



Religious Intolerance in the novel A suitable boy by Vikram Seth: A Review

Poonam Devi

Extension lecturer in English at G.C.W. Madlauda, Panipat

kaushikpoonam106@gmail.com

Abstract

With the themes of love and marriage, the Suitable Boy and religious intolerance, Vikram Seth's book A Suitable Boy is full of interesting ideas. "A Suitable Boy tells the narrative of four families in post-British India in the early 1950s, after the India-Pakistan partition and the end of British control. The story asserts that the Indian society of racial castes and arranged weddings has a good side to it. Efforts are made by a family to find a suitable suitor for their daughters who are still single. Many Indian girls and their families conflict over the idea of an arranged marriage as they become increasingly independent, such as going shopping in small groups with friends and completing university courses. When it comes to politics, the book has a lot going on, and if it weren't for the involvement of different family members, it would be tedious.

Key words: novel, political, marriage, Religious, members etc.

Introduction

The novel's title alludes to the fundamental issue of the search for a suitable man. One source of inspiration for this concept is the Indian custom of arranging weddings for young women who are considered suitable by their families. First and foremost, the man and woman must be of the same faith. In the case of Lata and Kabir, this becomes the most significant barrier between them. Without their parents' consent, they could only have married in secret, on the run. The boy's and his family's social status is also taken into account. The Suitable Boy also touches on the contradiction between a planned marriage and a marriage that is based on romantic feelings. Lata addresses the issue during her sister's wedding to Pran Kapoor and determines that it's excellent for Savita but may not be good for her.



When Mrs. Rupa realises that her daughter Lata is in danger, she asks family and friends to keep a watch out for her future husband. While she seems to be supportive of her mother's decisions, Lata privately wonders whether she will follow her heart and marry Kabir even if her mother doesn't approve. Even though she doesn't love him, Lata chooses Haresh Khanna as her spouse in the end. After realising that Kabir's religion would cause severe issues for her relationship with him and by the realisation that her love of literature would not be enough to survive a marriage with Amit. Malati was horrified by her decision. Lata's rationale includes the notions that, ultimately, she will fall in love with Haresh, he would be able to financially support her, and she will have a stable marriage. Malati, Lata's best friend, is a free spirit who is happy to have sex with anybody she likes. She is in direct contrast to the Suitable Boy idea. Consequently, the notion of The Suitable Boy is a defining feature of Indian tradition and culture”.

A Suitable Boy shows Vikram Seth's ability to switch across genres. He's shown to be a versatile author with a thorough understanding of India's politics, society, and culture. To give us an idea of how India's legislative assembly works, as well as how a legislation is drafted and how elections are conducted in India, he has used his political position to educate us on the country's electoral process. Seth has attempted to provide a complete portrait of India in her fifties. To put it another way, he's discussed the intersection between politics and religion. When it comes to Seth's socio-cultural knowledge, we've been able to see into the life of the impoverished, untouchables, women — both Hindu and Muslim — and even prostitutes — without a legitimate identity or position in society. Many women are totally disregarded and recognised simply as a supplier of sexual pleasure to the guy according to Vikram Seth, who has written about such a culture. When Kachheru is extremely old and has worked on Rashid's father's property for his whole life yet Rashid's father takes satisfaction in abusing the weak tenant and wants to keep him obedient. This is an example of the sad state of affairs faced by the scheduled caste. They portray Indian women as like clockwork, doing her chores at home without hesitation or doubt of any kind. Aside from Maan's profound love for Saeeda Bai, Seth also alludes to the continuation of the tradition that promotes such ills to torment notably the prince, rajas in Indian regions so defaming the family's name and reputation via her. Saeeda Bai, who quietly bears the weight of the lustful passion of Nawab Sahib in an



inebriated condition and becomes the unwed mother of Tasneem, is also represented clearly. An example of Vikram Seth's flexibility may be seen in his portrayal of childbirth and the excruciating agony of childbirth. As a male, it is impossible to experience or express the anguish of childbirth, but Seth has portrayed it in such a brilliant way that one starts to feel a type of feeling in his mouth. On the way to the hospital, a nurse advised Savita to hang on to the railing and push, and her lips fell apart in misery from the pain she was experiencing. A quick warm gush occurs when the baby's head emerges, and Savita describes feeling a ripping sensation below. After that, she was in so much pain she thought she was going to pass out. The typical scream of a mother after birth is that she cannot handle it and never wishes to have another kid, and Seth has expressed this via the character of Savita. Seth has described a newborn infant as the crimson, wrinkled, black-haired, wailing baby, coated in blood and a kind of oily film. Additionally, Seth has detailed the sexual excitement Billy Irani and Meenakshi experience as a result of their intercourse, as well as the pleasure it brings to them. Billy lays panting and delightfully weary, onto her, his head nuzzling her neck after conducting his sexual activity, and as he starts to withdraw, Meenakshi wants him to remain where he is but he needs to pull out as he has softened due to his performance. A regretful but the thing's fallen off comes from him to Meenakshi. Billy tells her, Well, it's not on me, and I could feel it fall off as she tries to dissuade him from believing it. It seems that Billy and Meenakshi's talk is difficult to grasp unless one has had a sexual encounter.

Religious intolerance

The work has a strong focus on religious intolerance. Lata and Kabir's love for one other is thwarted by their differing religious beliefs. Having built a temple to Shiva adjacent to a mosque, the Raja of Marh has become the archetypal religious militant. Muslims would be offended by the temple's pride and pleasure, a phallic icon depicting Shiva. There are religious riots and violence on both sides. Hindu culture despises prostitute Saeeda Bai more for her faith as a Muslim than for her way of life. When the holy days of both faiths coincide, even death might follow if neither side is ready to compromise. One example of religious intolerance is shown when Maan goes to Rasheed's family in another country. It's only until he shows that he doesn't really care about religion at all that Rasheed's



family members begin to embrace him, though. After Maan is accused of the attempted murder of a young Muslim man named Firoz Khan, this conclusion becomes more tenuous.

Conclusion

Maan Kapoor and Saeeda Bai, Ishaq and Tasneem, and most notably Lata and Kabir and the appropriate lads to whom she is introduced in Calcutta play a major role in this novel's suitable boy subplots. Finally, Lata decides to give up Kabir and settle for a man she likes but doesn't swoon over. Only Lata's tragic choice to reject Kabir as a husband stands out as really ugly in the story. The rest of the ugliness is limited to inter- and intra-family intrigues, which Seth manages to make fascinating reading.

Reference

- [1] Mohanty, Seemita. (2002) A Critical Analysis of Vikram Seth's Poetry and Fiction. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors,. Print.
- [2] McGirk, Tim (27 March 1993). Playing happy families in Brahmipur: Tim McGirk on the exhausting charms of Vikram Seth's frothy comedy manners, marriages and mynah birds: A suitable boy. The Independent.
- [3] Total immersion in 1950s India: Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy, 2010 review by Jo Walton Angela Atkins (26 June 2002). Vikram Seth's Suitable Boy: A Reader's
- [4] Guide. A&C Black. p. 7. ISBN 978-0-8264-5707-3.
- [5] Shyam S. Agarwalla (1995). Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy: Search for Indian Identity. Prestige Books. ISBN 978-81-85218-97-7.
- [6] House, J. and Kasper, G. (1981). Politeness markers in English and German. In F. Coulmus (ed.) Conversational Routine, Vol. 2, The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton Publishers, 157-185
- [7] Lachenicht, L.G. (1980). Aggravating language: A study of abusive and insulting language. In Papers in Linguistics: International Journal of Human Communication, Vol. 13, 607-88



- [8] Lakoff, R. T. (1973). The logic of politeness; or minding your P's and Q's. In Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, 292-305
- [9] Strawson, P. F. (1971). Logico-linguistic papers. London and New York: Methuen