

Indian Poetry in English
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Lecture - 17
Pritish Nandy

Welcome back friends and good morning to NPTEL online certification course on Indian Poetry in English. We are now going to discuss Lecture number 17. Prior to this, as you remember well, we have discussed Gieve Patel who also comes to Indian English poetry as an existentialist and also as an experimentalist because of his profession. In this lecture today we are going to talk about yet another big name which many of you might be familiar with and the name is none other than Pritish Nandy.

You might be knowing Pritish Nandy as a journalist, as a promoter of films as a producer rather, but initially Pritish Nandy began his career as a poet. So, let us look at the poetic oeuvre of Pritish Nandy and we shall also see how Pritish Nandy came to be Pritish Nandy and how he also divided and distributed himself in different areas and proved his own worth, proved his own meaning and established himself as a man who can always be reckoned with.


My dear friends, Pritish Nandy in himself combines not only a poet, but a painter, a promoter, a producer, but at the heart of all this lies Pritish Nandy's poetry. Now as we have always seen that whenever we talk about any poet, the first thing that we discuss is who the poet is and what actually was his early career like. Because whatever one does has got an imprint on a poet's entire poetry. Pritish Nandy was born in 1951 and that also in Bhagalpur in the state of Bihar in Eastern India to a Bengali Christian family.


Pritish is an Indian poet and you might be happy to note that Pritish Nandy is still there and still working. So, he is a poet, painter, journalist, he was also a sort of parliamentarian and then of course, he is a film-maker. Many of you might be knowing him through his films as well.

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Introduction

- ❖ Born on 15 January 1951, in Bhagalpur in the state of Bihar in eastern India to a Bengali Christian family.
- ❖ Indian poet, painter, journalist, parliamentarian, and film maker
- ❖ E. M. Forster Literary Award, 1976, & Padma Shri in 1977.
- ❖ Nominated as a Poet Laureate by the World Academy of Arts and Culture at the Fifth World Congress of Poets in San Francisco, 1981.
- ❖ Publishing director of *The Times of India* between 1982 and 1991.
- ❖ Associated with *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *The Independent*, *Filmfare*, *Femina*, *Science Today*, *Dharmayug* and *Madhuri*.
- ❖ Nandy founded Pritish Nandy Communications in 1993 and remains its Non-Executive Chairman.



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He had to his credit several awards namely, E. M. Forster Literary Award in 1976. You might be surprised to know that only at the age of 25 he was actually given Padma Shri Award. He was such a prolific poet and he, but he did not confine himself only to the world of poetry, because there were so many other skills in him.

We have been watching and reading that majority of the poets especially Indian English poets had some or the other way, their association with journalism, though they started working with many journals, many periodicals and so, Pritish Nandy was also not an exception in this regard. He had been the editor of *Illustrated Weekly* for quite some time, fine for a longer period of more than 3 or 4 years then he was also associated with '*The Times of India*' for 9 years between 1982 and 1991.

He was also nominated as a Poet Laureate by the World Academy of Arts and Culture at Fifth World Congress of Poets in San Francisco in the year 1981. So, Pritish rose to fame very early and he had also his acquaintances all over the world. He became very popular as a poet. He was also associated with *The Independent*, then *Film Fare*, *Femina*, *Science Today*, *Dharmayug* and *Madhuri*.

It was later that once Pritish Nandy said good bye to the world of poetry because you know he had so many loves and several loves collided with each other also. And then he bid adieu to the world of poetry and founded Pritish Nandy Communications in 1993 and he remains its Non-Executive Chairman even today. You might also remember that there used to be a very

famous show *Pritish Nandy Show* on Indian Televisions. So, Pritish is such a prolific name he has been called by many people as prolific poet.

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Poetry Collections

- ❑ *Of Gods and Olives* (1967)
- ❑ *On Either Side of Arrogance* (Calcutta, 1968) Writers' Workshop
- ❑ *Riding the Midnight River: Selected Poems* (1974)
- ❑ *Lonesong Street* (Calcutta, 1975) Poets Press
- ❑ *In Secret Anarchy* (Calcutta, 1976), United Writers
- ❑ *The Nowhere Man* (Calcutta, 1976) Arnold Heinemann
- ❑ *Again* (2010)
- ❑ *Stuck on 1/Forty in 2012* (2014)
- ❑ *Peerless Minds: An Arc of Achievement* (2019)



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Now, Pritish just in the beginning of his career started writing poems and he had several collections to his name you know, he started with '*Of Gods and Olives*' in 1967, then came '*On Either Side of Arrogance*' from Calcutta's Writer's Workshop, then '*Riding the Midnight River: Selected Poems*' which came out in 1974.

Then, '*Lonesong Street*' which became very famous because this *Lonesong Street* was later also sung. There are 12 poems in it and it was later sung by Pritish Nandy and Mallika Sarabhai it is already available. So, those who have a yearning for listening to it they can listen, they can enjoy, they can also listen to the voice of Pritish Nandy and the way he has given it the voice. It actually looks very beautiful and the meanings appear quite clear.

Although, the poet is of a different genre, the poet actually, at times, imitates the Avant Garde movement or at times he also because he was also a sort of experimentalist. Among the few experimentalists that we can make a mention of Pritish Nandy is also one of them.

He also had a collection with the Kamala Das and the collection entitled *This Savage Rite* fine? '*Tonight, This Savage Rite*' that is actually the name of the collection. Then came '*In Secret Anarchy*' in 1976 by United Writers and then '*The Nowhere Man*' which is a sort of,

from the title, a sort of realization, but we shall also read some of the lines from *Nowhere Man*.

Then, again you know after a long time I mean after a long time Pritish again came back to the world of poetry when he wrote 'Again' come when he got his own collection *Again* and then came *Stuck on 1 by Forty* in 2012. He also got 'Peerless of Minds: An Arc of Achievement' in 2019. So, his poetic oeuvre is quite rich and quite aplenty. We do not have much time to get into or to have a look at all the works, but we will take some of the major works that can show Pritish Nandy's poetic caliber as a poet.

Of course, Pritish Nandy may not be that much familiar among his contemporary poets, but whatever he has written they actually have a different sort of the impression and then he is known more outside than in his own country. So, let us have a look at the special features or the salient features of Pritish Nandy's poems.

Actually, for the first time when he wrote one poem entitled '*Calcutta If You Must Exile Me*' he became very famous. Pritish Nandy as he is an experimentalist you will find that there is no set pattern in his poems, it is always said that Pritish is a love poet and his obsession and his connection is more with the body. There is more of imagination and this imagination is soaked in the imagination of the body, in the imagination of a persona that is absence, in the imagination of one who is not there yet he feels the tinge of it.

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Characteristic Features of Nandy's Poems

- ❖ Wild energy and verbal belligerence
- ❖ Urban violence, horror, death and sex
- ❖ Political protest
- ❖ Popular song lyrics (Pop Poems)
- ❖ Political, social and personal
- ❖ Experimentation of the second half of the '60

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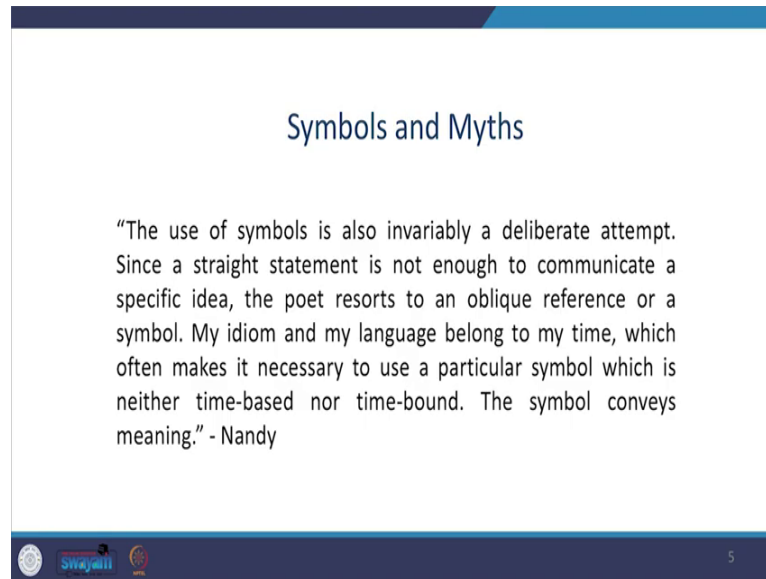
So, we can find that in majority of Pritish Nandy's poems there is wild energy and verbal belligerence, my dear friend. You can find that there are many critics also who have gone to the extent of saying that Pritish uses more and more of words even though that may not be required. One poet has gone to the extent of saying that there is a lot of nimiety, I mean something that should not have been much I mean unnecessary use of words.

And then Pritish can be considered to be a poet who is confined to the urban world and here you can also get a sort of attestation of the fact that Pritish's loyalties were also divided into journalism into advertising. And that he had actually sensed that world by being very close to it by being very close to it that is why we can find a sort of urban violence, the theme of horror, death and sex actually prevalent in his work. Of course, there are political protests here and there and that actually he has got a sort of license because of his association with journalism.

Then he also is very famous because of his love songs which actually were poems-- pop poems you can call it, if you listen to that *Lonesong Street* poems, which are 12 in number you can find that majority of those poems can be sung and that have also been sung. So, the themes around which his poetic over surrounds are political, social and personal.

And in the 60s especially in the second half of the 60s, there is a sort of experimentation that was actually being represented by none other than Pritish Nandy. So, it is time that we took some of the poems in order to measure the depth, in order to measure the merit of this poet Pritish Nandy. Pritish Nandy, even though many people might say many things about Pritish Nandy, but what Nandy himself says is of utmost importance and has got much weight to pull.

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What he says is, “The use of symbols is also invariably a deliberate attempt.” You know Pritish in many of his interviews has said that audacity is his actual strength. So, what he says about the use of symbols and myths because you can find that his poetry is a bit complex also and this complexity has been brought because of the use of symbols and myths. So, he says the use of symbols is also invariably a deliberate attempt.

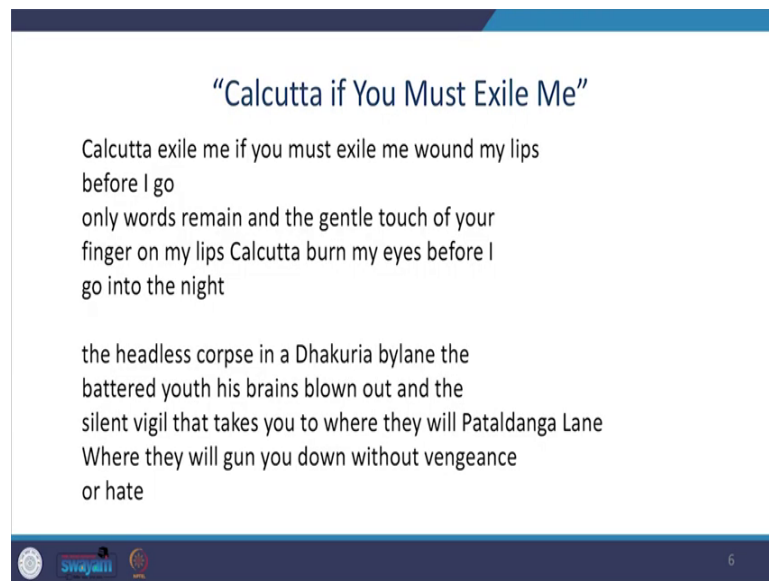
“Since a straight statement is not enough to communicate a specific idea, the poet resorts to an oblique reference or symbol.” When we read his poems we will find that there is a different sort of obliqueness in majority of his poems.

So, what he says is straight statement is not enough to communicate a specific idea there is a conflict between idea and ideals in the poetry of Pritish Nandy. The poet resorts to oblique reference or a symbol. “My idiom and my language belong to my time.” So, maybe the poets today could find a fault in the use of symbols and myths and the in terms of language, but he says my idiom and my language belong to my time “which often makes it necessary to use a particular symbol which is neither time - based nor time- bound. The symbol conveys meaning.” That is why we find a meaning with the help of symbols that Nandy creates in his poetic world.

Now, the poem that I was talking about, my dear friend please listen to each and every word of the poem to see not only the poet’s anguish, but how the poet looked at and even though Calcutta becomes the best. You know that a majority of the poems of the Bombay Circle they

were writing about Bombay. Bombay was the background, but here in British Nandy you can find Calcutta is the background in the back drop and what he says you can find and you can listen and you can find the nuances the way he portrays the city, the city life you know, the urban life and the other side of the urban life, the ugliness of the urban life, how beauty is being relegated to the margins in an urban atmosphere that is what the poet says. Let us read the lines of the poem.

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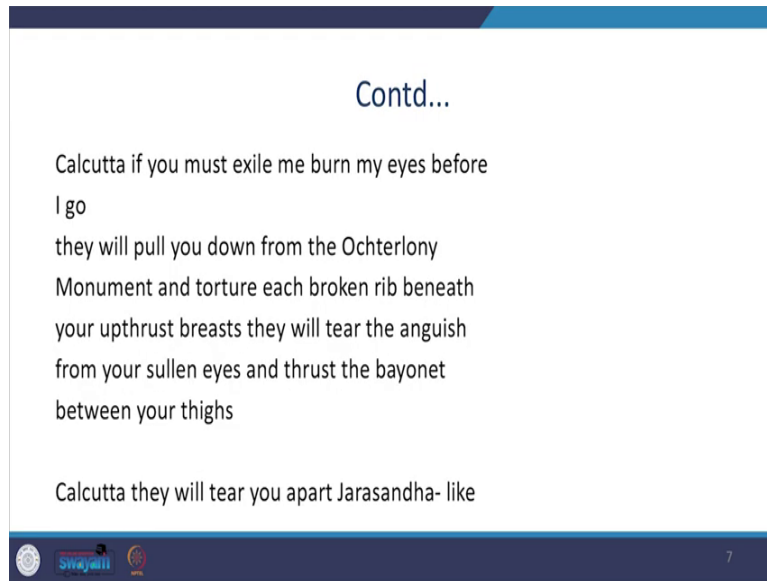


“Calcutta exile me if you must exile me wound my lips/ before I go/ wound my lips before I go only words remain and the gentle touch of your/ finger on my lips Calcutta burn my eyes before I/ go into the night.”

The poet is actually obsessed with Calcutta, but when he looks at the other side of Calcutta he actually feels very desperate and then he says before I leave Calcutta you must exile me.

“The headless corpse in a Dhakuria by lane the/ battered youth his brains blown out and the/ silent vigil that takes you to where they will Pataldanga Lane /Where they will gun you down without vengeance.” Now in a way we also get the description of several lanes of Calcutta and we also get the several ugly acts, several cruel acts that are being perpetrated on the city and the city becomes very infamous, the city is in talk, the city is in news. But for a wrong reason and that is why the poet thinking himself to be one of the representatives of the city Calcutta.

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He says, “Calcutta if you must exile me burn my eyes before/ I go,/

Because I cannot see the treachery, I cannot see the sort of imbalance that is there in a beautiful city which can be considered to be a city of joy which has been considered to be. “They will pull you down from the / Monument and torture each broken/ your upthrust breast they will tear the anguish.”

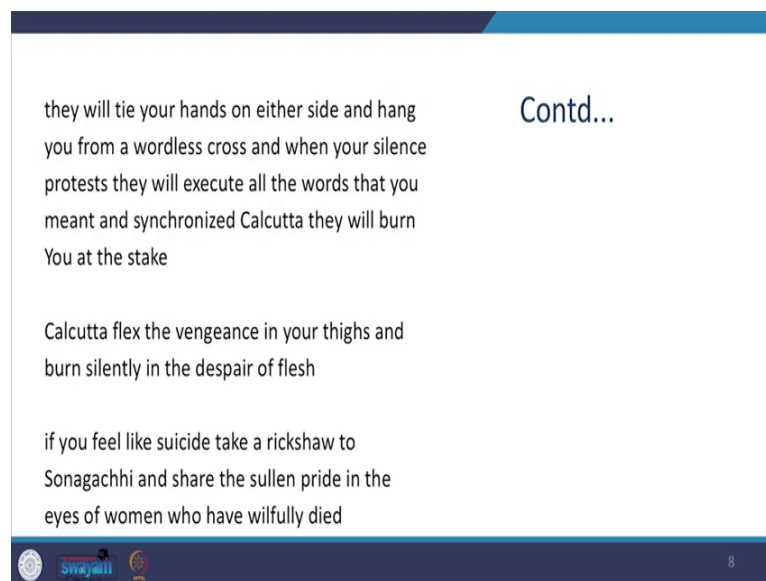
You know the sort of persecution which has been perpetrated on people. “From your sullen eyes and thrust the bayonet/ between your thighs./ Calcutta they will tear you apart Jarasandha like.” Now, see the poet is talking about Calcutta, but the poet actually makes a mention of Jarasandha---- a famous figure in the Mahabharata, you know Jarasandha actually stands for Jarasandha, who was actually the son of King Brihadrath. Now, there goes a story behind it that King Brihadrath had married the Queens of Kashi and he had got no issues. So, once a sage named Chandha Kanishka came and Chandha Kanishka gave a fruit to Brihadrath, what Brihadrath did--- Brihadrath gave this fruit to two of his queens and then the person who was born was this Jarasandh, but since he actually was divided, you know, it was divided-- the other half and the two halves were different.

So, the king was very unhappy and he decided to throw these two parts into a forest, but then there was Jara. Jara was a goddess of the forest and Jara picked it up one in left hand and the other in right hand and Jara actually when she brought both her hands together it was actually

combined and it became Jarasandh and then she came to the King's court and the King had to accept it with the counsell of Chandha Kanishka and this was Jarasandh.

Jarasandh was a very brave one and you may know your study of the Mahabharata that Jarasandh was finally killed by Bhim because Jarasandh was so powerful that he attacked on Mathura 17 times, fine? Seventeen times and finally, Jarasandh was actually killed by Bhim.

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So, here there is a reference of Jarasandha—"Calcutta they will tear you apart Jarasandh like./ They will tie your hands on either side and hang/ you from a wordless cross when your silence/ protests they will execute all the words that you/ meant and synchronized Calcutta they will burn/ you at this stake./ Calcutta flex the vengeance in your thighs and burns silently in the despair of flesh. You can find the body images every now and then how the body is being perpetrated in Calcutta. I mean Calcutta is just a symbol and through this symbol he is actually talking about the perpetrations that are being done or created, that are being enacted in a city.

"If you feel like suicide, take a rickshaw to/ Sonagachhi and share the sullen pride in the/ eyes of women who have wilfully died." And here there is another reference to Sonagachhi, which is actually famous for a red light area where the women and the poet also have a sort of sympathy with these miserable women and he says that if you feel like suicide take a rickshaw to Sonagachhi and they will find how they are also suffering---- these women at Sonagachhi.

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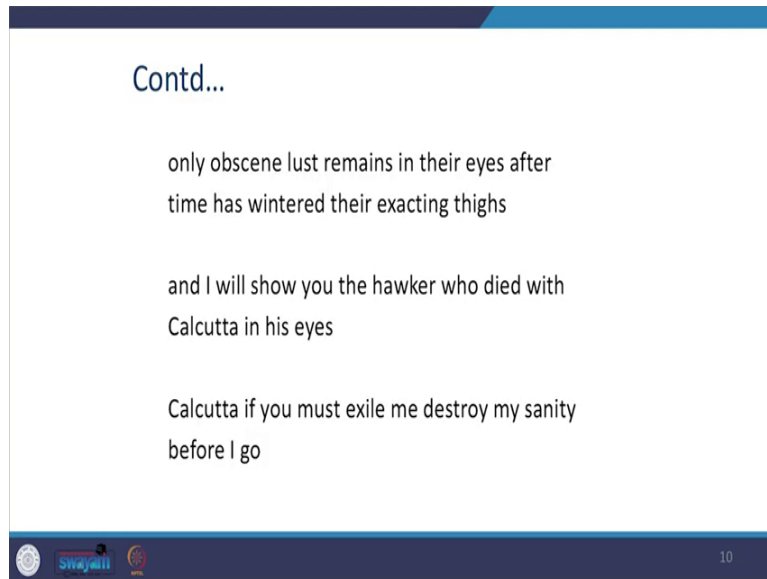
wait for me outside the Ujjala theatre and I will
bring you the blood of that armless leper who
went mad before hunger and death met in his
Wounds

I will show you the fatigue of that woman who
died near Chitpur out of sheer boredom and the
cages of Burrabazar where passion hides in the
wrinkles of virgins who have aged waiting for
sexless war that never came

“Wait for me outside the Ujjala theatre and I will/ bring you the blood of that armless leper who/ went mad before hunger and death met in his/ wounds”. So, the city which you think is very beautiful it has its own horror, it has its own realities and Calcutta if you really want to exile me burn my eyes. “I will show you the fatigue of that woman who/ died near Chitpur out of seer boredom and the/ cages at Burrabazar where passion hides in the/ wrinkles of virgins who have aged waiting for/ sexless war that never came.”

So, you can find if you have a proper reading of the poem, you can find that the poet is actually hinting towards the brutalities, towards the cruelties, towards the malignness of a city which actually outwardly looks so attractive so beautiful. So, in a way the poet not only talks about Calcutta, but the poet talks about the horrid realities, the external realities which actually are external realities which actually cover the internal realities which are there. So, the cry of the city can be witnessed in it.

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only obscene lust remains in their eyes after
time has wintered their exacting thighs

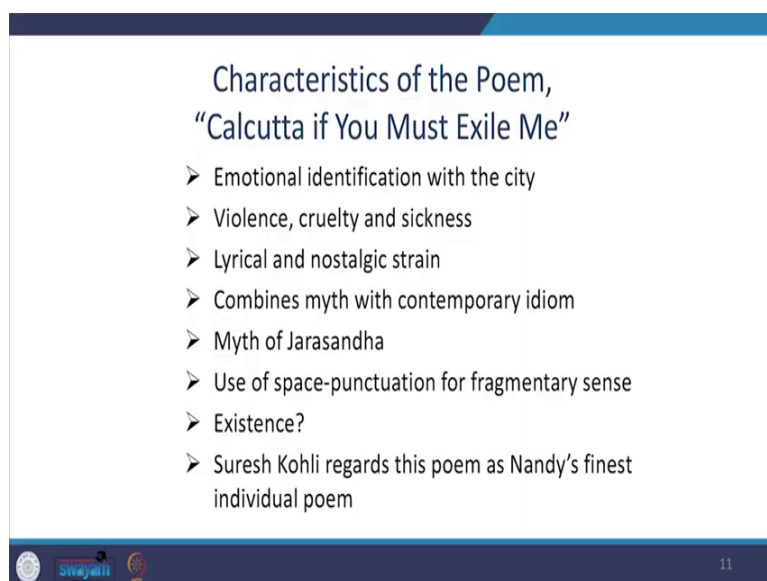
and I will show you the hawker who died with
Calcutta in his eyes

Calcutta if you must exile me destroy my sanity
before I go

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And then the poem continues and continues and then the poet says--- “only obscene lust remains in their eyes after/ time has withered their exacting thighs. / and I will show you the hawker who died with/ Calcutta in his eyes.” Aspiration, ambition, “Calcutta if you must exile me destroy my sanity/ before I go.” So, those who people feel that Calcutta is a beautiful place or a city is a beautiful place it is better I tell them oh Calcutta you must exile me destroy my sanity before I go.

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Characteristics of the Poem,
“Calcutta if You Must Exile Me”

- Emotional identification with the city
- Violence, cruelty and sickness
- Lyrical and nostalgic strain
- Combines myth with contemporary idiom
- Myth of Jarasandha
- Use of space-punctuation for fragmentary sense
- Existence?
- Suresh Kohli regards this poem as Nandy's finest individual poem

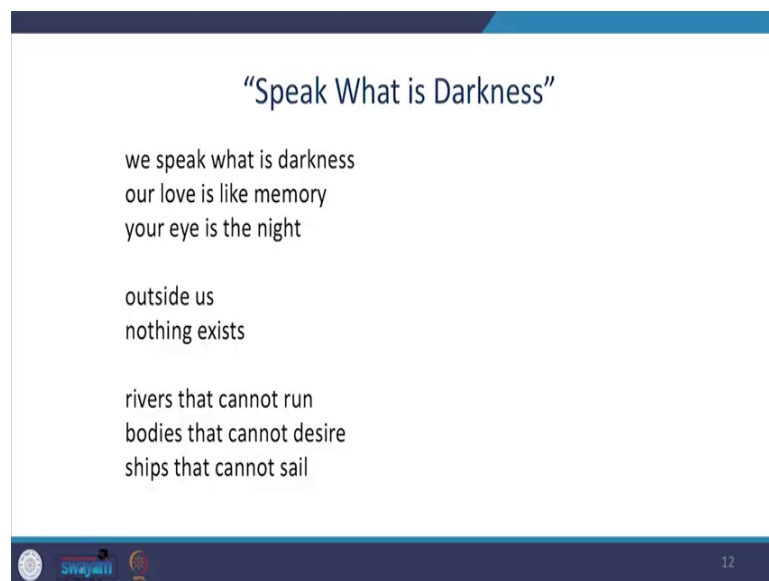
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So, having read this poem you can also come to some of the conclusions as we have discussed the poet is not only making a sort of emotional identification with the city, but he is actually talking about the sickness, the cruelty, the violence. there is a nostalgic strain because the poet spent majority of his time in Calcutta in the early days.

We have seen how the poet has also incorporated the myth of Jarasandh and then what the poet actually hints at is the existential crisis. All of us are facing within, all of us are actually looking for a meaning, all of us are looking for the search of the self, there is actually a quest that we are undergoing. It is right to go with or to support Suresh Kohli who regards this poem as Nandy's finest individual poem.

So, if Nandy can be remembered only for one poem I think he should be remembered for *Calcutta if you must exile me* burn my eyes burn my eyes destroy my sanity. There are some other poems also which we can just make a passing reference or in order to know, in order to understand what a poetic over that is being represented by Pritish Nandy.

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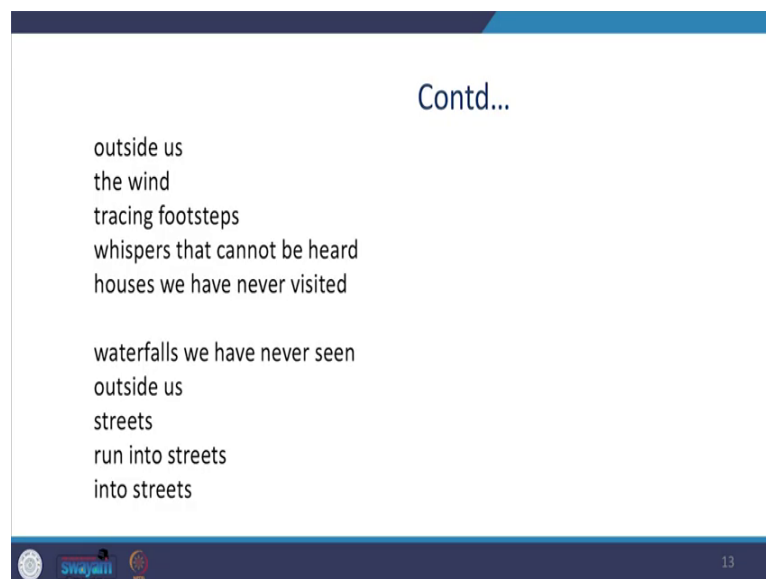


There is another poem which also talks about the dirt, the darkness and the poetic poem is entitled "Speak What is Darkness". At times, you will find the lines of Pritish Nandy appearing to be very oblique, but it is oblique with a purpose and the purpose is that he will give you a symbol and he says that his symbol is time- bound, his symbol is timely, because straightway you cannot say everything.

“We speak what is darkness /our love is like memory/ your eye is the night.” Now, the poet actually talks about love, the poet is excessively obsessed with love, fine and you can find in one poem after another---- love in its own manifestation and here the poet says----“ our love is like memory, your eye is the night,” your eye is the night or I forget everything. It is the one can also say that in your night I am actually trying to find out the meaning I am trying to find out the real meaning of life.

“Outside us/ nothing exists”. There is nothing outside us, everything is in us, everything is within, everything is in our bodies, everything is in our limbs. “Rivers that cannot run/ bodies that cannot desire /ships that cannot sail,” fine. So, speak--- what is darkness, what is darkness, rivers that cannot run, I mean the flow that cannot run, the flow that is obfuscated, bodies that cannot desire-- the bodies which have got a desire, but there is no freedom you cannot desire and ships which actually want to sail, the heart which wants to fly, but it cannot ships that cannot sail.

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Outside us what is there? “outside us/ the wind/ tracing footsteps/ whispers that cannot be heard/ houses we have never visited/ waterfalls we have never seen/ outside us/ streets/ run into streets/ into streets.” So, outside us what is there waterfalls we have never seen, outside us there are only streets, running into streets complexities, my dear friend complexities.

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Analysis of the poem, "Speak What is Darkness"

- ❖ Correspondence between lovers
- ❖ The personal space of lovers.
- ❖ Brisk and Unconventional
- ❖ Poem written without punctuation
- ❖ Images of nature
- ❖ Love Poem

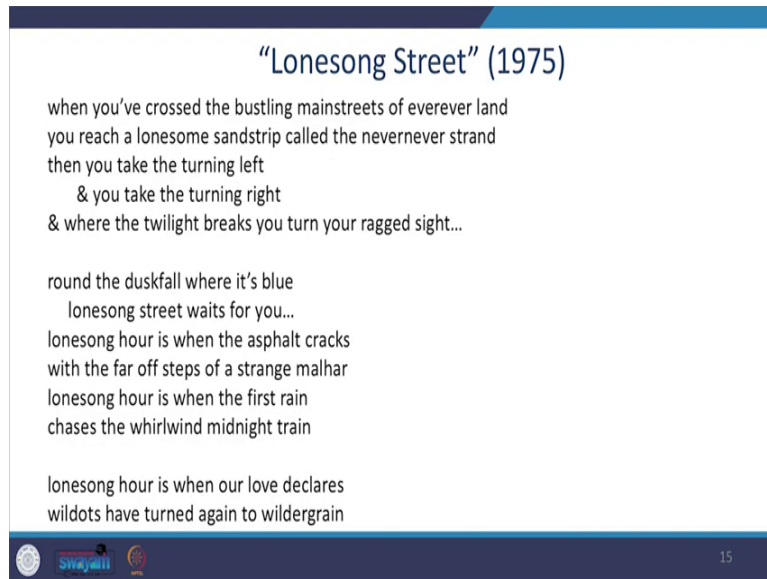
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And then if you analyze this poem also, you can find that there is a sort of correspondence between lovers, even though the lovers may not exist there, but then there is a sort of imagination----- the personal space of lovers, the personal choice of lovers, the personal feelings of lovers. So, there the poem may appear to be brisk and unconventional, there is no punctuation, that no punctuation also means to say that there is a cry for freedom and you can find there are nature images, nature images actually tell you to the ocean of love.

So, out and out this poem can be considered to be a love poem my dear friends. So, when a Prithvi Nandy speaks or writes what he speaks is through the images and the images are all that of love. Now after that one more important collection is actually worth mentioning and as I told you this collection entitled "Lonesong Street."

This Lonesong Street has got 12 poems and all these 12 poems actually are a depiction, delineation, deliberation of love, love to a beloved and beloved's love to a lover and what their feelings are. And this actually became so popular when it was sung, it became so popular that it sold 20,000 copies, my dear friend. This is also available because it was later converted into a film. So, we can read it and it has already been sung. So, you can enjoy listening to it.

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“Lonesong Street” (1975)

when you've crossed the bustling mainstreets of everever land
you reach a lonesome sandstrip called the nevernever strand
then you take the turning left
 & you take the turning right
& where the twilight breaks you turn your ragged sight...

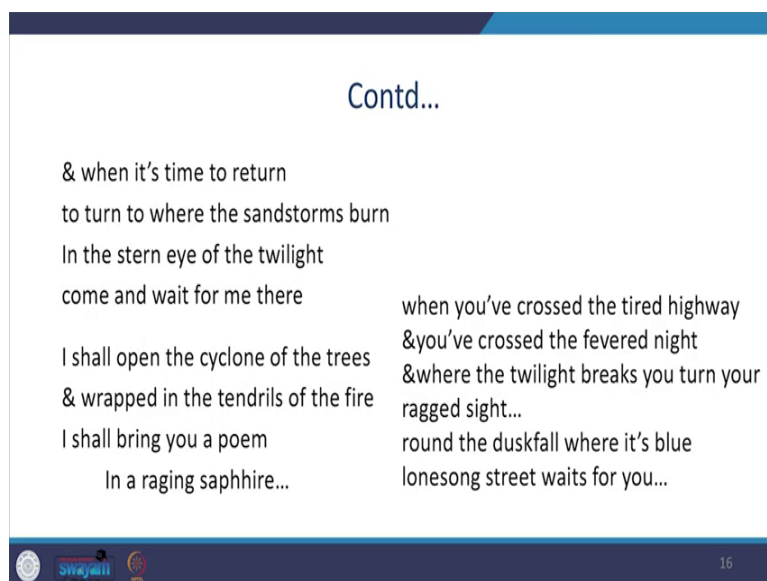
round the duskfall where it's blue
 lonesong street waits for you...
lonesong hour is when the asphalt cracks
with the far off steps of a strange malhar
lonesong hour is when the first rain
chases the whirlwind midnight train

lonesong hour is when our love declares
wildots have turned again to wildergrain

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“When you have crossed the bustling mainstreets of everever land/ you reach a lonesome sandstrip called the nevernever strand./ Then you take the turning left/ and you take the turning right/ and where the twilight breaks you turn your ragged sight/ round the dusk fall where it is blue/ lonesong street waits for you.... lonesong hour is when the asphalt cracks /with the far off steps of a strange malhar/ lonesong hour is when the first rain/ chases the whirlwind midnight train/ lonesong hour is when our love declares/ wildots have turned again to wildergrain.”

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& when it's time to return
to turn to where the sandstorms burn
In the stern eye of the twilight
come and wait for me there

I shall open the cyclone of the trees
& wrapped in the tendrils of the fire
I shall bring you a poem
 In a raging sapphire...

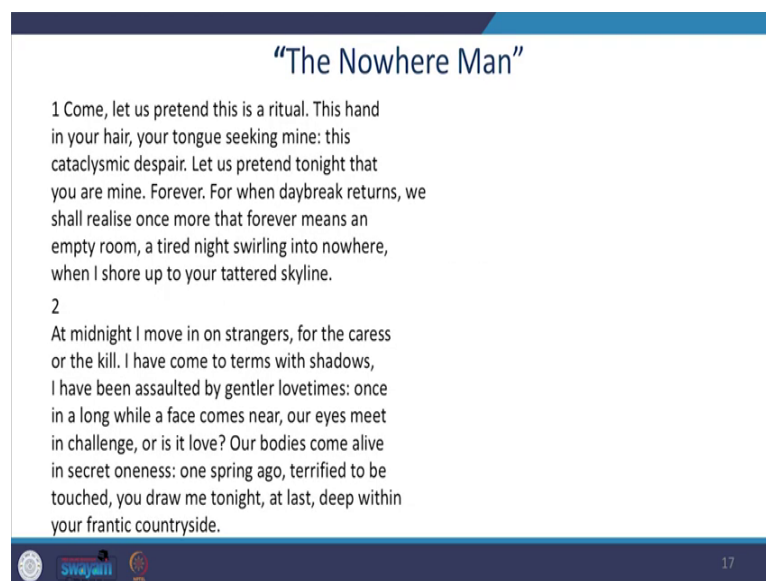
when you've crossed the tired highway
& you've crossed the fevered night
& where the twilight breaks you turn your
ragged sight...
round the duskfall where it's blue
lonesong street waits for you...

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“And when it’s time to return/ to turn to where the sandstorms burn/ in the stern eye of the twilight/t come and wait for me there.” I mean here is actually a sort of condition the condition of a lover who actually talks about the Lonesong Street and he also talks about the lonesong hour and then he says that when that hour is there you can come and wait for me there, I shall and then he comes up with a promise and we are reminded of Andrew Marvell here.

When Andrew Marvell in one of his poems says----- Andrew Marvell actually promises his beloved all sorts of things that he could have given her had he got the time. So, the poem begins with--- Had I got the hour fine this coyness lady were no crime,” but here Prithvi Nandy says, “I shall open the cyclone of the trees/ and wrapped in the tendrils of the fire/ I shall bring you a poem/ in a raging sapphire/ when you have crossed the tired highway/ and you have crossed the fevered night/ and where the twilight/ breaks you turn your ragged sight/ round the dusk fall where it’s blue/ lonesong street waits for you/ lonesong street waits for you.”

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“The Nowhere Man”

1 Come, let us pretend this is a ritual. This hand
in your hair, your tongue seeking mine: this
cataclysmic despair. Let us pretend tonight that
you are mine. Forever. For when daybreak returns, we
shall realise once more that forever means an
empty room, a tired night swirling into nowhere,
when I shore up to your tattered skyline.

2
At midnight I move in on strangers, for the caress
or the kill. I have come to terms with shadows,
I have been assaulted by gentler lovetimes: once
in a long while a face comes near, our eyes meet
in challenge, or is it love? Our bodies come alive
in secret oneness: one spring ago, terrified to be
touched, you draw me tonight, at last, deep within
your frantic countryside.

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So, this is out and out a love poem and here we can find the poet’s craving ----the poet’s longings and longings in an hour and these longings are in the form of lonesong songs, when in a lone song hour at a lonesong street the lover is waiting for, and with all sorts of conditions, with all sorts of promises, but then, is there a possibility of love today at present?

Now, we come to another important volume where we can find a sort of transition a transition of a person who had soaked to love to somebody becoming “The Nowhere Man.” So, this nowhere man from the title, it appears that the poet actually talks about a person of the new world, a person who is a nowhere man and again there also he finds that he is a nowhere man, why, again perhaps because he has been deprived of something and what is that something that we can find when we read this beautiful poem.

“Come, let us pretend this is a ritual. This hand /in your hair, your tongue seeking mine: this /cataclysmic despair. Let us pretend to night that/ you are mine. Forever. For when daybreak returns, we/ shall realize once more that forever means an/ empty room, a tired night swirling into nowhere, / when I shore up to your tattered skyline.”

The poet here says that here is a nowhere man---- and that is why since I am a nowhere man let me pretend because you cannot say forever, because when the daybreak returns we shall realize once more that forever means an empty room. I mean, this life which we are all looking forward to, being a very a beautiful exercise is an exercise in futility without love. So, what is true is only you, what is true is only love, what is true is your feeling of being one and the other of being one together.

“At midnight I move in on strangers, for the caress/ or the kill. I have come to terms with shadows;” I have come to terms with shadows. So, when I look at people they are only what are they are merely shadows. So, I have come to terms with shadows, “I have been assaulted by gentler love times: once/ in a long while a face comes near, our eyes meet/ in challenge, or is it love? Our bodies come alive/ in secret oneness....” So, we are perhaps living in a sort of illusion you know.

All of us are living in a sort of illusion that everything is going to be permanent, everything is going to be a source of perennial joy, but that is not perhaps it is only a sort of illusion.” Our bodies come alive/ in secret oneness: one spring ago, terrified to be/ touched, you draw me tonight, at last, deep within/ your frantic countryside.” Fine, the poet actually becomes so impatient that he says that there is nothing to wait for. So, whatever way we meet perhaps that is only an illusion and we are all the nowhere man.

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4
The wind disentangles itself from your frenzied body as
hurricanes of dreams follow me: eternity is only a
river reaching towards the sea. My tongue travels to
your navel, and downwards: I cling to your body, my
mouth breathes in the shadow of your breath. Someday
perhaps the sea will reveal itself, the delirium of
the flesh fatigue at dawn.

11
It hurts to say I am sorry. So let us use unfamiliar words.
The summer has gone the ground's turned cold. The old
road calls me back again. Another time we shall meet again:
as strangers or as friends, or perhaps as lovers once
again. Now turn, turn, to the rain again.

15
Tonight I draw your body to my lips: your hand, your
mouth, your breasts, the small of your back. I draw
blood to every secret nerve and gently kiss their tips, as
you move under me, anchored to a rough sea. I cling to
you, your music and your knees. I touch the secret vibes
of your body, I fill my hands with the darkness of
your hair. This passion alone can resurrect our love.

18

And then again as he moves further the poet says, “the wind disentangles itself from your frenzied body as/ hurricanes of dreams follow me: eternity is only a/ river reaching towards the sea; eternity is only a river reaching towards the sea. My tongue travels to/ your navel and downwards: I cling to your body, my/ mouth breathes in the shadow of your breath. Someday/ perhaps the sea will reveal itself, the delirium of/ the flesh fatigue at dawn.”

So, the poet actually makes some very unusual imaginations and unusual fears and anxieties that without love he cannot survive and then he says that eternity is only a river reaching towards the sea, at times we may feel that the poet is out and out you know a hopeless fellow, but then what the poet talks of is not without or not devoid of any logic, the what poet actually tries to say is that we cannot only go by listening we also have to think of out of the box.

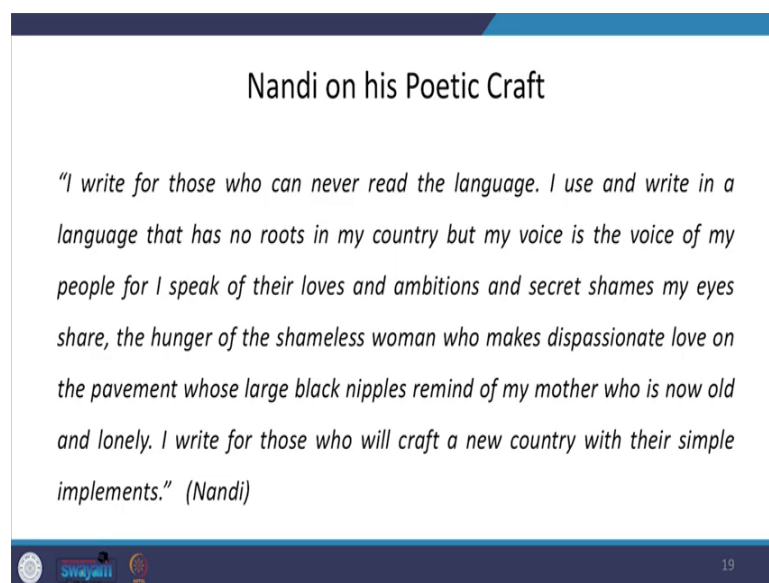
And then he says, “it hurts to say I am sorry. So, let us use unfamiliar words./ Let us forget those repetitive words. Let us use unfamiliar words. “The summer has gone the ground’s turned cold. The old /road calls me back again.” We live in memories, we live in desires. “Another time we shall meet again:/ as a strangers or friends or perhaps as lovers once again./ Now turn, turn, to the rain again,/ because this rain will not come again.

We have here a feeling of carpe diem, the feeling of carpe diem means that whatever is there presently you have to enjoy, you have to utilize, because whatever we look forward to is only a sort of empty dream. Tonight, and then as he proceeds further he says, “tonight I draw your

body to my lips: your hand, your/ mouth, your breast, the small of your back. I draw/ blood to secret nerve and gently kiss their tips, as/ you move under me, anchored to a rough sea. I cling to/ you, your music and your knees. I touch the secret vibes/ of your body. I fill my hands with the darkness of/ your hair. The passion alone can resurrect our love.” It is not the passion alone that can resurrect our love. But the feeling of being in love, the feeling or the imagination or the yearning to be or the yearning to enjoy whatever is at the present that actually is important.

Otherwise whatever swearing we make all those are simply hollow. So, it is a time to make love, it is a time to enjoy, the present time is the more important time and that we should not forget that should not be invited, rather whatever is there before us has to be exploited, has to be used. Nandi was actually criticized too much because he was excessively soaked in the pledges of the body, but what Nandi says on his own poetic craft actually is an eye- opener.

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Nandi on his Poetic Craft

“I write for those who can never read the language. I use and write in a language that has no roots in my country but my voice is the voice of my people for I speak of their loves and ambitions and secret shames my eyes share, the hunger of the shameless woman who makes dispassionate love on the pavement whose large black nipples remind of my mother who is now old and lonely. I write for those who will craft a new country with their simple implements.” (Nandi)

19

What Nandi says his, “I write for those who can never read the language. I use and write in a language that has no roots in in my country;”. that is why many people say that he became popular outside the country more.

So, there is a sort of openness that can be found in his poems, but “my voice is the voice of my people for I speak of their loves and ambition. I speak of their loves and ambitions”, that is why Nandi is considered to be a very modernistic. and “secret shames my eyes share, the

hunger of the shameless woman who makes dispassionate love on the pavement whose large black nipples remind me of my mother who is now old and lonely.”

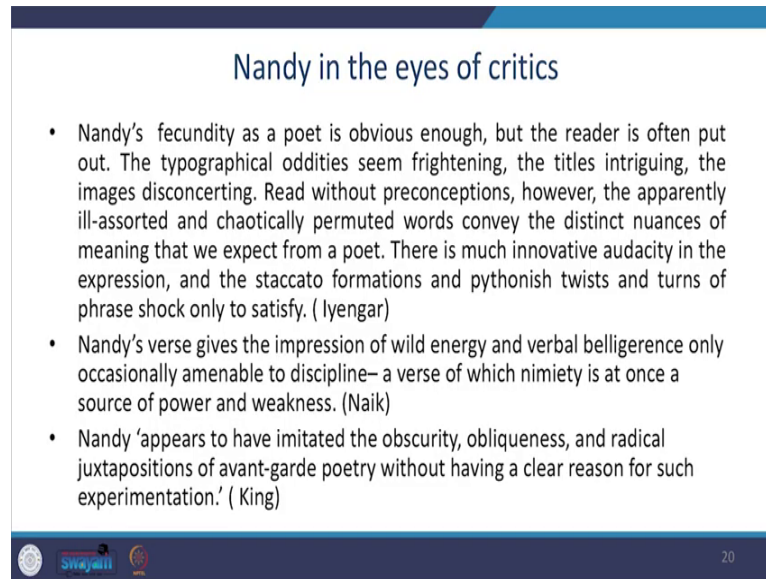
So, he is actually talking of those people who have really been deprived of love and also a sense of belonging, also a sort of the right or the sort of choice that they deserve. So, they have been deprived of and that is why he says, “I write for their loves and ambitions, I also write for the dispassionate love of the woman on the pavement, I write for those who will craft a new country.”

I mean, we can find a new change not only in terms of language, but also a new experiment that we have found because Pritish Nandy was also one of the major experimentalists. Now having discussed, I have simply shown you I have simply made you acquainted with some of the poems of Pritish Nandy, but you can also read it at your own leisure and pleasure.

Since, Nandy was also fighting for or struggling for a search of meaning, a search of communication that really got when he bid adieu to the world of poetry and joined the world of movies, the world of, say painting, the world publishing, the world of, you know journals. So, what his other critics or his contemporaries have said, but Nandy in the eyes of his own believed that he was actually trying to write for those people who cannot understand language; he wanted to be the representative of those people who actually were deprived of certain rights.

Now, let us look at some of the lines of the critics. Srinivasa Iyengar you all might have heard the name of because his book *Indian writing in English* that became a seminal book and it was only the effort of Srinivas Iyengar that Indian writing today is Indian writing. So, what he says about Nandy is of course, very remarkable.

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The slide features a blue header with the title "Nandy in the eyes of critics" in white. Below the title, there are three bullet points in black text. At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer containing a circular logo on the left, the text "Swayam" in the center, and the number "20" on the right.

Nandy in the eyes of critics

- Nandy's fecundity as a poet is obvious enough, but the reader is often put out. The typographical oddities seem frightening, the titles intriguing, the images disconcerting. Read without preconceptions, however, the apparently ill-assorted and chaotically permuted words convey the distinct nuances of meaning that we expect from a poet. There is much innovative audacity in the expression, and the staccato formations and pythonish twists and turns of phrase shock only to satisfy. (Iyengar)
- Nandy's verse gives the impression of wild energy and verbal belligerence only occasionally amenable to discipline— a verse of which nimety is at once a source of power and weakness. (Naik)
- Nandy 'appears to have imitated the obscurity, obliqueness, and radical juxtapositions of avant-garde poetry without having a clear reason for such experimentation.' (King)

“Nandy’s fecundity as a poet is obvious enough,” meaning thereby as a poet Nandy is very fertile, “but the reader is often put out”. meaning thereby he does not take readers when he is writing for them and then because he was an experimentalist that is why you can find that punctuations are quite open, he does not follow, there is no conformity to standard rules, he says ever land never strand these words you cannot find usually in the world of you know English language.

But then he experiments and that is why, “the typographical oddities the typographical oddities seem frightening enough, the titles are intriguing,” you know Calcutta fine you must exile me see the title is very intriguing, “the images disconcerting,” the images are very disconcerting and then what he advises to the readers is read without preconception, you have to read Nandy without any preconception.

However, “the apparently ill-assorted, he calls ill-assorted and chaotically permuted words convey the distinct nuances of meaning that we expect from a poet. There is much innovative of course, there is a lot of innovation” that he does and that is why he sings his own you know poems in the form of Lonesong Street.

There is much innovative audacity in the expression, audacity is actually a weapon for British Nandy, “staccato formations and python strips unusual.” You know unusual which may appear to be a sort of aberration and “the turns of phrases they actually shock only to satisfy.” So, this is what a Iyengar says.

We can also take in the views of some other critics M. K. Naik says, “Nandy’s verse gives us the impression of wild energy and belligerence, as if he is fighting with words, only occasionally amenable, only occasionally motivating to discipline a verse of which nimiety,” nimiety meaning thereby something which is actually in abundance you know unnecessary abundance ‘is at once a source of power and weakness’. It is both a source of power as well as of weakness.

Nandy as Stephen King says actually summarizes .You know because Stephen king had done a lot of research on Indian poetry in English especially modern Indian poetry in English and what he says is, Nandy ‘appears to have imitated the obscurity, the images are obscure, obliqueness, the differences are not as straight as Nandy himself also admits and radical juxtapositions.

So, he juxtaposes Avant-garde poetry without having a clear reason for such experimentation. He does not tell us why there is such an innovation in his poetry, but then one cannot deny the fact that his poetry has a sort of nimiety, his poetry had a sort of ‘obliqueness, and radical juxtaposition without giving us a clear reason.’

So, these are the views of the critics about Prithvi Nandy, but now we have to make our own conclusion having a look at some of the major poems of Prithvi Nandy and we can say that Nandy is a multi-faceted personality, a multi-faceted genius that is why his loyalties are in different fields.

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Conclusion

- ✓ Nandy is a multi-faceted poet and his early poetry is ‘superficially modernistic’.
- ✓ His poetry ranges from political protest to popular song lyric.
- ✓ His most characteristic contribution is prose poetry.
- ✓ Urban images of love and sex, violence and horror, death and decay are found aplenty in Nandy’s poetry.
- ✓ Nandy excels in experimental verse. His poetry mixes desire, memory , dream and silence.

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And his early poetry is superficially modernistic, of course, at the later stage he actually tries to mend his own fences just like the other Gieve Patel that we mentioned. His poetry actually ranges from a political protest to popular lyrics, song as in *Lonesong Street* we have found, his most characteristic contribution is prose- poetry you can find even in that *Calcutta You Must Exile Me* that there are more than sufficient lines which appear to be very prosaic, but that was a new style, that was actually an innovation which Nandy was trying to derive a pleasure out of it in order to say what he really wanted to say. There are images of love and sex, violence and horror, death and decay found abundantly in his world. Nandy, actually, we can conclude as Nandy excels in experimental verse and his poetry mixes memory with desire like that of T. S. Eliot, isn't it, and a dream as well as of silence?

Now, having concluded with these points we can finally end this lecture with some very important lines from one of his very famous book which he wrote later which is titled *Again* and where he actually gives us us an echo of what his poetic craft is and it is not devoid of reality.

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Summing up

Poetry always starts with words
When words start to hurt, we pause
regain our innocence and start again

But this time it's not poetry
Its life writing itself out
in a strange unfinished way

What you may choose to call
an autobiography of sorts. (from *Again*)

Thank You

SWAPNII 22

When he says, “poetry always starts with words/ when words start to hurt, we pause/ regain our innocence and start again. / But this time it’s not poetry/ its life writing itself out/ in a strange unfinished way. /What you may choose to call an autobiography of sorts. So, my dear friends this is what Nandy believes in and what he says is----- what you may choose to call an autobiography of sorts and that is why Nandy, not only Nandy but all the poets would agree

and all the lovers of poetry would agree that poetry always starts with words, words which mean, words which all refer to and words which actually break the silence of the seas, words which allow the flow of the river, words which allow the rhythm of the ships, words which prompt the whispers to take its own shape on the piece of paper and that is what poetry is. With this we come to the end of today's lecture and I thank you all for being patient and listening to these words.

Thank you once again and I wish you good night.