

From Heaven Lake: Travelling Across Cultures by Vikram Seth

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Abstract

Travelling across culture is an endeavour to spread knowledge about the visiting provinces, on the route of the China, Nepal and India to his readers. This research work focuses on the prominent novelist, poet, and nonfiction writer, Vikram Seth. He who has been known as a citizen of the world. He is a cultural traveller. The work of Vikram Seth is a large variety of encyclopaedic and traditional forms and the places of his poetry and prose moves across the world, making literary homes of distant lands and cultures.

Keywords: Travel Literature, Culture, Heaven Lake, Vikram Seth.

Introduction

Vikram Seth's initial loved work, *From Heaven Lake*, tells the story of a journey he created on the road from China to Asian nation as a young college man. As a hitch-hike, he travelled through rivers and across leech-ridden hills, Vikram Seth cosmopolitan through Northeast China to the Himalaya Mountains crosses four Chinese provinces, Xinjiang and Kansu within the north-western desert; then the basin and upland of Qinghai; and finally Tibet to India. Wry, observant and delightfully written, *From Heaven Lake* is an uncommon and intriguing exploration of one of the world's least – well-known space and travel classic. Within the modified surroundings of border conditions, because of that trendy ideas of cultural boundaries and political behaviour are being destroyed by the method of economic process, the same old read at migration as involving border crossing between two nonphysical (state) entities isn't any longer hypothetically satisfactory. Borders became “moving objects.” It is simple to be a liberal international in Paris or New York. However, Vikram Seth is reception within the remote culture. In his foreign countries visit as California, London, Austria, China and its folks, although settled remote, are never strange to him or his readers. It's a general assumption that travel writing may be a quite analysis from the margins or a culture of them to a culture that belongs to us. But Seth, the adjustable and futuristic traveller, wherever he goes, he feels like at home everywhere and China was like another home to him so he never thought that he is entering into the border of another Asian nations or other continents. Once he had truly done therefore walking past a gnat troubled stream. Seth's travel narrative brings along adjacent, however, politically separated areas in an inventive or literary kind and combines them in an exceedingly distinctive nevertheless basically relative purpose of read.

Method- To collect the authentic information, varied analysis articles and 'From Heaven Lake' were studied.

Discussion

In the primary edition of his book, *From Heaven Lake*, Seth tells us that his journey was undertaken once he lived in China as a student at Nanjing University from 1980 to 1982. He returned to India in 1981 via Tibet and Nepal. All the description is a part of the Journals that Seth written on his personal experiences, during the journey of China, Tibet, Nepal and India. Once he moved through Xinjiang and Tibet, and it contained some vivid portraits of the characters, their cultures, and appreciative description of the countries from where Seth move through China, Tibet, Nepal to India. Travelling, Seth contemplate on the political administration and its variations to the Indian system of presidency. Seth values the expertise of getting lived in several foreign countries and wrote of China. His book received nice approval once it came out in Britain and it received the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award, Britain's prestigious award for travel writing for the year 1983. Writing within the early 1980's, *The Simplest Seth*, may hope for at huge level, is patience and respect between the two nations and at the individual level he will solely affirm, by example that, to find out regarding another nice culture is to counterpoint one's life, to grasp one's own country higher, to feel a lot of reception within the universe, and indirectly to feature that reservoir of individual goodwill which will, generations from currently, temper the distrustful use of the national power. As Meenakshi Mukherjee has pointed out- The Non-Western worlds of continent and Asia have hardly even entered the literary portals of Indian writing in English.

The use of English language provides a way to Indian Writing in English that speaks for or represents the whole of India, particularly to the Western reading public. The faux plan of homogeneous national identity that emerges from Indian writing in English, relies on two imperatives: An erasure of linguistic/cultural variations at intervals Asian countries and also the strain of distinction with the West.

The territorial boundaries consisting of a tightly closed no man's land, between the two giants of Asia, easy-to-cross, and an appealing area by Seth. Once visiting new cultures, there are probabilities of complimentary growth. However, at identical time, because of the variance of power within the world, areas for newer styles of violence typically come about. It depends utterly on the course of the traveller's discovery and exploration whether or not s/he needs to rule, or hear, the other. For Seth, violence looked as if it would be an unknown term. He grows between the different cultures, wherever he visited in the continents he and the other enjoys his company whereas hitchhiking, throughout the country in an exceeding truck, stopping sometimes at places and creating friends for a life. The problems of bridging gaps or cultures in travel literature have the thought of border innate in them. The many borders on the atlas divide the world into continents, countries, states, and so on. These boundary lines, that divide everything physical (even non-physical like air), are themselves nonmaterial. Travel writing in such an era, once all the boundaries of victimization or imperialism has folded, has undergone a forceful modification, and also the borders between countries (not essentially political or geographical) have visibly shrunken to a good proportion. Seth additionally wrote the foremost refined poetry as merely as he writes a travelog or a unique. Seth isn't perplexed regarding the diasporic dislocations, or the rummage around for roots. Possibly, he doesn't feel disjointed or uprooted. He doesn't appear to deal with any issue that shakes the western world or pander to vital theory. He simply writes narratives regarding folks and places visited whereas creating those folks and places wake up out of the pages for the readers to endure a primary expertise. In an interview with Meenakshi Mukherji; he mentioned that he was simply a writer: not an Indian or of the commonwealth. He's one in all those personalities privileged and lucky enough to be able to travel and build the globe their own. Nandini Chandra appearance at the planet travel writing and tries to ascertain if Seth fits the "postcolonial hat." Seth doesn't appear to, or he could

even not need to. Although as a postcolonial individual to an “Oriental” communist country Seth carries some baggage on his travel, however his gaze isn't in any respect like those of his colonial counterparts. He doesn't examine China as a post inhabited individual through the “high meditation of western viewing glasses.” Seth's journal is additionally the same as the classic western figure of travel for the sake of travel; as poet says a writer should travel so as to write down. The primary paragraph of the book 'From Heaven Lake' describes an area comparable to an Indian city within the deserted summers: The buzz of the flies into the bus, and their the overwhelming sense of warmth, Donkey-carts force by tired wanting donkeys, vexed by flies, it is shortly past dawn and already the warmth has stricken. This description is of Turfan, a desert city of China, that Seth finds the same as the summers of urban center. The geographical distance/dissimilarity between the two countries are tried to be blurred. Usually, the important essence of a place/an area, and the experience of an individual among the folks of an area, she/he is visiting are erased by the formation of a archetypical ‘traveller's gaze’ supported the nationalistic affiliations, color of the skin, race, gender, class, education or the other formative factors. Moreover, the data a few place or those that one gathers before coming back to a specific place, that female parent Louise Pratt terms antecedent literary or prior/earlier literary productions, conjointly results in the formation of one or the opposite quite a gaze/s in a very individual. Vikram Seth has some kind of image in his mind for the China. He is born in India, a rustic that shares an awfully long borderline with China and therefore the border moulded with a huge chaos, he incorporates a previous and an awfully sturdy kind of China in his mind. However, in contrast to the colonial travel writers, he doesn't hold the “all knowing” subject position gazing at the passive “to be studied” objects. Vikram Seth could be an international person/leader, one who clutches philosophical system demographics. The foremost deeply entrenched border, evermore troublesome to alter, is that the mental structure. Despite equivalently of the folks everywhere

the planet, nations and their voters are usually categorised on the premise of sure national values. It is believed that there's a Chinese method of thinking, of liaising, negotiating, interacting and act even as there's an Indian method. (Seth, 23). Seth, like Amitav Ghosh, is separated from a majority of up to date travel writers because of his avant-garde stare upon a “historically defeated culture.” Seth tries to settle a history of “mutual mental object and conflict” (Holland and Huggan, 2000). Seth understands that point and patience is needed to resolve the long drawn-out border downside between the two nations. Thus, he says: to be told regarding another nice culture in a very personal level is to complement one’s life, to no one’s own country higher, to feel additional reception within the world. Seth, in *From Heaven Lake*, acknowledges that the modern-days travellers should knowledge best to barter borders that are habitually the marks of indiscernible lines of politics forces (Pronami Bhattacharyya 2014). In his China to Asian nation journey, Seth is precisely drawn into such marginal or oppose areas. He reaches sikiang, a north-western province; the name means that the “New Borderland”, and therefore the part autonomous, closely guarded and supervised country of Tibet. “Travel, for Seth, appears to be less a celebration of human freedom than an expertise of political barriers that are placed in freedom’s path”. In the article ‘Into Nepal’, Seth is seen traversing on foot towards Asian nation along with his carrier, Tenzing. We have a tendency to traverse a swish, meadow-green however nearly vertical slope; many metres on top of the river....A woman carrying a frock is laundry garments in a very little stream. She looks up at us as we cross (<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/72757388.pdf>). Suddenly a man steps out from behind a tree (<https://books.google.com/books?id=IHo3DwAAQBAJ>). He warns them to stop and show the luggage. He is a Nepali customs officer. It is only then that Seth comes to know that he has crossed the *border* and stepped into Nepal (International Journal of Travel Writing Print ISSN 2278-9642 Online ISSN 2278-9642) ‘But I didn’t know we had crossed the

border,' I say. 'That stream there, that's the border. You've just crossed it.' 'That...?' I look back at the stream. The woman is wringing out clothes over the water. Her soap lies on one rock, her washing on another.... Most of the imperial travel writers furnished details about the royal life, legends and myths of a place they visited, instead of bringing into life the people who inhabited those places. Seth does specifically opposite of what his colonial counterparts did. The small print he furnishes are associated with the folks he encounters. These are not the places and monuments that hold the best worth for Seth. Rather, folks are the "real hero" for him, as once he says, "when i believe of China, I believe first of my friends and solely then of Qin Shi Huang's tomb". Whereas doing therefore, Seth is in a position to gift the underlying social context of the gestures or incident that's being delineate. And in doing therefore, Seth demystifies several myths that the colonial gaze had created concerning the opposite. For example, once at Lhasa, Seth witnesses a 'ghastly' ceremony that the imperial gaze attributed to the inherent brutality attributed to Tibetan rituals. The dead bodies were sliced and minced, the bone broken, and were fed to eagles. However, it is the result of deficiency of fuel to burn and also the ground is difficult for abundant of the year. Seth has described an old woman who sits in a doorway reading a letter and fanning her face with it. The troopers passing by cracking flower seeds between their teeth, it's not just associate in nursing exercise in jousting. Equally once he finds that the border between Kingdom of Nepal and China is outlined by a handful of rocks and wonders at the absurdity of a customs man rising from behind a tree and also the incontrovertible fact that it makes no distinction to the lady laundry garments that her soap is on the China facet and her garments on the Kingdom of Nepal facet, he's during a approach attempting to claim the unity between the pragmatic hard-edged world of geo-politics and negotiation on the one hand and also the alternative realm thickly settled by Sui, old women, and alternative such folks of the everyday world.

Conclusion

Vikram Seth's passion towards travelling tempted him to take the road journey around the province of Asian countries and exploring the thinnest details of the culture by getting involved with the people of different streams of life. He got to know how the people are living with simplicity of life and living happily without much complain about the surroundings even though there are many problems. There is lot to learn from it and the beautiful message for his readers is that boundaries do not restrict the people, it is only a demarcation to proclaim the Political and geographical power and just the identification in the World map to help people in identifying that particular Place/City Exist. so to conclude that Seth's Travelling across culture is a tremendous effort to apprise his readers about the experience he have explored with his instinct pleasure which can only be understand by going through the work in depth and correlating the same.

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