

Indian Poetry in English
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Lecture - 10
K. N. Daruwalla

Good morning friends. As you well know we are having NPTEL online certification course on Indian poetry in English and you are being tuned in to by Binod Mishra. All of you might remember that in the previous lecture, we had started Indian modern poetry in English and in this regard the first major voice that we discussed was that of Jayanta Mahapatra.

Today we are going to discuss another significant and in true sense a modern Indian English poet, K N Daruwalla. My dear friends, most of us must admit the fact that every poet is not only the byproduct- of his age. But every poet has in his corpus the imprint of age, what he watches and in which circumstances he lives? And what are the issues that he comes across, actually become the subject matter of a poet's corpus.

There goes a story behind, how Daruwalla came to the world of poetry, Daruwalla had a very different sort of life and in an age, when because we are talking about the poets who took their poetry to writing their poetry in post independent India.

And as I have been repeating that India in those days had also so many challenges and the challenges actually came to be the subject matter of poetry. In this regard while there were many poets who actually had a sort of romantic spark, but then there were also many poets who could also look at the reality part of India and that is what we can find in the poetic world of K N Daruwalla.

So, if we have a look at the socio- political conditions in which Daruwalla had been writing his poetry, it was an age where here and there were several disturbances sometimes communal riots. And then the great hunger of 1974 followed by the emergency which was imposed on the country in 1975.

And of course, the other problems like poverty and then split identities, then lack of faith and in an age of doubt uncertainty all these things were there. But here was a poet who actually had his eyes opened to and his pen also kept busy writing or composing poems,

which in a way many of the writers and critics have called Daruwalla a poet, who is more concerned about the urban atmosphere.


But once we go into the details of Daruwalla's poetic world, we'll find as to what sort of a poet he is. Here, we can take one very small comment by another contemporary poet and critic Vilas Sarang, who also has edited one very beautiful anthology on Indian English poetry where Daruwalla is also one poet. What Sarang says will have to testify, justify, examine, elaborate and also find whether the comments or whether the observations of Sarang are correct or not. But let us first put this comment forward.




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Socio-Political Conditions

- Communal riots ("Curfew in a Riot-torn City")
- Great Hunger of 1974
- Emergency in 1975

"He (Daruwalla) brings alive the world of riot and curfew, sirens, warrants, men robbed at night, lathi blows on cowering back, Soda bottles and acid bottles waiting on the rooftops, press communiques."(Vilas Sarang)



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What Sarang says is--- "Daruwalla brings alive the world of riot and curfew, sirens, warrants, men robbed at night, lathi blows on cowering back, soda bottles and acid bottles waiting on the rooftops, press communiqués." Now the question is ---- are these going to be the subject matter of Daruwalla's poetic corpus? And if so why, what impelled and compelled Daruwalla to take on such themes?

We will find out but before that let us have a brief peep into Daruwalla's life. My dear friends, there are some poets who have seen both the phases---- the pre- independent phase and the post independent phase.

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K. N. Daruwalla- Life and Achievements

- ❖ Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla was born in Lahore in January, 1937.
- ❖ Educated in Ludhiana, Masters in English
- ❖ Parsi Zoroastrian Community
- ❖ Police Officer
- ❖ Winner of Sahitya Akademy Award(1984) and Commonwealth Poetry Prize (1987)
- ❖ Landscape poet
- ❖ One of the 'Parsi Quartet'
- ❖ Draws from historical events and literary sources.



1984

Swajani 3

And Daruwalla's birth itself was in an undivided India and that was in the year 1937. Daruwalla whose full name is Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla, was born in Lahore in January 1937. Because of his father's job and other things, he had been to several places before he finally came to Ludhiana.

And in this regard his education was in different mediums--- sometimes in Hindi, sometimes in Urdu and it was only when he came to India and started studying in Ludhiana from where he did his masters and that masters also in English then English became his language.

He actually belonged to a Parsi Zoroastrian community and which we can find in many of the references that appear and occur in his poetic world, fine. What is so significant of Daruwalla's poetic corpus is--- one can come across several blows the blows of lathi and then at several places of violence, riots. Because Daruwalla was a police officer, he actually entered into IPS Indian Police Service.

And then, he could actually see from the inside what was the real picture and, but then he with his own experience, he actually created a poetic world where one can find the sort of boldness with the way that Daruwalla portrayed reality of India. In such a way that many people started calling him a poet of urban India, but in Daruwalla's world we do not find only urban India since he belong to and majority of his works took him to North

India. So, at many places we can find the picturesque quality of Daruwalla's poetry of North India and that is why he is also called a poet of landscape.

One can find various landscapes in Daruwalla's poetry and majority of these landscapes not only comprise urban areas but also village areas, where we can also come across certain words, at times. He also uses some local words, sometimes-- some Urdu words where he does not get the appropriate ones.

And of course, Daruwalla is such a poet, here I am reminded of while I was discussing Jayanta Mahapatra and we had said that, Mahapatra is steeped in a sort of regionalism, fine? Regionalism and poet of the past. But here in Daruwalla's world you can find that Daruwalla has exposed himself to various faces of reality.

And one cannot say that Daruwalla is confined only to one theme or only to one issue or one subject. But then his own experiences as a police officer, then as Secretary, then as in several government positions, where he got several experiences and all these experiences are reflected in the form of his poetry.

Since he was a Parsi Zoroastrian fine--- Parsi Zoroastrian community he belonged to, one can also find that at times he appears to be, he seems to be rather biased, towards certain religious practices. But his bias should not be taken as a sort of his hatred towards a particular community or whatsoever.

Rather it is a sort of portrayal of reality since Daruwalla is a poet who like a painter brushes with his color and brush he provides such a beautiful landscape, that one can really delve beautifully into the beauty and the ugliness of India. Now in several of his interviews Daruwalla himself has said that, poetry has to be a social gesture. That is why his responsibility as a police officer I did not deter him from the beautiful world of poetry.

So, socially he was very much committed even though he was considered to be a very tough guy as an officer and tough even as a poet in terms of the precision and in terms of what he wanted to say, he could say it very bravely and very briefly: "So, poetry has to be a social gesture because on occasions I feel external reality bearing down on me from all sides, with a pressure strong enough to tear the eardrums." Actually the circumstances

and situation around him had pressurized him so much, that he wanted to contribute and he wanted to reflect it in the form of his poetic sparks, my dear friend.

Now, Daruwalla has got quite a good number of collections and majority of his poems, towards the end he also brought out himself one volume where which he calls collected poems.

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The slide is titled "His Poetic Corpus" and features a list of ten books by Keki N. Daruwalla. To the right of the list is the cover of the book "Under Orion" (1970), which has a dark blue background with white stars and the title in white. Below the list is a quote: "Poetry is composed not only in the cerebral cortex but the digestive tracts as well." The slide also includes logos for Swayam and a small number '4' in the bottom right corner.

His Poetic Corpus

- ❑ *Under Orion* (1970)
- ❑ *Apparition in April* (1971)
- ❑ *Crossing of Rivers* (1976)
- ❑ *Keeper of the Dead* (1982)
- ❑ *Landscapes* (1987)
- ❑ *A Summer of Tigers* (1995)
- ❑ *Night River* (2000)
- ❑ *Fire Altar: Poems of the Persian and the Greeks* (2013)

"Poetry is composed not only in the cerebral cortex but the digestive tracts as well."

UNDER ORION
Keki N. Daruwalla
(1970)

And majority of his poems are also there, but he started with *Under Orion*. He started his poetic world or poetic journey with *Under Orion* which came out in 1970. This Orion actually is referred to or the reference to this Orion is that, Orion was a great hunter who pursued the pleidas; who pursued the pleidas and was in this he was eventually slain by Artemis. And finally he was placed in the sky as a constellation.

So, the very first title of his poem *Under Orion* and then I came several other volumes here you can find the names of all these volumes. And if your interest pulls you towards the world of Daruwalla you can go to these volumes. Of course, if one goes to collected poems there also one can get quite a good number of his poems.

Now we will also find out, what sort of poetry and how his poetic lines were revealing? As you know in earlier lecture we had said, in the words of Jayanta Mahapatra who said; poetry has to be revelatory. So, here is one point who actually reveals the true picture of India and true pictures of India not only in its benignity, but also in its malignity, my

dear friends; not only in its beauty, but also in its ugliness. What is actually so significant of Daruwalla is that, Daruwalla is the very satiric in a very subtle manner he actually attacks certain practices.

And then there is a biting remark about several practices which are being followed in our society, be it religion, be it the social practices, be it the pictures of India, be it the worshipping of our old idols and celebrities and what not. We can find because the range of Daruwalla is quite great, quite vast rather and the subjects are also varied. What he said of his own poems was--- “Poetry is composed not only in the cerebral cortex cerebral cortex but the digestive tracts as well.”

What actually he means to say is that poetry is not only of the psyche not only of the bone, but poetry should be such that one can digest. Of course, my dear friend it is very difficult to digest the reality, but then that should not become an impediment to a poet and to a poet who actually wants to show a poet who wants to show through his torch light the hidden realities, which never come to the surface ,my dear friend.

Now, as I had been saying that Daruwalla is considered to be an urban poet, because majority of the poems revolve around a sort of landscape. And but then while he paints, it he paints the landscape and scenes of North India, because majority of his postings were in North India and through that he is not only portraying the plains, the pastures, the hills and also the frightening rivers and the seas.

So, nature is also a very having a very benign presence in majority of his poems. That is why Daruwalla is considered to be a poet of landscape. And later on as he grows as a poet, because his early poems may be considered simply to be a landscape. But as he grows as a poet you will find that he matures as an experienced poet, where he tries to portray the felt experiences the experiences that he had lived with; but then he has converted it into a sort of poetry. There are both mild and wild aspects as I have been saying.

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Urban Poet

- Skilfully paints the landscape and scenes of North India with beautiful plains, pastures, attractive hills and frightening rivers and seas.
- Talks of *thatch-roofs and cow-dung cakes*'
- Wild and mild aspect of society and environment.

“The contemporary Indian socio-political world- not merely the city, but also of small town, village and the countryside is portrayed with heavy strokes, laden with savage irony...” (Vilas Sarang)

A landscape of distance
Of meaningless milestones
Crouching on the flanks
Swallowed in the dust and the express-smoke
The sad-eyed bitch upon the platform
Kicked by the urchins doesn't squeal
Head dropping, eye bored, she walks away.
(Under Orion, p. 72)

Now, we can take a look at some of the lines from one of the very first collections named *Under Orion*. Where he says:

a landscape of distance

of meaningless milestones

crouching on the flanks,

swallowed in the dust and express smoke

the sad eyed bitch eyed bitch

At times Daruwalla will use certain unusual words also, but then there is a purpose with it.

The sad eyed bitch upon the platform

kicked by the urchin does not squeal,

head dropping, eye bored she walks away.

Now he is not only confined to man's world, but also to the world of animals and also to the world of birds, my dear friend. Actually those people who consider Daruwalla only to be an urban poet can get a response in the words of Vilas Sarang who says, “The contemporary Indian socio-political world and which is not confined only to the city but also of a small town village and the countryside is also portrayed with heavy strokes.”

Actually irony is a great weapon of Daruwalla, Daruwalla is very ironic, We will when we come to the poems we will find. “Laden with savage irony”. Savage irony at times the irony is very bitter. The attack is very bitter my dear friend, here on this slide you can find the typical qualities of Daruwalla’s poetry. I mean not only the themes, but Daruwalla actually became a poet from his own experience and that is why since there is a biting attack also.


So, Daruwalla is at times, very angry. He can be considered to be an angry poet, but then his anger comes out of the observation at times. He is very skeptic also, the satiric tone also because at times he hits our religious practices. Not intentionally, but then he actually tries to draw out, since every satiric poet wants to bring a sort of amendment by correction.

The correction of what? The correction of vices, amendment of vices by correction, that is to quote Dryden’s word and here also in Daruwalla we find the same thing going on.

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Characteristic Features of Daruwalla's Poetry

- ✓ Observational
- ✓ Angry, sceptical and satiric tone
- ✓ Metaphysical dimension than mysticism
- ✓ Sharp awareness of variety in Indian life.
- ✓ Deprivation, misery, disease, death and fire images
- ✓ His religious view characterised by modern scepticism.
- ✓ Political chicanery and hypocrisy
- ✓ Broad range of technique: coinage of unusual words.



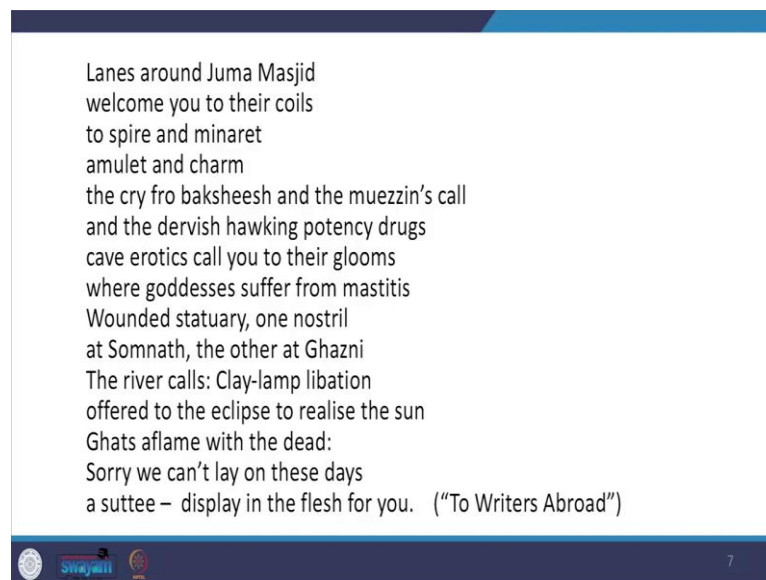
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Daruwalla had a sharp awareness of the variety of Indian life and of course, his religious views were characterized by modern skepticism. Why Daruwalla is a modern poet? Because he will not admit or he will not agree to everything very blindly, rather he wants to observe it, examine it, investigate it with his own experience and then his pen will flow and when it flows, it flows very beautifully, my dear friends.

So, there are the titles of poem also you will find, in many of the poems he depicts love, in many of the poems he will talk about collage, in many of the poems he will talk about the dialogues, at times he will talk about the third voice. And, he, it appears, as if he is searching for his own voice, but he is searching for his own voice through his own observation.

For example, at places when he has to write poems and since he is the poet of landscape. Now see let us have some lines from one of his poems entitled “To writers abroad”, to writers abroad. Now see if we if you read the lines of the poem you will find that not only there is a landscape, but there are attacks also.

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“Lanes around Juma Masjid

welcome you to their coils.....

Look at the words, to their coils.

“To spire and minaret amulet and charm

the cry the cry for baksheesh and the muezzins call

and the dervish hawking potency drugs,

cave erotics call you to their glooms

where goddesses suffer from mastitis.

Now see he does not leave even the gods and goddesses and in a way he is actually trying to say, how our bloody rituals are also not free from? What man has done to man? Or what we have done through our practices?

Wounded statuary one nostril

at Somnath the other at Ghazni,

the river calls clay lamp libation

offered to the eclipse to realise the sun.

Ghats aflame with the dead

sorry we cannot lay on these days

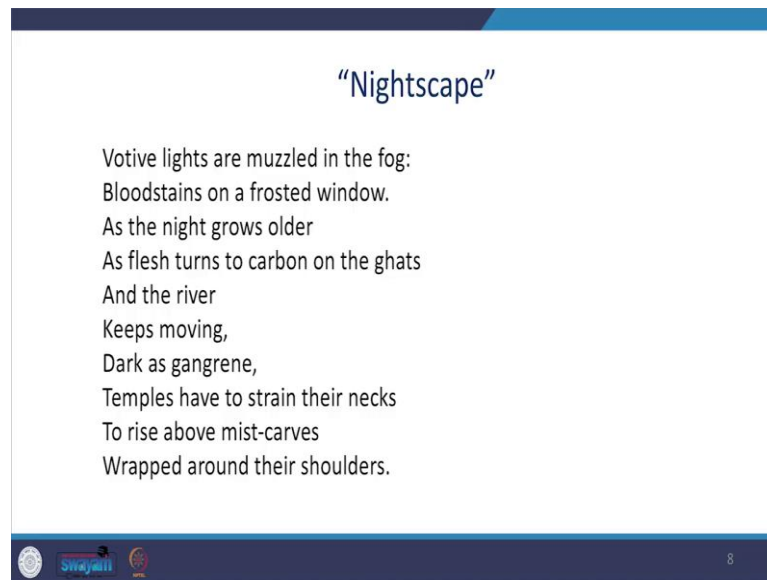
a suttee ---displays in the flesh for you.”

So, you can find here that even though he is simply portraying the reality, but then there is a purpose and the purpose is served through the attacks that Daruwalla as a poet is making. So, the irony plays well throughout in majority of his poems even when he is portraying a sort of landscape, but then he is telling the outside well because he cannot confine and he will not sing the glory of our ancient tradition and all. But then he will actually try to find out, where lies the ugliness? Where lies the gaps? Where lies the splits? Where actually are the faults? That we have been worshipping since ages my dear friend.

Now, as Daruwalla is a poet of landscape and as he is well trained in making use of unusual words at times, here you can find in this poem entitled “Nightscape.”

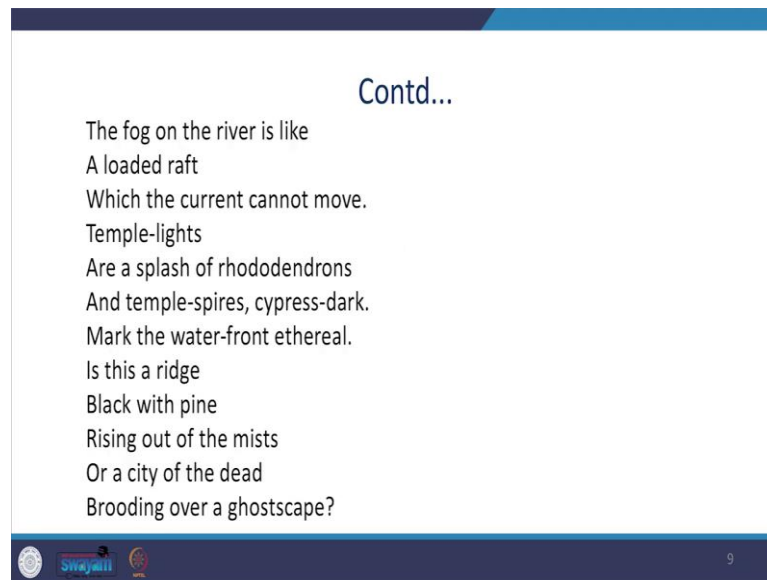
I think it would be better if you can read it yourself and you can feel it my dear friend. Because if I impose my meaning that rather will be a sort of injustice, but then I will simply read some of the lines in order to let you know how a poet’s profession also enters his pen when he is writing.

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Votive lights are muzzled in the fog
bloodstains on a frosted window
as the night grows older,
as flesh turns to carbon on the ghats a
And the river keeps moving
dark as gangrene.
Temples have to strain their necks
to rise above mist carves,
wrapped around their shoulders.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:57)



The fog on the river is like

a loaded raft,

which the current cannot move

See the images

And temple lights

are a splash of rhododendrons.

And temple spires cypress dark

mark the water front ethereal,

is this a ridge black with pine

rising out of the mists

Or a city of the dead brooding over a ghostscape?

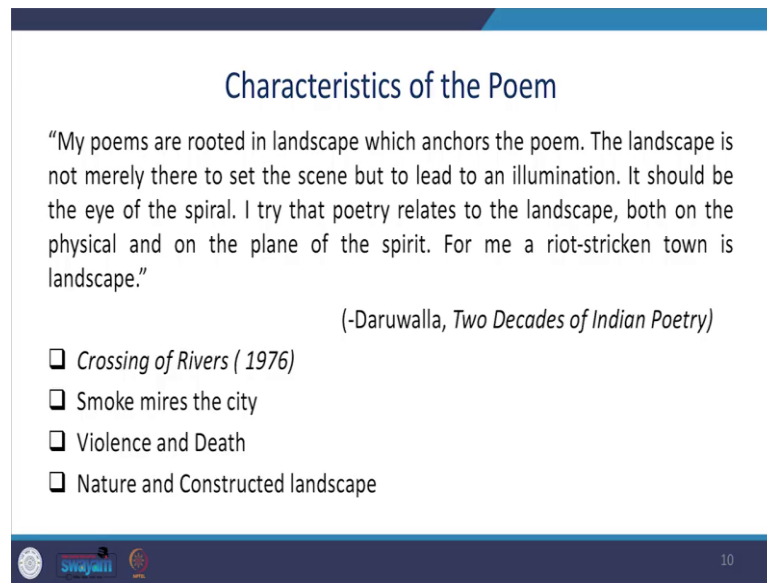
Now, he actually talks about-- how you know how we can consider him to be a modern poet, because a modern poet talks about the ills of the society. We cannot confine ourselves and limit ourselves to the realities that we have been carrying now.

And then in poem after poem one will find that even though all the religious practices that we are performing, whether by the side of the river or at the sea coast or

whatsoever? Are they really fine? Because in one poem he says when he talks about a Ghat in perhaps in the poem entitled “Varanasi” where he talks.

On one side the corpses are burning and on the other side the cooking is also going on. So, he is a poet who will offer you the contraries of all times, my dear friend and out of these contraries-- he will actually make a beautiful world, where we as readers and the lovers of poetry can find a beautiful meaning my dear friend.

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Characteristics of the Poem

“My poems are rooted in landscape which anchors the poem. The landscape is not merely there to set the scene but to lead to an illumination. It should be the eye of the spiral. I try that poetry relates to the landscape, both on the physical and on the plane of the spirit. For me a riot-stricken town is landscape.”

(-Daruwalla, *Two Decades of Indian Poetry*)

- Crossing of Rivers (1976)*
- Smoke mires the city
- Violence and Death
- Nature and Constructed landscape

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Now, in this poem if we come to believe in the words of what Daruwalla himself says, he says that of course his “poems are rooted in landscape which anchors the poem. The landscape is not merely there to set the scene, but to lead to an illumination.

I mean from this one should come out and try to find out the sort of illumination,

“It should be the eye of the spiral; I try that poetry relates to the landscape both on the physical and on the plane of the spirit.”

Till now we have only been talking about this spirit, but what about the physic and you will also find. That he does not ignore the physical realities. He is actually a poet of the modern age and he does not ignore physic, he does not ignore the immediacy, he does not ignore the reality, he simply does not want to sing and confine himself to the nest of singing birds. “For me a riot stricken town is landscape.” Now as a police officer he

might have had the experiences of, you know tackling, handling and controlling several riots and that also get an imprint in majority of his poems.

Actually, one of his collections entitled “A crossing of rivers”, which is completely based on the water and water front imagery. We will also take some lines from them in order to prove our point. Fine? And you know those people who consider Daruwalla to be a poet of simply landscape and a poet who is only an urban poet can take the cue from one of his poems entitled the “ The Ghaghara in Spate.”


It actually talks about a natural calamity, but if you will look at the lines of the poem you will find that even in natural calamity, how the poet tries to bring the comparisons. And how he tries to create certain metaphors which are related to our everyday life and you can see that, how Ghaghara when there is a flood when there is a spate? How people are destroyed? How people are affected?

But yet the river goes on and then there is a sort of personification of the river, let us try to find out from some of the lines s, that we can create a sort of impression of what a sort of impressionistic poet Daruwalla was.

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A few Lines from “The Ghaghara in Spate”

And every year
the Ghaghra changes course
turning over and over in her sleep.
In the afternoon she is a grey smudge
exploring a grey canvas.
When dusk reaches her
through an overhang of cloud
she is overstewed coffee.
At night she is a red weal
across the spine of the land.



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“And every year

the Ghaghara changes course,”

I mean there is no certainty, my dear friend. There is no certainty life itself is very uncertain, so why are we simply singing the glory we should also be prepared for, what is actually to come? What is actually on the onslaught? What is actually impending? What is there in a store?

And he says that everywhere and you see when he says every year the Ghaghara changes course:

“Turning over and over in her sleep.” Now, can a river sleep, but then the poet since he is a poet he has got a license and he personifies that the river in sleep in the afternoon she is a grey smudge.

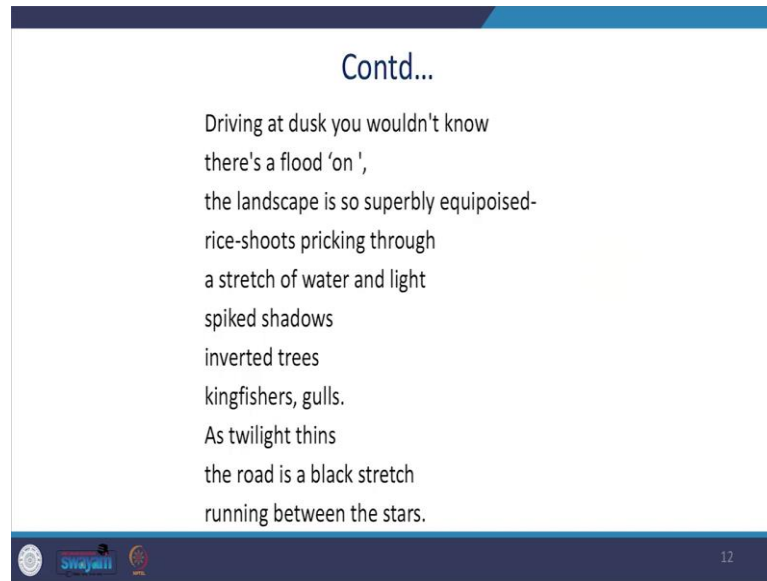
Look at the literary device in the afternoon, I mean the different colors are also being given to Ghaghara:

“In the afternoon she actually
wears the color of grey smudge
exploring a grey canvas,
when dusk reaches her through
an overhang of cloud.
She is overstewed coffee,
she is over stewed coffee”.

I mean, here he compares the color of the river waters with that of the coffee which has been overstewed,

“ at night she is a red weal
across the spine of the land driving at dusk.”

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Contd...

Driving at dusk you wouldn't know
there's a flood 'on ',
the landscape is so superbly equipoised-
rice-shoots pricking through
a stretch of water and light
spiked shadows
inverted trees
kingfishers, gulls.
As twilight thins
the road is a black stretch
running between the stars.

Swajati 12

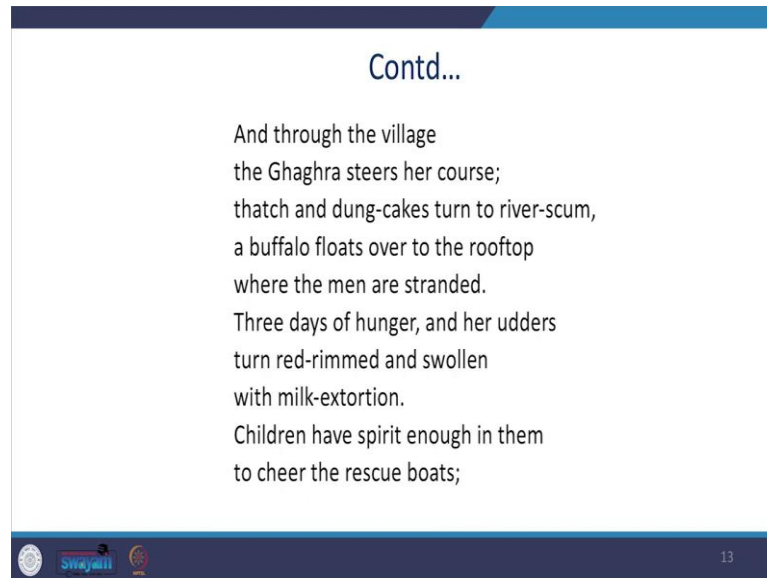
You would not know there is flood on, if you go to the evening to see the river Ghaghara you would not believe that the river is on flood or there is a spate the landscape is so superbly equipoised. You see he is trying to find out beauty even in ugliness-

“rice shoots pricking through
a stretch of water and light,
spiked shadows,
inverted trees,
kingfishers, gulls.”

He mentions that birds also which actually during evening time can be visible, “

“as twilight thins
the road is a black stretch
running between the stars.”

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Contd...

And through the village
the Ghaghra steers her course;
thatch and dung-cakes turn to river-scum,
a buffalo floats over to the rooftop
where the men are stranded.
Three days of hunger, and her udders
turn red-rimmed and swollen
with milk-extortion.
Children have spirit enough in them
to cheer the rescue boats;

Swajani 13

And through the village/ and now you can also find how the river in spate does the harm to the villagers

the Ghaghara steers her course,

thatch and dung cakes turn to river scum

. So, everything is being destroyed, I mean, the poor possession of the poor villagers they are destroyed-

“a buffalo floats over to the rooftop,

where the men are stranded

three days of hunger and her udders

turn red rimmed and swollen

with milk extortion

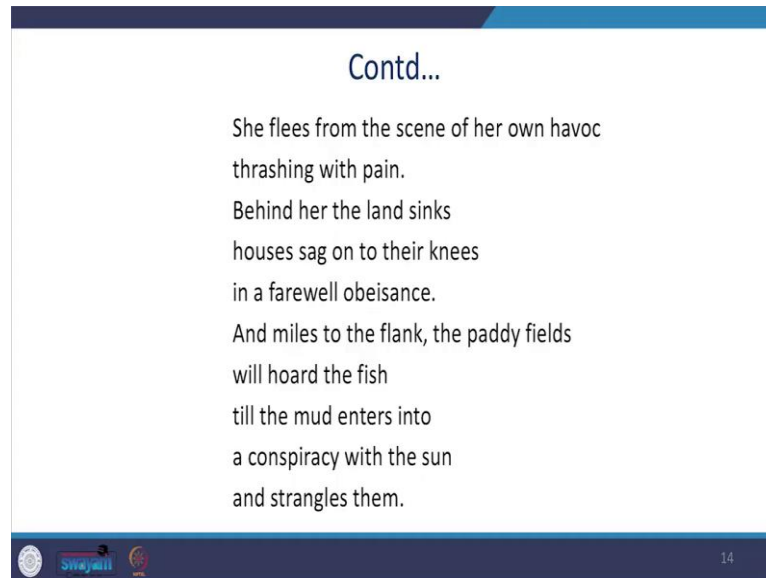
children have a spirit enough in them

to cheer the rescue boats.”

See how the river when in spate--- how it affects everyone it may be a fun for the little children, but for the villagers they are going to be deprived of even the small possessions that they have, even a buffalo floating to the roof top and all these are the horrid realities.

So, here Daruwalla actually tries to portray the picture of a river of course, nature, but then we cannot consider Daruwalla only to be an urban poet.

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She flees from the scene of our own havoc...

and Ghaghara changes its course. So, Ghaghara is given the human qualities here;

“ thrashing with pain

behind her the land sinks

houses sag on their knees

in a farewell obeisance

and miles to the flank the paddy fields

will hoard the fish, till the mud enters into

a conspiracy with the sun and strangles them.”

So, this is actually the portrayal of a reality which India faces every now and then in majority of the rural areas. How come then Daruwalla is an urban poet? How can then Daruwalla is not also a rural poet? Who is actually aware of the sort of challenges that the village people have to face during a natural calamity.

Now, if we analyze the poem linguistically and stylistically also, you will find that since Daruwalla wanted to portray reality, that is why his poems could not be metrical, he also


wants to enjoy the freedom not only from the meter; but a sort of freedom that can help him tell or that can help him portray the real picture of India. Of course, there is an impressionistic picture and one can also find a sort of aerial view of the riverscape as rightly has been said by Krätli.

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Characteristics of the Poem

- From the concluding section of, "Poems from the Terai"
- Impressionistic
- Esthetic distance
- Atmosphere of destruction
- Ariel view of riverscape

"Personification of river as Goddess to create the portrait of a lady in disarray, capricious and unruly as only a female deity can be."- (Krätli)



That the river goddess the, "personification of river as goddess to create the portrait of a lady in disarray",

That is why you know the changing of the colors the changing of the course. And also the mood of the river you know in a subtle way he also talks about the capricious mood of a lady you know and unruly only a female deity can be we have been worshiping gods and goddesses and especially deities in India.

But then the deities always cannot be good, my dear friend and if the deity is so powerful why can not the deities stop. And withhold this sort of situation where the villagers are being deprived of their poor possessions my dear friend.

Now, next to that there is another collection entitled *Apparition in April* where also he talks about Indian culture and all and there also in one poem after another, how he mentions that there are certain practices which are being followed and a non-Indian cannot understand the illusion of it even though the landscape is portrayed.

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Apparitions in April

- ❑ Depiction of Indian Culture
- ❑ Landscape portrayal
- ❑ evocation of the dazzling yet devastating seascape
- ❑ Obscure to non-Indian

Each in the cinder-fall finds his small nirvana!
Flame-drops and icon-wash fall on eager palms!
The heart in a moment's surrender to the God-
feet
swirls into concentrics of a motion
beyond dynamics. There is no alarm
as the soul thrills to its first passion, while
around the walls
is an eternity of snow in passionless calm! (88)
("Pilgrimage to Badrinath")

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But then it is portrayed in such a manner, where the evocation of the dazzling yet devastating seascape can be found. So, here we can take one example and this example is about how in Indian context the dead people are disposed and while the dead people are disposed fine. There is this these lines which you find on the right hand side they are taken from a poem entitled “Pilgrimage.” That after a dead is being disposed how the people are now going to Badrinath, because that is a ritual and the poet very beautifully describes. And finally towards the end what he will say, you will find. People are now going in a procession---

“Each in the cinder fall finds his small nirvana, / flame drops and the icon wash fall on eager palms/ the heart in a moment surrender to the God- feet.”

I mean, when the people are dead. And now the soul is going to be surrendered to god:

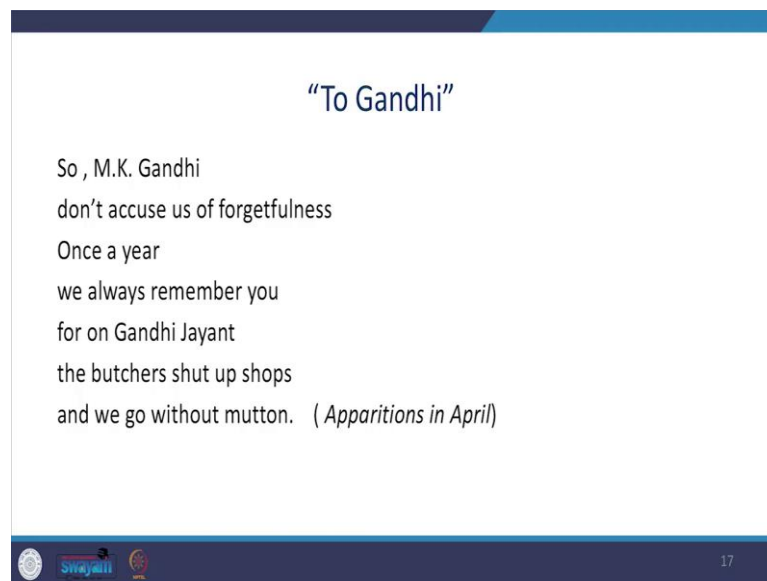
“swirls into concentrics of a motion/ beyond dynamics there is no alarm/ as the soul thrills to its first passion, while around the walls is an eternity of snow in passionless calm.”

People are not worried about the the eternity of a snow. So, this eternity of snow itself is very symbolical yet what they feel is that after the dead is being disposed no after the burning is over, now they have to go to pilgrimage.

So, in a way he also takes a dig at certain practices, where people are without doubt not afraid even of this snow; but they are actually undertaking their journey simply because they have to go to Badrinath. So, it may appear quite obscure to a non-Indian, but then here is a practice and that Daruwalla mentions.

So, in a way even though he is portraying, but he is also portraying the other side of it which actually is not approved of. I mean, it is said that Daruwalla is a poet in whose world there are not only beggars, lepers, temples, superstitious beliefs there are not only criminals; because he was in the police service, so he comes across. And then at times he also talks about the politicians. But he talks about the politicians in such a manner that they may not they should not be insulted, but then he also takes a dig at how every year they remember certain days and after that they do not remember. For example in this poem entitled “To Gandhi”, here he says, I mean those people who consider themselves an often boast of themselves to be the followers of Gandhi to them there is an attack where in the famous poem, which has been taken from apparitions in April.

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The poet says.

So, M K Gandhi

do not accuse us of forgetfulness

once a year we always remember you

for on Gandhi Jayanti,
the butchers shut up shops
and we go without mutton.

Now you see what sort of contrary image he is creating that we remember every year once fine. So, there is an attack that if Gandhi has been so powerful and inspirational, but then we only remember him once a year. And then, how do we remember? We remember in a way that on that day the butchers shut up shops and we go without mutton.

So, this is how; this is how Daruwalla makes beauty even out of ugliness and this is how he also sets a sort of sarcastic you know, a sarcastic reply to those people who only consider Gandhi them who only consider themselves to be the followers of Gandhi and the worshippers of Gandhi.

So, actually he is actually heating at the false claims of being the followers of certain ideals and practices, my dear friends. Again in one another poem the collection is the poem is entitled “Vignette III” where the poem is titled crossing of rivers, as I had told you that “Crossing of rivers” is replete with water images.

And here you will find the sort of picture that he creates for one time or the other you will also approve of it as a sort of reality. Because what we consider to be very sacrosanct and pious, but then we do not look at the other side of it. And this poem is an attack of on our religious practices where, I mean, he does not have to insult anyone; but then he puts before you the sort of contrariness that we are following.

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Realistic Portrayal

Perhaps they come to Varanasi
the unloved, the hungry
looking for their soul like
the blind looking for their lost children

In the street of the lord
the sepia teeth of the pandas
in the streets of virginity
the raucous laughter of whores.

I wish to tear myself from all these
the wet lick of the city's fiery tongue
and the sputter of dry sex purchased like fuel..

(Vignette III, Crossing of Rivers)

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Perhaps they come to Varanasi/ the unloved the hungry.

Now who comes to Varanasi? So, here he says that. So, long as we are in abundance we are full of wealth and all we do not want to go there, but then majority of the people who go to the who go to these Ghats and specially to Varanasi they are the unloved, “the hungry looking for their soul like the blind looking for their lost children.”

So, it is perhaps towards the end that you try to go to a Varanasi or to a religious place only out of hunger. And then he also gives various examples where he says, in the street of the lord in the street of the lord the lord here is the lord here is the god you know, the god I mean he is referring to the lord he is referring to the lord; Vishwanatha maybe or maybe some other lord whatever it is.

But then the master I mean the master of us all,

“In the street of the lord/ the sepia teeth of the pandas.

Now see that even the religious places have actually become a hotbed of merchandise where the pandas they have got the right and they are actually the agents to the god.

“ In the streets of virginity/ the raucous laughter of whores.”

So, we are talking about a religious place where we talk of how these pandas whose you know whose smiles the beguiling the beguiling the Coquettish smiles. And then on the

other side we also find ‘in the streets of virginity the raucous laughter of whores,/ I wish to tear myself from all these.’”

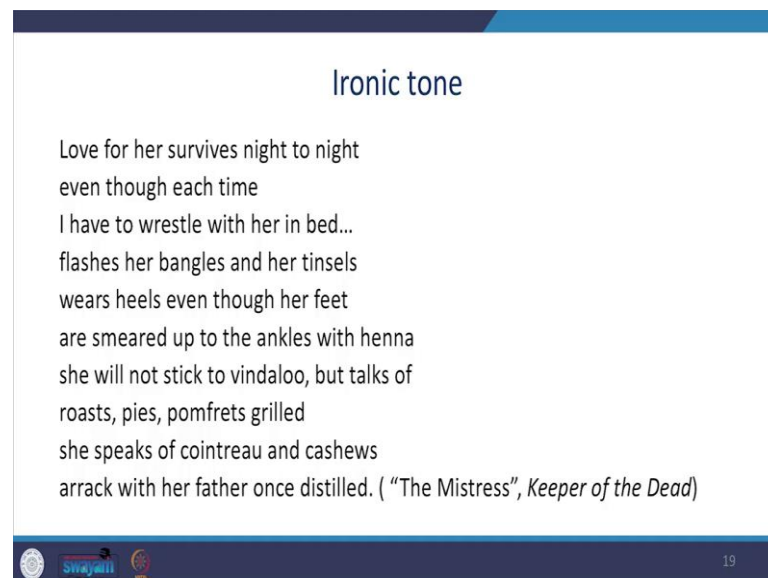
Now here is the poet’s voice,

I wish to tear myself from all these/ the wet lick of the city’s fiery tongue/ and the sputter of the dry/sex purchased like fuel.

So, the poet says that, why should I follow? And once again in another poem he also said that why should I trod on? And why should I remember, when there is god? Why should I not be happy that there will be no troubles, but then the troubles are there, my dear friend.

And that is why he says if such a sort of practice is being followed in a religious city, let me. So, I wish to tear myself from all these the wet lick of the city’s fiery tongue and this sputter of dry sex purchased like a fuel. I mean I have been saying that Daruwalla’s tone is very ironic very satiric and you know he even does not leave language. He does not leave the English language and then here is another attack where he as an Indian you know as an Indian he talks about how he has made English language his mistress.

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Ironic tone

Love for her survives night to night
even though each time
I have to wrestle with her in bed...
flashes her bangles and her tinsels
wears heels even though her feet
are smeared up to the ankles with henna
she will not stick to vindaloo, but talks of
roasts, pies, pomfrets grilled
she speaks of cointreau and cashews
arrack with her father once distilled. (*"The Mistress", Keeper of the Dead*)

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And then he says love for her survives night to night I am in love with English language no doubt.

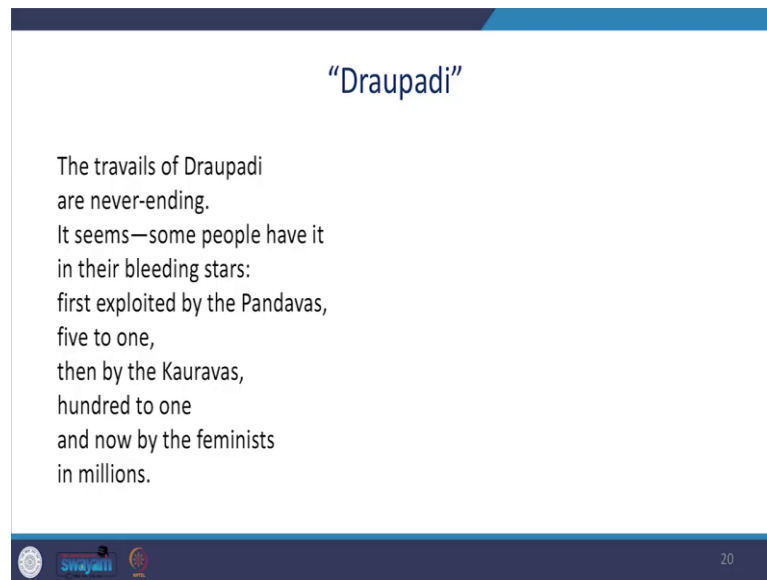
“Love for her survives night to night/ even though each time/ I have to wrestle with her in bed/ flashes her bangles and her tinsels/ wears heels even though her feet/ are smeared up to the ankles with henna./ She will not stick to vindaloo, but talks of/ roasts, pies, pomfrets grilled she speaks of cointreau and cashews/ arrack with her father once distilled.”

So, here there is a reference to the British also and then to this language English where in a very ironic way he says, the love for this language continues night after night and I have to wrestle with her even in my bed with the flashes and bangles and tinsels and all. So, this is also this poem is entitled the mistress and this is from the keeper of the dead. So, now, in all the poems you will find that there is a symbolic gesture also the keeper of the dead.

So, as we Indians we are actually we worship all those who are dead not only our forefathers, but even those people I mean the Britishers have left India, but still we are the worshippers of English language my dear friend. And then every now and then we actually the love for it continues. So, the poet in his own capacity as a poet in with his personal experiences he actually tries to make it general.

And he tries to be sympathetic towards those people who are not good at English, yet they are trying to use this language a very superfluously and whatsoever and they try; to see that the nuances of even this language and the other practices continue. Now, to say that he was critical simply will not be true unless and until we examine the entire world of Keki N. Daruwalla. In the poem entitled “Draupadi” you see, again there is an attack where he says.

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“Draupadi”

The travails of Draupadi
are never-ending.
It seems—some people have it
in their bleeding stars:
first exploited by the Pandavas,
five to one,
then by the Kauravas,
hundred to one
and now by the feminists
in millions.

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The travails of Draupadi/ are never ending./

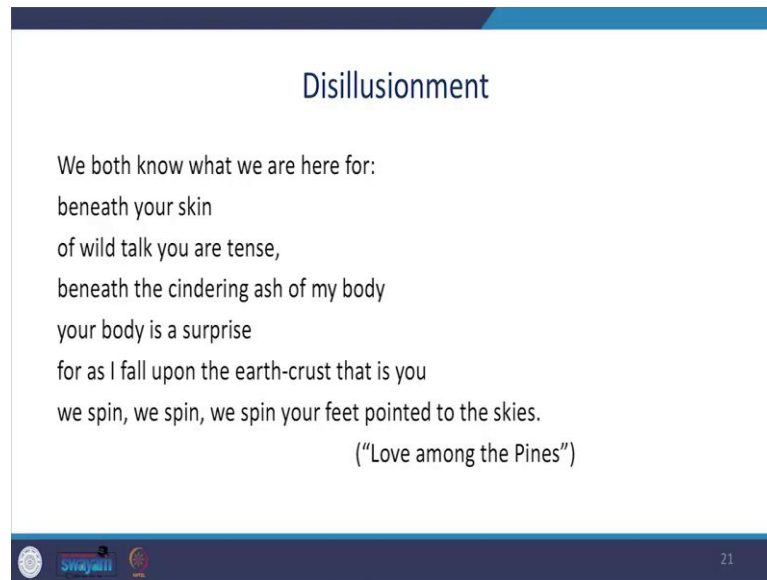
So, the miseries he is talking about the miseries--- the travails of Draupadi are never ending- “ it seems some people have it in their bleeding stars./ First exploited by the Pandava’s/ five to one five to one. You all know that while Draupadi was one you know and it was said that Draupadi would be the wife of all the five people.

So, he says that this was actually a practice which was in the Mahabharata days, but now he says, but this such a sort of practice is not going to end. “Five to one/ then by the Kauravas/ hundred to one/ and now by the feminists in millions.” So, the attack-- that he lays the attack that he puts on very bravely, but very subtly and here there is an attack on by the way he says, and now by the feminists in millions those people who consider themselves to be millions. But then how far they are true? How far they are practical? How far they follow the principles of being the feminists as feminists? Fine.

So, when we look into the lines of Daruwalla we find that there is immense message even though the messages are all suffused with attacks, these are ironical these are biting attacks. And Daruwalla is such a poet where you can also find a sort of scarcity a sort of discontent a sort of barrenness which is prevalent in major parts of this nation and then we actually boast of considering ourselves to be civilized to be developed.

Now, here is a poem entitled “Love among the pines”, and there he once again takes an attack on the rituals that are. In such a bloody way these rituals have been created, as per Bruce king who mentions in one of his papers.:

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Disillusionment

We both know what we are here for:
beneath your skin
of wild talk you are tense,
beneath the cindering ash of my body
your body is a surprise
for as I fall upon the earth-crust that is you
we spin, we spin, we spin your feet pointed to the skies.

("Love among the Pines")

So, the attack we can see,

“we both know what we are here for/ beneath your skin/ of wild talk you are tense/
beneath the cindering ash of my body,/ your body is a surprise/ for as I fall upon the
earth crust that is you, /we spin we spin we spin your feet pointed to the skies.”

So, there is a sort of disillusionment also in love and, but then one can again find that Daruwalla is one such poet, who is not satisfied with the present reality. He is actually trying to find out the fault with the reality and he actually tries to correct it.

To correct the vices by correct the voices by correction and that is there in not only one poem, but poem after poem. Again one example where the poem is titled Myth talk, and in myth talk once again he says that many of these rituals which are actually based on certain gospels or whatsoever. How far are they correct? And how far are they approved?

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“Myth-talk”

Are you glad you were not there?
You may not have stood it,
all these animal smells,
the fresh steaming dung
the hay soggy with urine,
the tang of branmash and body-
heat
and somewhere the placenta like a
bloody undergarment. (59)

[...]
How long must I sacrifice the body
to the soul
the codpiece
to the masterpiece
lost in some vague, aesthetic future? (61)

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And then he says:

“Are you glad you were not there?/ You may not have stood it/ all these animal smells/
the fresh steaming dung,/ the hay soggy with urine/ the tang of branmash and a body
heat/ and somewhere the placenta like a bloody undergarment.”

And then as he goes further he says how long must I sacrifice the body to the soul.

So, those people who keep their body in confinement and simply believe that if the body
is fasted, the soul can only reach the supreme home. So, there is once again a question
and an attack, “How long must I sacrifice the body to the soul? To the codpiece, to the
masterpiece lost/ in some vague aesthetic future.”

So, how can you deny the future calls and challenges if you are simply engrossed in all
the traditional rights and rituals. And that is what makes him at times one may consider
him to be biased, but then he simply tries to portray the reality because as a poet.
Daruwalla is not only a poet of only the big people, but then he is a poet also of the
common people.

And you know he talks of in certain poems he also talks of sin, but then he is conscious
also. And his consciousness actually propels him to believe, that sin is simply a sort of
curio for him my dear friend. We can, before we come to wind up this talk we can take

some critical comments about the poetic world of Daruwalla and some contemporary poets namely Nissim Ezekiel whom we have already talked about and a master poet, who

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Poets and Critics on K. N. Daruwalla

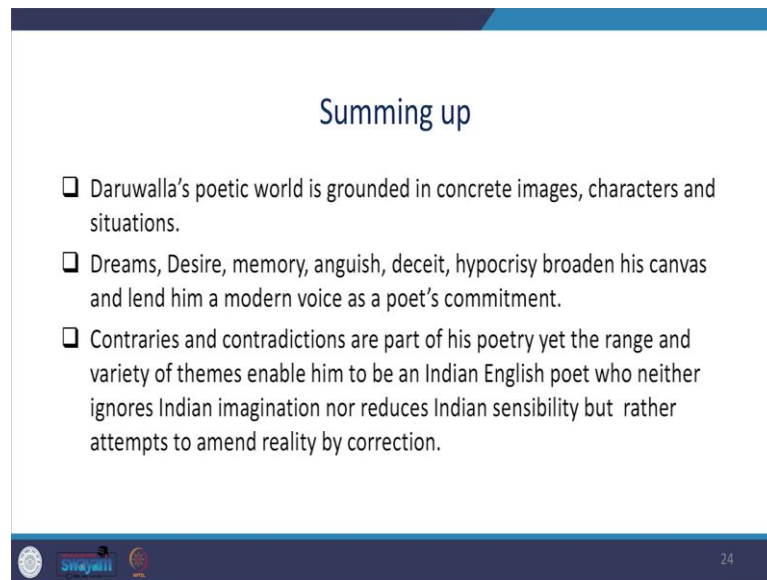
- ❖ 'impressive evidence not only of mature poetic talent but of literary stamina, intellectual strength and social awareness.' (Ezekiel)
- ❖ While Daruwalla might seem to reduce reality to the purely physical and detest those who accept fate do not fight to survive, the actuality of his poems is more complex. There is not only anger at the incompetent, but also a strong ethical and moral consciousness often expressed in savagely satirical comments." (Bruce King)

says that- Daruwalla's world is an "impressive evidence not only of mature poetic talent, but of literary stamina intellectual strength". I will rather underline this word "intellectual strength and social awareness." He is actually socially committed, my dear friend socially committed. That is why his poetry at times may appear to be hinging on a sort of intellectuality, but this intellectuality can be well digested. It is not something very unusual, because he portrays and then he shows you.

Bruce king in one of his articles has very pointedly said that, "While Daruwalla might seem to reduce reality to the purely physical and detest those who accept fate do not fight to survive the actuality of his poems is more complex. There is not only anger at the incompetent, but also strong ethical and moral consciousness moral consciousness often expressed in savagely satirical comments."

So, to say that Daruwalla was an urban poet and Daruwalla simply was talking about the physical immediacy and then of the body and not of the soul and making an attack, on all sorts of religious practices and rituals. But then he was actually through this he was actually trying to create a sort of awareness and this awareness of moral consciousness. That is how as a poet Daruwalla has quite been successful and his range is a very big my dear friend.

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Summing up

- ❑ Daruwalla's poetic world is grounded in concrete images, characters and situations.
- ❑ Dreams, Desire, memory, anguish, deceit, hypocrisy broaden his canvas and lend him a modern voice as a poet's commitment.
- ❑ Contraries and contradictions are part of his poetry yet the range and variety of themes enable him to be an Indian English poet who neither ignores Indian imagination nor reduces Indian sensibility but rather attempts to amend reality by correction.

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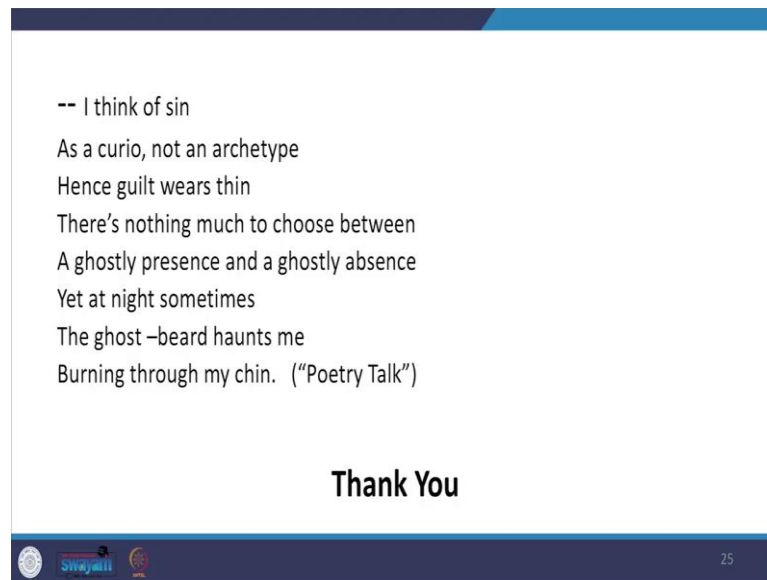
To sum up, let us say Daruwalla's poetic world is grounded in concrete images, characters and situations, grounded in concrete images, characters and situations majority of his characters you will find fine. So, they are grounded in concrete images. So, the poet is trying to attack, but in a very subtle manner. We can come across the themes of dreams, desires, memories, anguish, deceit, hypocrisy of the contemporary world.

But all these actually help him broaden his canvas and lend him a sort of modern voice. And this modern voice, because he might have been inspired by all these modern poets namely T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and many others. And that is why he also thinks of that this body cannot be kept in confinement, simply because the triumph of the soul.

Contraries and contradictions are part of his poetry no doubt, yet the range and variety of themes enable or qualify Daruwalla to be an Indian English poet; who neither ignores Indian imagination, who neither ignores Indian imagination nor reduces Indian sensibility, but rather attempts to amend reality by correction. So, if we have a detailed look because it is very difficult to have a discussion on all the poems.

But I am simply trying to intensify the curiosity of my readers. So, that they can have a leap in the world of a K. N. Daruwalla-- Keki N. Daruwalla. And before we end I would like to make a mention of one of the quotes from one of his very significant poems which I liked very much entitled poetry talk where he says.

(Refer Slide Time: 49:35)



-- I think of sin
As a curio, not an archetype
Hence guilt wears thin
There's nothing much to choose between
A ghostly presence and a ghostly absence
Yet at night sometimes
The ghost –beard haunts me
Burning through my chin. ("Poetry Talk")

Thank You

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“I think of sin/ as a curio I think of sin as a curio, not an archetype/ hence guilt wears thin/ there is nothing much to choose between a ghostly presence and a ghostly absence. /” And in these only two we are actually hanging on or we are being suspended into a sort of ghostly presence and a ghostly absence that is what we face every day in the contemporary world.

“Yet at night sometimes/ the ghost beard haunts me/ burning through my chin.”

And I think the lines of Daruwalla will also burn through your mind, through your heart and allow you to interpret, analyze, enjoy, cherish and relish the beauty and the ugliness that comprise the entire drama of human life in this world so far. So, my dear friend, with this we come to the end of today's talk.

Thank you very much I wish you all a good day ahead thank you.