

Indian Poetry in English
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Lecture - 16
Gieve Patel


Good morning friends and welcome back to NPTEL online certification course on Indian Poetry in English. Today we are going to do lecture number 16 and if you can recollect well, we are dealing with some such Indian poets in whose poetry we have got a sort of existential tinge. In this regard we have already done the poetry of Kamala Das and after Kamala Das we did Jussawalla and we have also now on our cards Gieve Patel, fine.

So, today we shall be discussing are the poetic world of Gieve Patel. Now, before we go into the poetic world of Gieve Patel, let us have a background in which Gieve Patel appeared as an Indian English poet. My dear friends, we know that the climatic conditions are also very important in the making or the marring of a poet. By climatic conditions here I mean the social and the political scenario that are prevalent in an age.

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Socio-Political Conditions

- ❖ Post-Independence
- ❖ Wars fought in Vietnam, Bangladesh and the Middle East
- ❖ 1969 Gujrat Riots: Communal Violence
- ❖ Emergency in 1975
- ❖ Insensitive society
- ❖ 'Green Movement' writer



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It is in this regard that Gieve Patel when he appeared on the Indian literary scene, it was actually a scene of post independence and presently the poets that we are discussing majority of them are post-independence poets.


Now, the post independence poets--- if we simply take some example apart from India, we can also find that all around the world, there were several struggles, several wars were being fought. For example, in Vietnam, Bangladesh and a Middle East, wars were being fought and in 1969 there was a Gujrat Riot which actually affected many of the poets of that time. Followed by the emergency which was clamped on India and Indian masses in the year 1975.

So, all these actually led to a sort of chaos in the society and poets and writers got very much affected. It appeared as if for a time being, society had become quite insensitive, but at the same time writers with their own poetic credibility and their own poetic consciousness were also fighting a sort of movement which we can consider to be a sort of Green Movement. There were many writers and here the writer or the poet that we are discussing is also one of the members of that Green Movement.

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Introduction to the poet

- ❖ Born in Bombay, 1940 to Parsi parents who were from a small village named Nargol in Southern Gujrat.
- ❖ Anglophone poet belonging to a minority community and to the culture of Bombay.
- ❖ Doctor by profession : Doctor-Poet
- ❖ Exhibited for Contemporary Indian Art, Grey Art Gallery, New York City, 1985.



Painter, Playwright and Poet

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Now, let us have an introduction to the poet. My dear friends, you have already read about the poetry of Nissim Ezekiel and also of Daruwalla--- these two poets and also of Jussawalla---- all these three poets were from a different religion, they were actually from a different community and apart from being Indian, they actually at times felt that they were treated or they had the feelings of being a sort of outsider.

Today, the poet that we are discussing is Gieve Patel, who also belonged to a sort of minority community because he was from a Parsi community. If we come to see his bio,

we can find that he was born in 1940 in Bombay to Parsi parents, who belonged to a very small village named Nargol in Southern Gujarat. Actually his initial education, I mean, the education of this poet, namely, I mean this poet that we are discussing actually he got his education in his nearby schools.

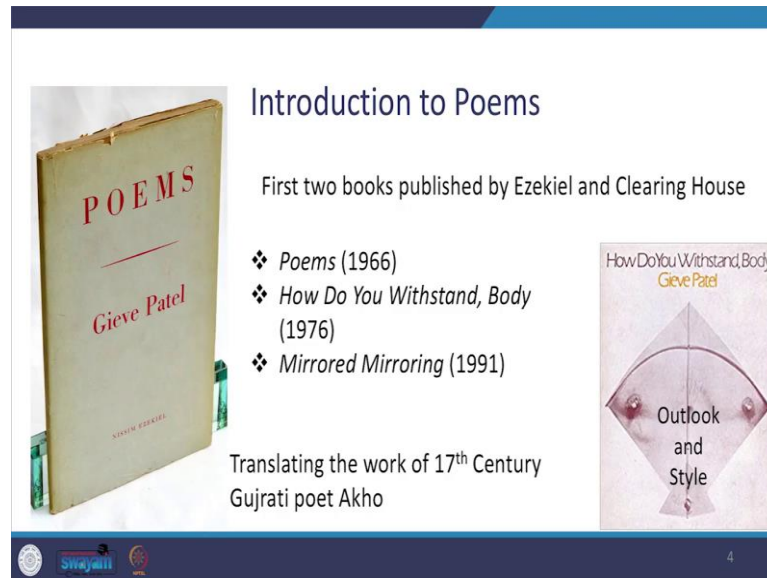
But then he actually wanted to be and his parents wanted to make him a doctor and that is why his early education was in the field of a medicine and then Gieve Patel was an Anglophone poet, fine. He also even though apart from his own language that he knew; he also started writing in English and then not only did he belong to a culture of minority community, but he was also one of the members of the Bombay poet circle.

He was actually a physician by profession. So, we can consider Gieve Patel to be a poet, a physician and also a sort of poet. He actually was very much attracted towards poetry and we can find a sort of impression of Surrealism in his poetry when we look into the details of his poetic oeuvre. He also held several art exhibitions namely Contemporary Indian Art, then Grey Art Gallery and then he also held some exhibitions in New York City in the year 1985.

My dear friends, even though Gieve Patel could not compete much with the contemporary poets as regards getting some awards or a getting some recognition, but the books that he published actually speak volumes about him because he was also one of the experimentalists.

And as an experimental poet, we can find in the works of Gieve Patel something that you can call not only a sort of linguistic experimentation, but also a sort of experimentation which can be considered to be a part of Avant-garde movement because through his own expertise and skill, he was actually trying to create a world which many other poets of his age could not have approved of.

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Introduction to Poems

First two books published by Ezekiel and Clearing House

- ❖ *Poems* (1966)
- ❖ *How Do You Withstand, Body* (1976)
- ❖ *Mirrored Mirroring* (1991)

Translating the work of 17th Century Gujarati poet Akho

Outlook and Style

Since he was very much in association with Ezekiel and contemporaries, the first book that Gieve Patel published was by Ezekiel and Clearing House. The first book by Gieve Patel came out in 1966 and it was entitled *Poems*.

If we have a look at the first collection of Gieve Patel we can find there is a sort of youthful aspiration of a young man who could be considered to be a sort of rebel because he came from a family of rich people. He was a member of a rich community-- his grandfather had lots of land and other things, but then Patel always felt himself to be isolated because he had his sympathies with people of say, not only minority, but the people who were who can be considered to be underdogs and the people who are doing menial jobs and all.

So, all these sympathies of Patel can be witnessed in his very first collection entitled *Poems*. Now, there is one poem where we can also find an imprint of the rural background and the festivities and the poem is named *Naryal Purnima*. So, this Naryal Purnima is supposedly the longest poem in the first collection entitled poems and in this poem this Naryal Purnima is actually a sort of festival which is celebrated on the full moon day especially in the month of August and September.

And on this day people actually not only gather, but they celebrate certain festivities and rituals, but then in that poem also Gieve Patel talks about his own status as being a

person who is isolated and whether his sympathies are with the underdogs as he himself mentions in that poem, I will find.

The second collection was entitled *How Do You Withstand Body* came out after a gap of 10 years between his first collection and the second collection. Because basically Gieve Patel was a doctor by profession. His father also was a dentist and that is why father might be feeling satisfied to see his son becoming a doctor.

But then as Gieve Patel himself was actually in a very conflicting situation whether to be a doctor because poetry and medicine, practice and say a painting there was a sort of conflict in and between. And so, there is a gap of his poetry writing and there is a 10 years gap between the first volume and the second one and the third one came after again after 15 years, the third one is entitled *Mirrored Mirroring* that came out in the year 1991.

Now, it's quite a moment of pleasure to know that Gieve Patel is still alive and he lives in Mumbai, fine. He is still busy and later on he also translated the work of 17th century Gujarati poet Aka. So, many of the works of this poet Aka have been translated by Gieve Patel.

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Characteristic Features of Patel's Poems

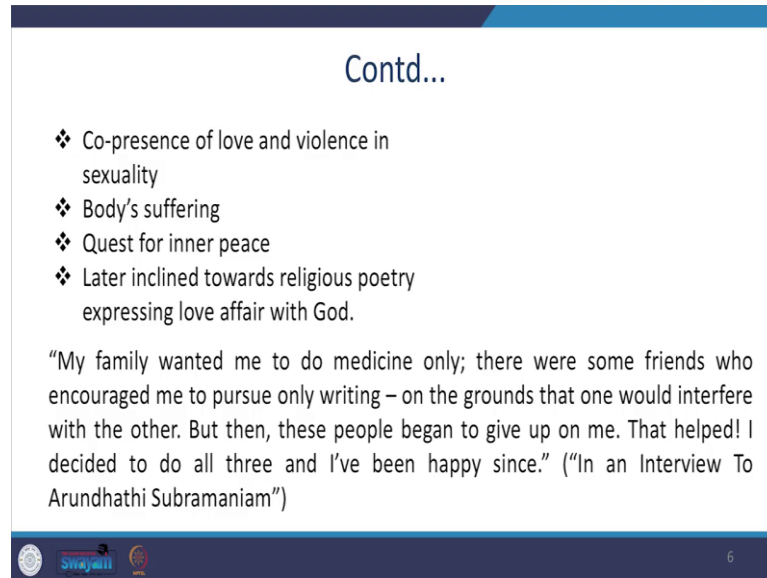
- ❖ Under-privileged
- ❖ Social consciousness
- ❖ 'Situational' poetry
- ❖ Bare colloquial Style
- ❖ Lack of imagery and metaphor
- ❖ Precise and economical
- ❖ Dense and oblique in meaning
- ❖ Lacking in poetic sentiments
- ❖ Reflect upon actual situations not imaginative.

Swajati 5

Now, when we look at the characteristic features of Patel's poems, I think we will take a different sort of interpretation. Today first we look at Gieve Patel's *Poems* and then we

shall see whether the themes that Gieve Patel discusses, then we can come to having a sort of realization as to what sort of poetry is being written or was being written by Gieve Patel.

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- ❖ Co-presence of love and violence in sexuality
- ❖ Body's suffering
- ❖ Quest for inner peace
- ❖ Later inclined towards religious poetry expressing love affair with God.

"My family wanted me to do medicine only; there were some friends who encouraged me to pursue only writing – on the grounds that one would interfere with the other. But then, these people began to give up on me. That helped! I decided to do all three and I've been happy since." ("In an Interview To Arundhati Subramaniam")

Because he becoming a doctor, you know becoming a doctor was the expectation of his family members. So, in one of the interviews to a fellow poet, Arundhati Subramaniam, what he himself had said is of utmost importance--- "My family wanted me to do medicine only. There were some friends who encouraged me to pursue only writing-- on the grounds that one would interfere with the other, but then these people began to give up on me that helped I decided to do all three I have been happy since then."

Now, what are these three things? The first was poetry; the other was becoming a physician and the third was painting. So, he actually divided his time into these three and whatever he has written through his poetry, I think they actually speak volumes of his experience as a physician.

But then he was completely different from other contemporary poets and you cannot find much of the imagination. So, his work is not soaked only in imagination, but then there is a different sort of reality that as an all looker, as an observer Gieve Patel himself found.

In the very first volume entitled *Poems* as I mentioned there is one poem entitled "Naryal Purnima," I mean it can also be called as a coconut festival. So, in that poem what he

writes is of utmost significance and you can find that just at a very early stage he had developed a sort of the feeling of isolation. Now, let us have a look at the lines and then you can realize and then we can attest to the poetic faith of this poet Gieve Patel.

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Predicament of Self and Identity

Do I sympathize with the underdog?
Is it one more halt in the search for 'identity'?

Our interiors never could remain
Quite English. The local gods hidden in
Cupboards from rational Parsi eyes
Would suddenly turn up on the walls
Garlanded alongside the King and the Queen.
And the rulers who had such praise for our manners
Disappeared one day. So look instead for something else:
Even accept and belong. ("Naryal Purnima", Poems,24)

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Do I sympathize with the underdog? Is it one more halt in the search for 'identity'? So, he being a Parsi, he actually felt himself a bit different from others the sort of treatment that he received, the sort of recognition that he received.

So, in the very first collection and in the longest poem that is "Naryal Purnima", where he says,

"Our interiors could never remain/ quite English",

Look at the lines:

"Our interiors never could remain/ Quite English, the local gods hidden in/ cupboards from rational Parsi eyes/ would suddenly turn up on the walls/ garlanded alongside the king and the queen/ and the rulers who had such praise for our manners/ Disappeared one day. So, look instead for something else/ even accept and belong."

So, we can find here that there is a sort of suffering of the poet. The poet suffers, the poet feels himself to be an outsider and then there is a conflict between what he is and what his surroundings are and then it appears as if he is looking for or he is searching for a sort

of identity. So, there is a sort of identity crisis that we can find in the very first collection of age.

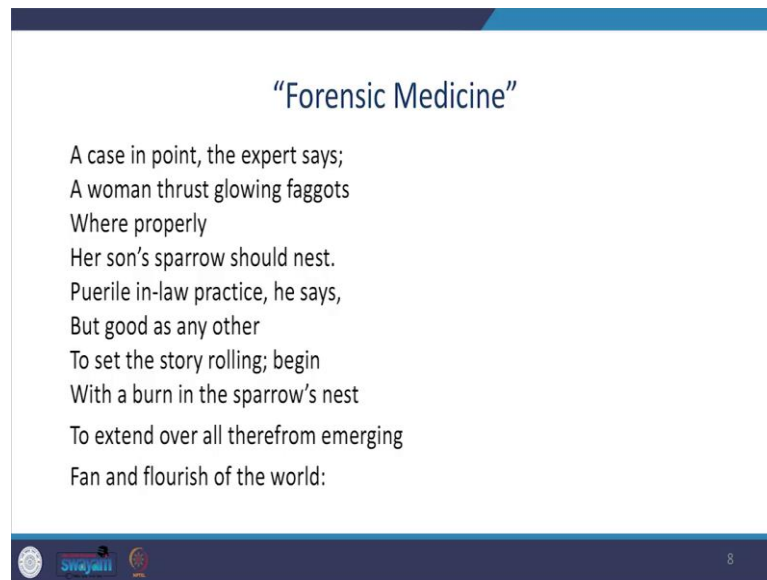
There are certain hours, you know, realities hidden-- where he says the local gods hidden, and then he says because you know we also get a hint here--- our interiors never could remain quite English. Perhaps what he means to say is that we were not kowtowing before the Britishers and then there is also a reflection of his own guilt and of his own suffering and on the suffering of the community where he says that we are not quite English and then the local gods.

So, when he says local gods there are references, the references maybe to the leaders of those times, the references maybe are to the people of those times who actually had become enslaved and who were actually being ruled by the British and then he was actually feeling he was actually having a sort of suffering not of his own, but of the entire country and he actually had a sort of sympathy with the two.

So, here we find let us see the last line and the rulers who had such praise for our manners. Perhaps, our rulers might be very happy when they see ourselves being a slave, but then they disappeared one day. So, look instead for something else, what is that? Even accept and belong, accept what? Belong to whom? To the country to the community, to a sort of faith, but then accept. So, you have to accept. So, there is a sort of harsh dig that we can also find, but as a poet because you know he divided his time between his practice as a doctor and then painting and then poetry.

So, we find that majority of his poems, they actually bear a sort of mark of his medical practice and while he is from a medical profession, you can find this sort of even though there cannot be too many of phrases and images, but then are the words that he has used in his poetry, they actually speak much about his own profession.

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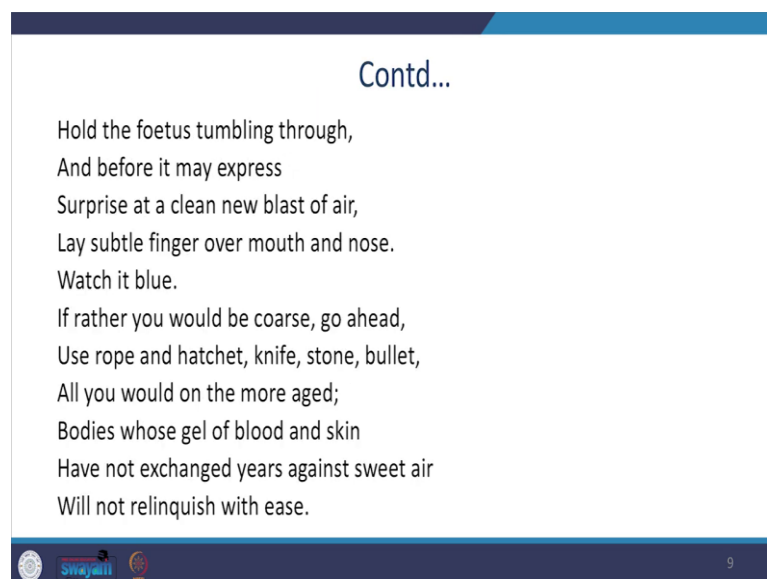
“Forensic Medicine”

A case in point, the expert says;
A woman thrust glowing faggots
Where properly
Her son’s sparrow should nest.
Puerile in-law practice, he says,
But good as any other
To set the story rolling; begin
With a burn in the sparrow’s nest
To extend over all therefrom emerging
Fan and flourish of the world:

Swajati 8

Let us take a poem entitled “Forensic Medicine”. It is often said that in the first collection also there are more than 30 poems which are some way or the other related to the practice of medicine. “A case in point the expert says;/ a woman thrust glowing faggots/ where properly/ her sons the sparrow should nest/ puerile in law practice he says, / but good as any other. / To set the story rolling begin/ with a burn in the sparrows’ nest/ to extend all away there from emerging/ fan and flourish of the world.”

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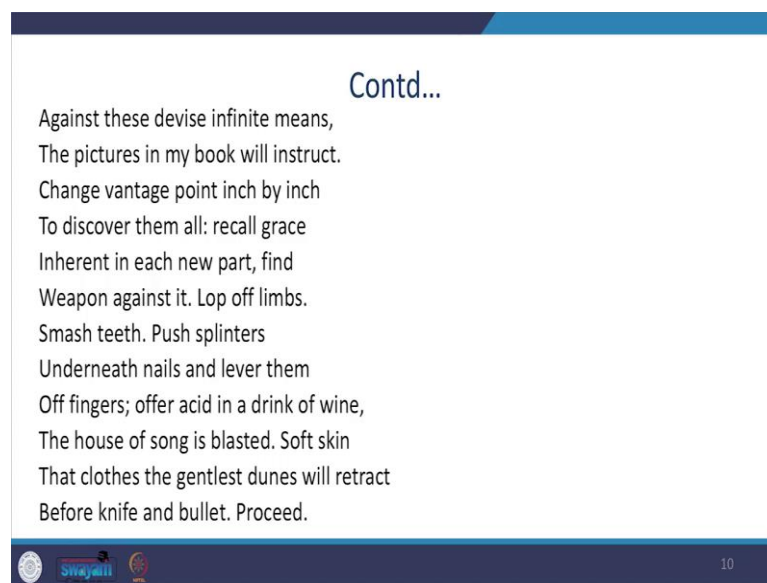
Hold the foetus tumbling through,
And before it may express
Surprise at a clean new blast of air,
Lay subtle finger over mouth and nose.
Watch it blue.
If rather you would be coarse, go ahead,
Use rope and hatchet, knife, stone, bullet,
All you would on the more aged;
Bodies whose gel of blood and skin
Have not exchanged years against sweet air
Will not relinquish with ease.

Swajati 9

“Hold the foetus tumbling tumbling through/ and before it may express/ surprise at a clean new blast of air,/ lay subtle finger over mouth and nose/ watch it blue./ If rather you would be coarse, go ahead,/ use rope and hatchet/

Look at the use of words, “use rope and hatchet, knife, stone, bullet /all you would on the more aged;/ bodies whose gel of blood and skin/ have not exchanged years against sweet air /will not relinquish with ease.” As the poem follows, you can find how the poet is actually portraying the reality of his own professional world.

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Against these devise infinite means,
The pictures in my book will instruct.
Change vantage point inch by inch
To discover them all: recall grace
Inherent in each new part, find
Weapon against it. Lop off limbs.
Smash teeth. Push splinters
Underneath nails and lever them
Off fingers; offer acid in a drink of wine,
The house of song is blasted. Soft skin
That clothes the gentlest dunes will retract
Before knife and bullet. Proceed.

And towards the end what he says is, “Underneath kneels and liver them/ off fingers offer acid in a drink of wine, / the house of song is blasted. Soft skin/ that clothes the gentlest dunes will retract /before knife and bullet. Proceed.”

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Flick pages. The regal column of the neck
Upholding the globe of sight and sound
Is often undermined; or straight
Charge at speech and sight, chop off tongue,
Gouge eyeballs out, hammer nails into the ear.
When you have ravished all, missing
No entrail, do not forget
To return where you started: with a penknife
Strike at the rising sparrow's neck;
With ends of twine strangle the orbs
That feed him seed;
And outrage the sparrow's nest.

You are now full circle
With nothing
Not thought of, not done before.

And now it is often said that as a doctor what he has done is, he actually tries to mutilate the entire body even linguistically in his poems and then finally says the last line. Look at the last line—“You are now full circle/ with nothing/ not thought of, not done before.”

We may consider that the way he was being treated or the sort of experiences that he had, he actually also tried to discover that in his own medical profession, that is why as a poet towards the end what he will do? He will shock you and the last lines are very shocking--- “You are now full circle. Having mutilated all the limbs of the body and then says—“You are now full circle/ with nothing,/ not thought of, not done before.”

Now, all this actually suggests that he was such a poet who actually not only talked about his own profession, but through his own profession that actually became a weapon for talking about not only about the under-privileged, but then there is a sort of consciousness. His poetry can be considered to be situational poetry, the style is very bare colloquial style not like that of a poet who actually brings lots of heaps of images and phrases and all.

It is of course, precise and economical, but there are oblique references. At times it will appear that his poetry is very difficult, very complex, but then if you have in your mind that his medical profession bears a stamp on majority of his poems, there may not be poetic sentiments yet it reflects upon actual situations not imaginative.

So, we can always say that there is a sort of internal struggle and the poet is actually searching for a sort of inner peace, but body is a question that the poet always tries to struggle with and being a doctor he knows the operations of the body and one critic goes to the extent of saying that when he talks about, it appears as if he is actually talking about a surgical operation, my dear friends.

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Analysis of the Poem “Forensic Medicine”

- ❖ Hospital poems
- ❖ Wounds and pains of human body
- ❖ Medical violence and cruelty
- ❖ Rough style and tight rhythm
- ❖ Dispassionate and detached
- ❖ Abundant in grotesque images
- ❖ Prosaic

Swayam 12

So, we can find in the world of a Gieve Patel the stamp of the medicine in one poem after another. But then majority of his poems; one poem that we read recently “Forensic Medicine”, it was the title and we can find that how the poet has, as I said, mutilated the body and finally gives you a shock.

So, there are wounds and pains of human body, it appears as if doctor he was not totally involved, but he was actually detached; detached as a poet and then there are grotesque images that you can find and then since there is no poetic sentiment involved, the poetry of him appears to be very prosaic.

But that does not mean that Gieve Patel was not a poet. That actually does not negate the fact that Patel was lacking in a sort of poetic sensuousness or a poetic consciousness. For example, if we take another poem entitled “On Killing a Tree”, we can find that through this killing of a tree, the poet actually finds that even all other creatures even whatever flora and fauna which are around us also have a life of their own. So, life in various

manifestations can also be a witness to majority of the poems that have been written by Gieve Patel.

Let us take some lines from this poem which not only talks about the sensuousness and the concern, it also talks about the eco- critical bent of the poet and in a way it also provides us a sort of voyeurism that the poet had. At times there are overtones of sexuality that we can find as a doctor he has his keen sense of making a sense of observation as a poet.

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“On Killing a Tree”

It takes much time to kill a tree, Not a simple jab of the knife Will do it. It has grown Slowly consuming the earth, Rising out of it, feeding Upon its crust, absorbing Years of sunlight, air, water, And out of its leperous hide Sprouting leaves.	So hack and chop But this alone wont do it. Not so much pain will do it. The bleeding bark will heal And from close to the ground Will rise curled green twigs, Miniature boughs Which if unchecked will expand again To former size.
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Swajathi 13

Now, let us read some of the lines.

It takes much time to kill a tree
not a simple jab of the knife

Look at the expression jab of the knife again from the medical field will do it has grown,

slowly consuming the earth,

rising out of it, feeding

upon its crust, absorbing

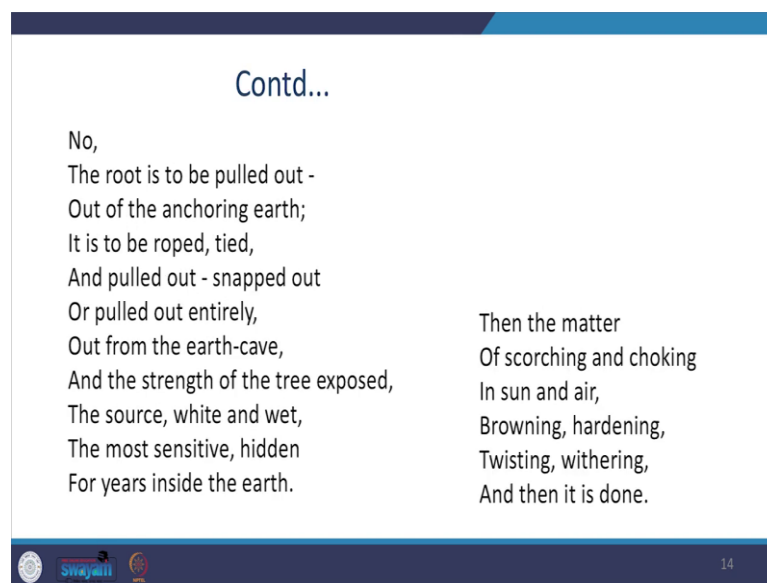
years of sunlight, air, water.

So, when I read it, I actually find as if a migrant voice is speaking, is not it?

Years of sunlight, air, water---- which are all below the roots of the tree they are actually suffering it ‘And out of his Leperous hide.’ See here is actually the predicament of the poet that actually comes through this poem ‘sprouting leaves hack and chop.’

Look at the images--- So hack and chop,/ but this alone will not do/ it not so, much pain will do it./ The bleeding bark will heal/ and from close to the ground/ will rise curled green twigs,/.... if you simply hack and chop you might find that the bark has been injured, but again there will leaves come up, so there also is a sort of hope.

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“Miniature boughs/ which if unchecked will expand again to former size./ No,”.

And then he says—“No, the root is to be pulled out/Out of the anchoring earth;/ no you simply cannot hack and chop and live it, but if you really want to exterminate you will have to pull out the a root ‘it is to be roped, tied/ and pulled out-snapped out/ or pulled out entirely,/” out from the earth-cave/ and the strength of the tree exposed.”

I will simply go to the last stanza and- “Then the matter/ of scorching and choking/ in sun and air,/ browning, hardening, /twisting, withering/ and then it is done.” So, we find here not only an image of distraction, but at the same time we find here a sort of sympathy not only for the tree, but for all those people who are rooted here and you simply want to exterminate that.

So, the poet in the garb of this eco- critical, you know, poem he is actually also talking about those people who have been here on this earth for so many years. But then have been deprived of so many opportunities and all. So, there can be a sort of compassion that can be found here.

Now, if we analyze this poem in greater detail because all of you are, you know, free to analyze it, but you can find that there is a note of violence against environment, graphic images you have already found and then the death and decay of the self is also witnessed.

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Analysis of the Poem "On Killing a Tree"

- ❖ Eco-criticism
- ❖ Full of satire
- ❖ Violence against environment
- ❖ Graphic imageries
- ❖ Medical imageries
- ❖ Death and decay of self

Swajathi 15

So, not only his first collection, but the second collection also when we move to the second collection which is actually prevalent with the images of the body and the body actually plays its part well, but with the help of the body, the poet actually asks so many questions and here is the poem that you can read at your own ease and your leisure and pleasure, but again you can find a sort of sympathy with what the poet actually feels.

Let us take a note of some of the lines in order to understand what the poet really felt. Here, appears to be a sort of dialogue there is no other audience, but the poet is interrogating the body itself—"oh dear body, how do you withstand, how do you bear, how do you tolerate?"

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“How Do You Withstand, Body”

How do you withstand, body, Destruction repeatedly Aimed at you? Minutes, Seconds, like gun reports Tattoo you with holes. Your area of five By one is not Room enough for The fists, the blows; All instruments itch	To make a hedgehog Of your hide. It's your fate, Poor slut: To walk compliantly Before heroes! Offering In your demolition A besotted kind of love: Dumb, discoloured, Battered patches; meat-mouths For monsters' kisses.
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“Patel appears to be aiming at a thickly textured, economical, rough, vigorous colloquial style which expresses a mind thinking through its emotions and conflicts towards some logical resolution.” (King)

16

And then the poet says—“How do you withstand body?/ Destruction repeatedly/ Aimed at you? Minutes,/ Seconds like gun reports/ tattoo with holes,/ your area of five/ by one is not/ room enough for/ the fists that blows/ all instruments itch.”

Now, see here actually poet asks a very silent and simple question to the body how do you withstand all that? As a medical practitioner, he also might have experienced how the patients know how they are being dealt with even though for a sort of cure, but then all sorts of operations, all sorts of persecutions are made only on the body and the body is a witness and the body withstands.

So, we can find a note of melancholia also here and then the poet says—“To make a hedgehog/ of your hide. It is your fate/ poor slut: To walk compliantly /before heroes offering/ in your demolition/ a besotted kind of love: dear body you have bared everything, but then you are actually walking compliantly before heroes offering in your demolition even in your destruction you are offering the besotted kind of love/

And then—“Dumb, discoloured,/ battered patches”

See the images of ravage, the images of destruction, the images of violence, the images of cutting, fine ? “Meat mouths for monsters’ kisses.”

So, how much has this body suffered and that is why this volume which was the second one it is you know, majority of the poems of this volume are actually associated with

body and how the body has suffered it all. Here, I think we can take a very important comment by Bruce King who says, “Patel appears to be aiming at a thickly textured, economical, rough, vigorous colloquial style which expresses a mind thinking through its emotions and conflicts towards some logical resolution.”

The poet is actually trying to find resolution, but then the poet is struggling and the body and its parts, they actually become the weapon for the poet’s resolution of the perennial problem.

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The Ambiguous Fate of Gieve Patel, He Being Neither Muslim
nor Hindu in India

To be no part of this hate is deprivation.
Never could I claim a circumcised butcher
Mangled a child out of my arms, never rave
At the milk-bibing, grass-guzzing hypocrite
Who pulled off my mother’s voluminous
Robes and sliced away at her dugs.

Planets focus their fires
Into a worm of destruction
Edging along the continent. Bodies
Turn ashen and shrivel. I
Only burn my tail.

One of the major poems that actually made Gieve Patel very famous among the poetic circles was written in the backdrop of 1969 Gujarat riot and then the poet in this poem talks about how people became merciless, how people had become cruel and then in an atmosphere of cruelty, what the poet writes and says: The ambiguous fate of Gieve Patel he being neither Muslim nor Hindu in India.

So, the poet here actually talks about a sort of secularism and then he also tries to give us a message that we are neither Hindu nor Muslim. And here also we find that there is another thing which the poet actually does not say, but he is somehow different yet he is actually considered to be deprived and this poem had become very popular. We can take the lines of this poem in order to understand it in greater depth in detail where the poet says:

“To be no part of this hate is deprivation.”

You see you see the dig that is there even to be no part of this hate is deprivation, even if you are not being hated that is again a sort of deprivation that is why in one of the poems he had said to accept and to belong fine. So, you should not feel that if people do not hate you belong know even if you are being hated you belong. “Never could I claim a circumcised butcher/ mangled the child out of my arms, never rave/ at the milk-bibing, grass-guzzing hypocrite.”

Look at the way the poet actually uses the words with the help of his medical knowledge, “At the milk-bibing, grass-guzzing hypocrite/ who pulled off my mother’s voluminous/ robes and sliced away at her dug/ planets focus their fires/ into a worm of destruction. /Edging along the continent bodies/ turn ashen and shrivel I/ only burn my tail.”

“ I only burn my tail”--- here the poet not only interrogates his own identity, but the identity of all those people and there you know the title itself says—“The Ambiguous Fate”. My fate here is ambiguous--- I am neither a Muslim nor a Hindu in India I am actually a Parsi.

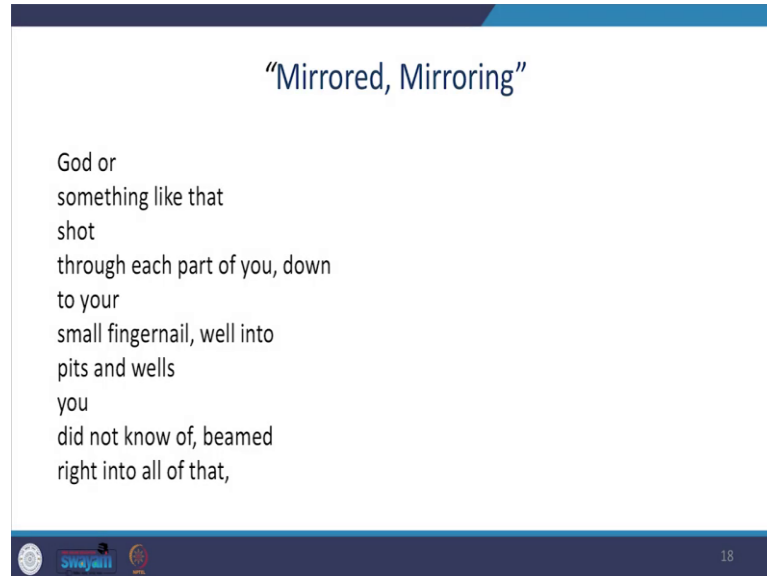
So, there is a sympathetic note towards Parsi being a minority community, but at the same time the poet actually says that when there is an aggression, when there is a riot, I think people try to forget the differences and rather people should try to forget the differences and try to become one because when atrocity is done it is not done in the name of colors because the color of everyone’s blood is the same. That is why the poet says to be no part of this hate is utter deprivation.

Now, all these poems being written I mean when we come to the third volume of the poet, we find the poet has come out from the world of all sorts of butchering, all sorts of injury and here this *Mirrored Mirroring* which came out in 1991. Here we can find a sort of transition and transition from return transition to return to reconciliation.

There is actually the beginning of a new journey--- that journey may be considered to be a spiritual journey and here the poet may also talk about God in the beginning he actually in some of the poems he talked about, because he was very hesitant to take the name of god, but now there is a sort of surrender, there is a sort of submission and the poet

actually appears to have tried to come to a sort of resolution. Let us take some of the lines of this collection.

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“God or/ something like that/ shot/ through each part of you, down/ to your/ some small fingernail, well into/ pits and wells/ you/ did not know of, beamed/ right into all of that.” So, his entire collection of poems may appear to be very prosaic because he as a doctor takes the jibe of the knife or whatsoever. He also does so, while a making you know while cutting his own lines and then you will find that some of the lines are just one-word line. So, it appears that his own expertise appears to have impacted his own writing.

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Contd...

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and your fruitlessness; flooded
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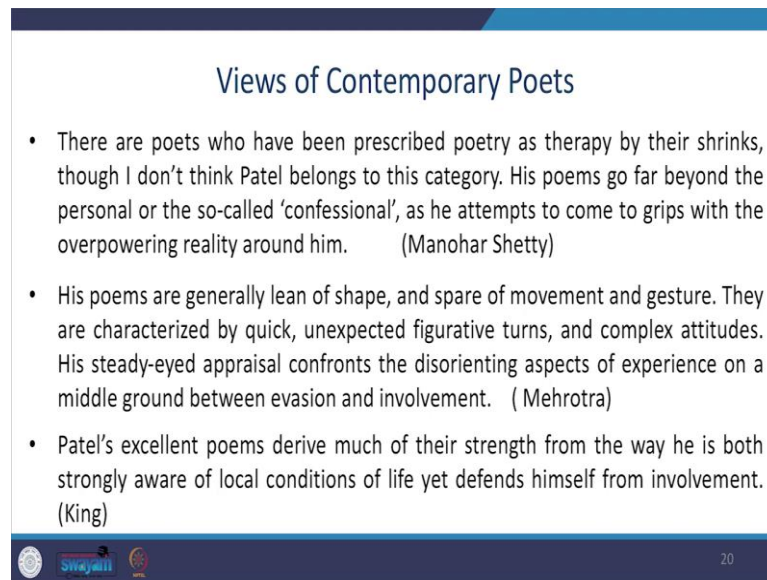
[From: *Mirrored, Mirroring*;
Publisher: Oxford University
Press, New Delhi, 1991]

And here then he says--- and into your/ crude meanness/ and your fruitlessness; flooded/ might be/ the word for/ it./ Trans/lucence,” You see how the word translucence has been divided, there is a sort of enjambment we can say, but then it is only of words. Trans/lucence, the sun/ blaz/ing through, lift/ing the most of you/ out/ of sight, save for/ a persistence of veins.”

So, *Mirrored Mirroring* is a collection where the poet shows because we have already found that in “How do you withstand body,” there is a sort of self, you know lamentation, but here the poet comes to make a sort of realization and there is actually a craving for a sort of a spiritual satisfaction and the poet is perhaps trying to mend his own fences, my dear friend.

Now, having looked at the poetry collections of Gieve Patel, we have found that the poet’s world is full of medical terminologies, medical vocabularies, the images that if any, we can consider they belong to the field of medicine and linguistically also, we have found that there are several cuts, hesitations in terms of lines, in terms of words, but what the contemporary poets view of Gieve Patel can be very pertinent in this regard to establish or to make the reputation of a very contemporary Indian English poet Gieve Patel sink. So, let us take some of the criticism or critical lines on Gieve Patel by his contemporary poets.

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Views of Contemporary Poets

- There are poets who have been prescribed poetry as therapy by their shrinks, though I don't think Patel belongs to this category. His poems go far beyond the personal or the so-called 'confessional', as he attempts to come to grips with the overpowering reality around him. (Manohar Shetty)
- His poems are generally lean of shape, and spare of movement and gesture. They are characterized by quick, unexpected figurative turns, and complex attitudes. His steady-eyed appraisal confronts the disorienting aspects of experience on a middle ground between evasion and involvement. (Mehrotra)
- Patel's excellent poems derive much of their strength from the way he is both strongly aware of local conditions of life yet defends himself from involvement. (King)

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In this regard Manohar Shetty what he says is of utmost importance:

“ There are poets who have been prescribed poetry as therapy”, Poetry as therapy because poetry soothes you during the time of leisure when you are injured, frustrated burdened and all. So, the poet also in this regard, “poetry as a therapy by their shrinks, though I do not think Patel belongs to this category.” So, he does not consider Patel to belong to this category of poetry as therapy rather what he says is, “his poems go far beyond the personal or the so-called confessional, as he attempts to come to grips with the overpowering reality around him.”

To say that simply as Gieve Patel was a doctrine that is why his poems talk about all these things of destruction, demolition whatsoever, but then Manohar Shetty says that he actually came to grips with ‘the overpowering reality around him.’

So, the situation that is why he has been called a situational poet, the situation or the circumstances that were around him they got room through Gieve Patel's poetry. Another contemporary poet Mehrotra we have already learnt about Mehrotra A K. Mehrotra-- Arvind Krishna Mehrotra what he says is also very significant in this regard, ‘His poems are generally lean of shape.’

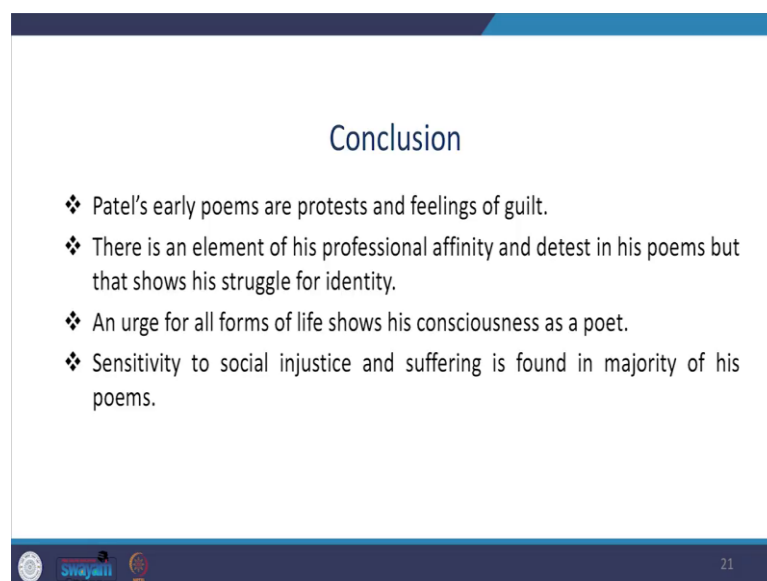
If you look at the lines the lines are not abundant there is not an abundant growth, but then there is a lean of shape and a spear of movement and gesture. “They are

characterized by quick unexpected figurative turns and complex attitudes. His steady eyed appraisal confronts the disorienting aspects of experience on a middle ground between evasion and involvement the poet is actually trying to struggle between evasion and involvement.” He is in a world of medicine he might evade, but then there is a criss-cross, we find a sort of conflicting loyalties of the poet.

What Stephen King says is, of course, very remarkable in this regard—“Patel’s excellent poems derives strength much of strength from the way he is both strongly aware.” So, he finds a sort of consciousness, a sort of awareness. Awareness of what? Awareness of “local conditions”. That is why “Naryal Purnima” isn’t it? Awareness of what? The world that he was dealing with that is why medical profession, “yet he defends himself from involvement.” We cannot find that the poet is completely involved rather we find the poet comes out the poet actually tries to fulfil his own dharma.

So, having looked at several views of contemporary poets and critics, it is now time to make our own conclusion about Gieve Patel. We have already found that the early poetry of Gieve Patel, I mean, *Poems* which came out in 1966, they are full of protests, there appears to be often conflicts between him and his grandfather. The grandfather who was actually a rich man, but on the other hand this person, I mean, Gieve Patel was actually his sympathies were towards the servants and that is why he said; our you know our contours or we were not quite English our interiors were not quite English.

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Conclusion

- ❖ Patel’s early poems are protests and feelings of guilt.
- ❖ There is an element of his professional affinity and detest in his poems but that shows his struggle for identity.
- ❖ An urge for all forms of life shows his consciousness as a poet.
- ❖ Sensitivity to social injustice and suffering is found in majority of his poems.

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And then we also find feelings of guilt, there is an element of professional affinity, no doubt about it. And detest, I mean, dislike in his poems, but that shows his struggle for his own identity for the triumph of itself he was actually trying to raise a war against the atmosphere that he was living in.

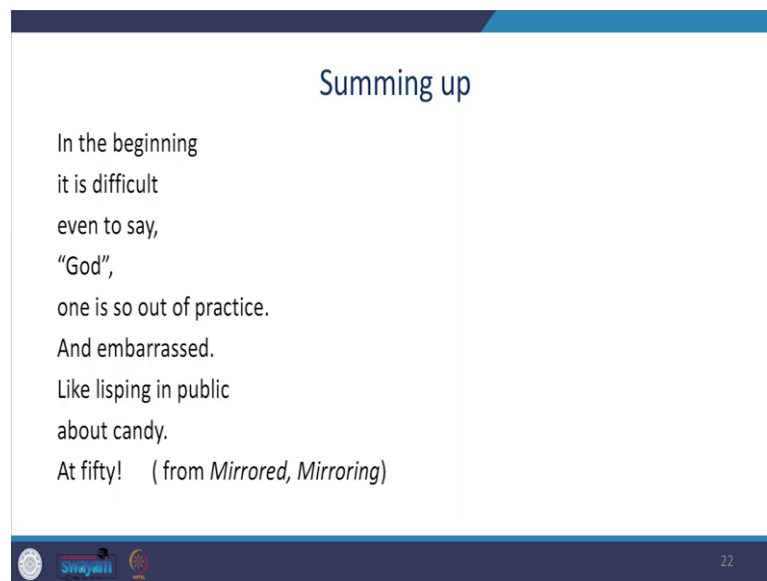
There is an urge for all forms of life because we find that he not only does he talk about human beings, not only does he talk about body, but also he talks about the body of a tree when the tree is ravished, when the tree is uprooted and how below the earth the tree has actually suffered sunshine, light, darkness and all. And all sorts of ravages that the tree, but then if you really want to uproot it out, you will have to take it out you would have to pull it out.

So, finally, we can say that the poetic world of Gieve Patel offers a sort of sensitivity to social injustice and suffering that is actually found in majority of his poems. Now, having said all this, it is now time to sum up our discussion of Gieve Patel once again by quoting from his last book that is *Mirrored Mirroring* where he says:

“In the beginning


It is difficult/ even to say, “God.” I mean when all of us are young, you know God actually is not a sort of possibility because you feel that there is immense potential within you.

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Summing up

In the beginning
it is difficult
even to say,
“God”,
one is so out of practice.
And embarrassed.
Like lisping in public
about candy.
At fifty! (from *Mirrored, Mirroring*)

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So, in the beginning it is difficult even to say God--- “One is so, out of practice/ and embarrassed/ like lisping in public/ about candy at fifty.” So, even though there is a sort of realization, but the realization comes too late and with this we come to the end of today’s discussion.

My dear friends, Gieve Patel was also a sort of existential poet who actually was trying to find his own meaning in this world where he felt himself out of the touch, where he felt himself like an outsider where he was also actually trying to search for his roots and that is where we find him reconciliating towards the end. With this, we come to the end of today’s talk.

Thank you very much I wish you all a good night.