

Sufferings of the People During Colonized: A Critical Study on Vikram Seth's *The Suitable Boy*

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Abstract

This paper discuss the sufferings of the people during colonized in Vikram Seth's *The Suitable Boy*. Both Lata and Varun, portrayed as submission subjects of the dominants since they engage the habit of overly obedient and reject resistance. though is seems like the easy way out, their reasons for behaving this way are quite complicated, first their material need, both are young and jobless, they have no choice other than depending on their families. Vikram Seth's reflects the same sufferings in his novel, *The Suitable Boy* this is going to be analysed. Based on the fundamental understanding, there are two kinds of people who have different assumptions on situations. one assumes the situation as their fate and move accordingly. Based on the fundamental understanding, there are two kinds of people who have different assumptions on situations. one assumes the situation as their fate.

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The establishment of someone's power over someone else can be called as colonialism. Due to the influence of colonisers, in India the colonising habit taken place in the minds of the people. And their arises the people of colony's sufferings. There are number of works which reflects this problems and sufferings faced by the people of colonies. One of the prominent South Asian writer Vikram Seth's reflects the same sufferings in his novel, *The Suitable Boy* this is going to be analysed.

Based on the fundamental understanding, there are two kinds of people who have different assumptions on situations. one assumes the situation as their fate and move accordingly. And the other resist the situation which prevent their happiness. the former accept the attacks of colonisers as their fate and avoid any kinds of reaction against them. these characters are known as lethargic. They usually do not resist against the situation that prevent their happiness. In the selected novel *Late*, for instance, though she is in love with Labor, marries Hares at the end due to the wish of Mrs. Rupa Mehra, since she belongs to the subordinate family and brought up so, she has no power to say 'not. Unlike her elder brother, Lata and Varun are very much like each other.

Sometimes the circumstances and atmosphere may not change the minds of the subordinate people. *Late* and her brother educated in western style, they are not the type to copy the British. Just because they belongs to the category of people who do not have any rights to raise voice and to be dominant, they simply obey the order even if it is against to their happiness. Their sense of obeying is not only what they have been taught to do but also a matter of self interest. "I always obey my mother, said Lata. And besides, who will pay my hostel fees if she doesn't?" (ASB)9. So their relationship can be consider as a business relationship. For Instance she let her mother to use her power over her and in return she is allowed to go to school. Likewise, Varun since he doesn't have a

job, is allowed to live in their house, eat and drink in exchange for obeying the rules. At the house he was beard as a dependent or parasite in return he is supposed to put up with Arun in silence “He (Varun) was too well aware that while he lived in his elder brothers house he was subject to his elder brothers will” (ASB, 27).

The colonisers continue to step on the people if they fails to resist. similarly the two colonisers in the selected novel Arun and Mrs. Rupa Mehra, colonized two innocent obedient subordinates, Varun and Lata. Since Varun lacks self-confidence, he is afraid of his brother Arun and he easily play prank on him. “He (Varun) was thinking, unsure of himself. . .was terrified, in different ways, of both Arun and Meenakshi” (ASB,11). Due to his overly obeying nature they make him to do whatever they want. In the house he was treated like servant by the husband and wife. He make no complaints even after he was treated as a servant. “Well, in the evening Arun Blair and Meenakshi Bhabhi are often out and I have to mind Aparna, said Varun , smiling weakly. Not that I mind, he added” (ASB 27).

Though Lata worried and feel sorry for her brothers condition of being the victim of constant bully of Arun she also undergoes the same trouble from her mother. Yet she does not resist or react the situation. Lata let her mother to make every decision of her life most importantly her marriage. As malate points out “Your mother will get you married off within a year , I’m sure of it. And like an obedient little mouse, you’ll obey her” (ASB 33). And she does. Lata cannot even get her mother out of her mind when she does something that she knows Mrs. Rupa Mehra will not approve of, like when Labor talks to her for the first time in the Imperial Book Depot: “Visions of her mother’s disapproval floated across her mind. she made an effort to push these away”(ASB,53). Her mind is altogether gotten hold of by Mrs. Rupa Mehra. She is so under her mother’s control that Mrs. Rupa Mehra’s physical presence is not necessary to feel the oppression.

Lata was mentally affected by the dominant. During the time of exams she is least bother about her courses but what matters her the most is the reaction of her mother. ‘What will Ma say’ (ASB,148). Whatever she does whether it is good or bad, Mrs. Rupa Mehra’s image is always in her mind. Everything happens in Lata mind and that everything includes her reactions as well. She does not stand up for her rights but she gives passive reactions in her thoughts only: “She felt a great burst of pride for Savita’s father-in-law who had played his part in throwing the English out of this country, and she momentarily forgot all about Sophia Convent and Emma” (ASB,636). Of course this is as temporary a reaction as it is passive, because she will go on taking delight from English literature, especially with Amit.

Another act that expresses the suffering is that when Lata is brutally colonized by Mr. Sahgal. As a dominant person Mr. Sahgal uses his power to sex it molest the innocent girl. She should have avoided him but never tells anyone what has happened to her. Even after pushed into such a horrible situation she kept quiet and forget the incidents. Obviously she has no voice because she’s very much impressed and subjugated by the dominant people. This incident may be portray the submission of the oppressed people. Since she belongs to the group of oppressed Indian woman and also to the group of the colonized Indians. Either way she followed the herd instincts and possess the feelings of guilt and of duty because in order not to be alone opposition to the herd should be avoided. otherwise the herd should leave her since “the herd turns away from anything that is new or unusual” (Freud,64).

Thus for the sake of the society she transforms her personality and give up her desires and personal interest. occasionally she expresses her real self and she suppresses it at once. She protest freely only when she is encouraged by someone out of the group such as Malate. Her ego is formed by her Indian nationality, her class as a woman, her status as the smallest child of the house. "The individual gives up his ego ideal and substitutes for it the group ideal" (Freud,78).

Varun similarly, is so u pressed that after a while he begins to rebuke himself the way Arun rebukes him: "What am I?... I'm a bloody fool, he concluded, with the Arun-like condemnation pronounced in an Arun- like tone of dismissal" (ASB,495).Let alone giving any reaction, Varun believes himself to be everything that Arun calls him. he takes all the things people say about him for granted and instead of rebelling, blames himself. It seems like he does not want to brother to have a quarrel even when he is right:

When Arun told him that if he hadn't been drinking around town all night there would have been someone at home to prevent the robbery, his face grew red. Arun too, after all, had been out having a good time. But instead of provoking Arun, who appeared to be at the end of his tether, Varun kept quiet and slunk into his room. (ASB,1017)

Varun always built up the nature of bowing his head in front of the dominants. Whenever he gets scolding either he bows his head or go to his room. He never show any reactions very often he makes angry remarks in his thought like when he thinks of Arun as follows. "All he knows how to do is to sick up to the British and crawl in their tracks" (ASB,409). From few experiences he understood that if he ever raises his head Arun will make him to pay for it. This is the reason why he always been kept his anger hidden. As a matter of fact, Varun non-reaction is itself a kind of reaction to authority; however, the problems is that such a reaction does not grant him his freedom. on the contrary, it makes him a slave. since he hates the Imperial rule, he hates his brother for his deeds as well. But being a frustrated person, he feels defeated like his country and therefore does not feel the need to take any action. "We are a failure as a country. We can always snatch defeat out of the jaws of victory" (ASB,1242). he says, it can also be explained in Freeman terms as the alteration of his ego.

Varun, here portrayed as a melancholic characters. According to Freud, melancholia is caused by "the real or emotional loss of a loved object" and is reflected by the individual as a "cruel self-catering depreciation of the ego... relentless self-catering criticism and bitter self-reproaches" (Freud,51). The cause for his melancholia may be either his father's loss or his disappointment with his country. his ego can be decided into two as the result of his melancholia: one is the raging side and the other is the part that contains lost object. In this, case Varun sees himself as a failure, identifying himself with either his father who achieved nothing but served the British and died, or with his country which is also a failure. on the other hand , he is the owner of the first part of his ego which rages against the second part.

Both Lata and Varun, portrayed as submission subjects of the dominants since they engage the habit of overly obedient and reject resistance. though is seems like the easy way out, their reasons for behaving this way are quite complicated, first their material need, both are young and jobless , they have no choice other than depending on their families. In fact they don't find any other choice other than living in the houses of dominant, powerful persons, and obey their rules. Another reason is that they are brought

up as subordinates. In the novel with the two powerful colonisers they have been awfully suppressed: “Having been subject to his brother’s authority since boyhood, (Varun) hated it and, in fact, all authority” (ASB,408). They have been taught since childhood to obey the rules and let the colonisers shape their lives. therefore lethargy is not altogether of their own making, but something imposed upon them. Thus the chapter analysed the couple of cause for the major characters subjugation by the powerful and dominant people of the society.

References:

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