fundamental device. While commenting on the importance of the point of view Georges Simenon says, "It is not only a question of the artist's looking into himself but also of his looking into others with the experience he has of himself. He writes with sympathy because he feels that the other man is like him".<sup>68</sup>

'Point of view' means an attitude, judgement, or opinion. In literature, according to Harry Shaw, Point of View has several meanings :

1. Physical point of view has to do with the position in time and space from which a writer approaches, views, and describes his material;
2. Mental point of view involves an author's feeling and attitude towards his subject;
3. Personal point of view concerns the relation through which a writer narrates or discusses a subject, whether first, second or third person.

In personal point of view, several arrangements are possible. If a writer assumes the point of view of a character, he becomes an "author participant" and usually writes in the first person. This is the point of view of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, who, as author, relates what happened to him reveals his own feelings in his own words. If the writer adopts the point of view of a minor character, he becomes an "author observant" who sits on the sidelines and reports the story. For instance, in several of Conrad's stories, the narrator observes more than he participates. When an author selects an impersonal point of view and detaches himself completely, he

becomes Godlike, an “author omniscient”. He sees all, hears all, knows all : his all seeing eye can focus wherever he pleases; he can see into the minds of characters, and even report everyone’s innermost thoughts. For instance, Tackeray’s Vanity Fair is written from an omniscient point of view. In lengthy works of fiction, writers sometimes employ combinations of the methods of point of view.

According to Macauley and Lanning, there are three approaches to the Point of View :

- i. Narrator - Agent or Dramatised Narrator
- ii. I, He Or She
- iii. Omniscient

**i) Narrator Agent :**

The agent device is an ancient one in fiction, but modern novelists, beginning in the era of James and Conrad, have made it into strategy. The idea that lay behind the use of a narrator - agent came from a revulsion against the many eighteenth - and nineteenth - century writers who made a habit of “authorial intrusions”. This is a matter of banishing the story for the time being and permitting the author in his own voice and person, to drop in for a chat with the reader. The narrator - agent was invented to carry out a special mission. He is the author’s point of view transformed (either in small ways or in large), personified, and humanised. Because he is on the same scale and in the same setting as the actors. He can move about freely and see broad areas of the story. But he does, in taking the author’s place as teller, accept some limitations and make some sacrifices. He cannot be an omniscient as the author. That is, he can guess shrewdly about what is going on in minds of the principal actors,



but he cannot enter into those minds. The delicate instrument of interior exploration is denied to him. Therefore he has to rely on the cruder tools of attempted mind reading or insight, on what he hears, on careful observation, and on hearsay observation.

The advantage owned by the narrator-agent, is the fact that he is not involved emotionally in the story and that he has a greater chance to gather information from all sources. But there are still certain areas, besides the interiors of other minds that the rules of plausibility deny to him. These are the things that create that small but important "distance" between him and the centres of action.

**ii) I, He or She :**

Henry James called the first person singular "that accursed autobiographic form which puts a premium on the loose, the improvised, the cheap and the easy".<sup>69</sup> There are certain novels that have a true need for the first person teller, provided that he is created and separate being. The autobiographic form, far from being always accursed, can give the effect of the intimacy and involvement to the reader in cases where the third person cannot. The reader's sympathies and identification are likely to be given to the narrator who has a role in the story, and this is somewhat truer of the first person than of the third person teller. Story being told by somebody about himself or herself, presumes that the "I", having gone through certain experiences, now looks back at them from a more mature and knowledgeable standpoint. The reader assumes, first, that the experience was formative and expects to see a formative quality about the story; and second, that the "I" who tells the story is somewhat different from the I

who experiences it. And it is different because he has attained the critical perspective that comes from having lived the whole of it.

It is easier for the author to make "he" or "she"—even if that person is a principal and narrator - act or experience things that do not emerge from autobiography. Frequently, it is psychologically easier for the author to put the third person principal through extremes of experience or expression than to do so for the "I". The third person point of view, then, is just slightly more removed and second hand than is the first person. Though this sacrifices a shade of the total sympathy the reader may have with the character through whom the story is seen, it nevertheless allows the reader to have a view of some aspects of the "He" that are difficult or impossible for the "I" to recognize about itself. For instance, in Andre Malraux's Man's Fate, there is a scene in which a young man (Kyo) listens to his own voice on some records that the revolutionists are using to send secret messages. He can not recognise the voice as his own; and so it is that there are certain things, even very common things, about ourselves, of which we are not aware. It is easier for the author to show such traits about the third person without ostensibly or noticeably departing from his viewpoint.

### iii) **The Omniscient :**

As the actual author and real teller of the fiction is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He must give the impression that the story happens naturally and as the characters will it, and not that it is his arbitrary construction. There will be times when he can borrow the vision of one or another character and observe things from that person's point of view. But there will be other times when the author is entirely

responsible, commenting, abridging or taking a panoramic view. At those times he is the only possible narrator - but he must do this work plausibly, unemphatically, without proclaiming himself. Several critics of technique have spoken of the "invisible narrator", which is a somewhat misleading term. A voice is a very real presence in fiction and the sophisticated reader is usually aware of that voice's identity. The author's tone should be consonant with the fictional surroundings, tuned, as it were, to the pitch of story and thus unobtrusive.

The whole secret of this particular art of narration is the power of metamorphosis. One of the most interesting and important metamorphosis is the ability to possess, for the time being, the mind and outlook of one character; then to revert back to the all-seeing, impersonal vision of omniscient when necessary; and then again to accept limited sight through the eyes of a second character, etc. The author may choose to borrow one character's point of view either briefly and momentarily or over some longer span. In either case, he must be sensitive about his methods because this is a transmutation of view point that must not strike the reader as an annoying magician's trick. It would be better to select only one character for an insight and to bring out whatever else necessary in the form of dialogue — or to response some of the reactions for further exposition.

An author should perform the individual point of view of one of his characters only for well -calculated reasons and for a definite purpose. It is better not to shift point of view within the telling of one incident or within a paragraph. It is most effective when the author sticks close to the point of view he has adopted until he has completed some turn of his story.

The succeeding method of viewing the story is the objective or what has been called the "theatre" method. The characters are all viewed as acting and speaking equally in front of the reader and no one of them has a consciousness open to view. All the emphasis here is on "showing, not telling". It is appropriate to the spoken or acted scene whose intention is to produce a fictional dialectic : conflict, debate, the working out of a problem, the interplay of character. This "detached" point of view is so frequently employed in modern fiction.

Modern writers, to a great extent, have tended to rely heavily on the apparent "telling, not showing" device of symbolism to convey their comment. But symbols are not always opposite and they can be very cumbersome. They run the risk of being either too subtle and thus ineffective with the reader or too obvious or too ambiguous. The point when an explicit comment demands to be made arises again and again, and the author can not continue to evade without letting both intelligibility and intelligence disappear from the story.

The final answer to the question "Through whose eyes should we see ?" is , of course, dependent on the nature of the story and the angle or angles from which the author wishes to watch it. If one kind of viewpoint proves inadequate for all that the writer wishes to give about his material, he should use another or a combination of others. Point of view has an important relevance to characterization, narrative method, and final meaning. Its selection should be made with a view to aiding, rather than limiting, the development of these other essential elements.

In the novel A Suitable Boy Seth plays the role of an omniscient observer while telling the story. Seth himself has admitted "there are two aspects of

omniscience : the tone of omniscience, i.e., the permission the writer gives himself or herself to any thoughts of the character, he or she may be interested in. Secondly, when you determine what the characters will do. As far as the first is concerned, I am sometimes omniscient, sometimes semi-omniscient, sometimes ignorant".<sup>70</sup> Being an omniscient observer Seth has given the impression that the story in the novel happens naturally. With the help of so many characters, some major and some minor, the story is presented and carried out. Some events happen in their own life or some events happen in the life of their family members and friends. Sometimes they are eye-witness of some happenings and they see them from their own point of view. Seth has also taken a panoramic view of the society, the politics, the family relationships and the religious attitude of the people just after the independence of India, in 1951-52.

Sometimes Seth has pierced into the minds of his characters and expressed them through their doings or their thoughts. For example,

Mrs. Rupa Mehra glanced in a cursory manner over her piles of old New Year cards before returning to the birthday roses. She took out a small pair of scissors from the recesses of her great black hand bag, and tried to decide which card she would have to sacrifice. It was very rarely that Mrs. Rupa Mehra bought a card for anyone, no matter how close or dear the person was. The habit of necessary thrift had sunk deep into her mind, but eight years of the deprivation of small luxuries could not reduce for her the sanctity of the birthday greeting. She could not afford cards, so she made them. In fact she enjoyed the creative challenge of making them. Scraps of cardboard, shreds of ribbon, lengths of coloured paper, little silver stars and adhesive golden numerals lay in a variegated trove at the bottom of the largest of her three suitcases, and these were now pressed into service. (38)

Sometime Seth has shown his characters thinking about others persons, how one person thinks about other person. For example, Mrs.Rupa feels about younger daughter Lata during the wedding of her elder daughter, is what Seth wants to show about the anxiety of the mother of searching of suitable boy for the daughter :

What on earth had got into the girl? What was good enough for her mother and her mother's mother and her mother's mother's mother should be good enough for her. Lata, though, had always been a difficult one, with a strange will of her own, quiet but unpredictable - like that time in St.Sophia's when she had wanted to become a nun! But Mrs.Rupa Mehra too had a will and she was determined to have her own way, even if she was under no illusions as to Lata's pliability.(22)

The whole secret of the art of narration is the power of metamorphosis. Seth has used this very skilfully. For instance, in case of Hareh Seth, sometimes himself tells about him as follows :

He did not mourn for his lost managerial status because he was the kind of man who preferred not to look back, and because in any case there was plenty of work to be done - and, what he liked most of all, battles to be fought, challenges to be overcome. As a Foreman he had been put in charge of the Goodyear Welted line, which was the most prestigious line in the factory; Havel and Kurilla and the others knew that he could make this shoe-of-a-hundred-operations from scratch with his own rigid-thumbed hands, and would therefore be able to diagnose most problems in production and quality control. (1112).

While expressing the characters from his point of view Seth has done it plausibly, unemphatically without proclaiming himself. Sometime he makes Haresh to tell about himself:

I've only been at CLFC a year, but I'm establishing a whole new department and I've got them orders that they didn't have the know-how or the initiative to get themselves. But there's no future in it, that's the trouble. Ghosh is the tope man, and it's all family owned, and I can't aspire to anything really.....(554)

At other time Arun expresses his thoughts about Haresh through the letter to Mrs.Rupa.: (937)

According to one of the press reports Seth wants to be a plain story-teller and that he is driven by the characters and the plot. In his interview he says, "modernism has had a long innings, but.... it's all too self-conscious. Style gets in the way of the content".<sup>72</sup> This sufficiency supports the point of view Seth has while narrating the story of A Suitable Boy. Through out the novel we find that Seth's voice is a very real presence, and we become aware of his voice's identity. His voice is consonant with the fictional surroundings to the pitch of story and is therefore, unobtrusive.

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## Chapter IV

### Conclusions

Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy's beginning reminds one of the often – quoted first sentence of Pride and Prejudice which indicates that marriage is to be the central concern of that three – decker novel. However, befitting to Indian ethos, Seth indicates that marriage is the central concern but with a difference. The difference is in the ironic tone the title of the novel itself holds and it is in tune with the ceremonies, rituals that take place in the novel and there is no subversion of assumptions regarding marriage. Though Seth presents his characters with the desire to subvert, they only realize the futility of such efforts of going away from the tradition. They finally see harmony in arranged marriages and therefore support the views of the elders.

Marriage has been a major and recurring concern in this novel like in English fiction from the time the novel emerged as a distinct literary form. With the exception of Defoe and Sterne, all the eighteenth – century novelists tended to write about a web of human relationships out of which at least the central strand terminates in marriage. Marriage proved such a favourite theme because several areas of human experience could converge on it: particularly the Indian concern with class and caste stratification, the rich narrative potential of property inheritance, history and individual rebellion – all these could be made to subsume within a central focus on marriage as Seth does show in A Suitable Boy. He also makes Lata, woman as the central character for whom there is a special significance in the convention. Men can make numerous choices in their lives and find a place in

individual effort, for women marriage is the only means of social mobility, one of the few areas within which they could exercise choice, and the only means of determining identity in a society that denied them autonomy. Seth's A Suitable Boy ends with Lata's marriage to Haresh, the boy of her mother's choice but Lata manipulates the existing narrative conventions subtly to comment upon a wide range of social and moral situations, including the predicament of a sensitive woman in a predominantly materialistic and patriarchal (mother taking the place of the father though!) society. One notices the sympathy Seth has for the woman's situation in society, emphasizing a feminist subtext.

As far as the narrative technique of A Suitable Boy is concerned, one notices Seth's perfect hold on the scheme of the novel structure and texture too. All the important characters are introduced in the beginning itself because the novel begins with a marriage which is a propelling factor that keeps the novel moving—Lata's elder sister, Savita is the bride and the atmosphere is a symbolic social ritual of marriage. The middle of the novel is full with movements and changes of time in history and locale. The novel also ends in a marriage of Lata. The journey of a new life begins with the married couple travelling in a train. If the structure of The God of Small Things is 'spiral', the structure of A Suitable Boy is 'linear.'

The narrative of the novel has totality and coherence. Post-modernism has multiple forms but Vikram Seth rejects the intricacy of texture and pervasive congestion and complexity of utterance. He, like James, Faulkner, Hemingway, 'lets slip into his narration words that are mastered or possessed. The emergency of Seth's writing cannot help but require idiosyncrasy.'<sup>1</sup>

The major characters are all very lively and are individualized from the beginning. However, Lata emerges as a woman of will and spirit who thinks for herself. In the society within which she lives there is very little space for the exercise of will. She has only the power of refusal, not of selection. The institution of marriage on the part of the woman and therefore Lata has to marry Haresh.

Language is a major means of characterization in A Suitable Boy. The way sentences are formed and words are chosen in a dialogue reveal a lot about the speakers' personalities. Precision of language is an indication of correct sensibility. Although Seth depends heavily on dialogue for characterization, he also uses other devices like direct authorial comment, or offering his own summary of the character. Seth always has a serious objection for a romantic overdose and advocates the revival of the solid Victorian-type novel or, to be precise, he wants to belong to the tradition of writers like Jane Austen and George Eliot. However, A Suitable Boy propagates neutral language and therefore, it is called a 'reader-friendly writing'<sup>2</sup> by Krishna Rayan.

In the end it can be concluded that Vikram Seth's technique in A Suitable Boy is cleverly evocative: each chapter title chooses a particular situation, event or object such as 'Browsing through books', 'a medal melts away', 'Blood soaks a lane', and 'The curtain falls' ... which then becomes the focal point around which his themes arrange themselves. The narrative sensitively weaves its way through the love-hate relationship of two important participants of an episode around whom the story flows like the river Ganges in the novel. This novel has many things ranging from the overthrowing of feudal systems to the elections to the Parliament, college life and environment,

complexities of joint families, parties, ghazals, plays, hooliganism etc. It is like a warm covering woven out of many patches of cloth. There is the linearity of narrative, closure and above all transparency which is a dominant value of this novel. In the words of Supriya Karunakaran "it is ~~through~~ writers like Vikram Seth and Shashi Tharoor that a revival of Indian thought and Philosophy is possible ... these people ~~apparently~~ challenge the system, but actually infuse it with new life and vigour."<sup>3</sup> Therefore an indepth study of such ~~me~~ metafiction are a must.

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