Chapter Two

Parsi English Writing and Gieve Patel’s Voice

You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you’re not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.

- F. Scott Fitzgerald

The history, the exodus, the milieu, the ethos, the distinct nature of the Parsis and the contours of their sensibilities are traced, along with the objectives of the thesis, in the previous chapter with the view to reveal the severity they had undergone to retain a tradition of their own in India. This chapter gives a glimpse of the earlier Parsi literature and how the Parsi writers laboured for ages through their writings to preserve their culture and of Gieve Patel’s contribution for the uplift of the Parsi ethos even in the community’s adverse situation in India. The Parsi writers dealt with, in this chapter, are studied under non-specific labels in order to make a distinction between Gieve Patel and other Parsi intellectuals seeking to excel in their specific locale in the cultural cosmopolitanism with all their eccentricities - their probing intensity of social commitment, their cultural alienation and disinherittance.

Patel situates himself as a distinctive force in the literary hierarchy. The established cultural contacts, the considerable impact in the coalescence of aesthetic modes and values, and the intimate relationship especially in the cross-fertilisation of cultures have registered a steady growth and achieved a high degree of sophistication and maturity among the Parsi creative writers. An all-encompassing endeavour has been made by them to bring into its vitals a certain amount of resilience in tone and perspectives to proximate with the cultural main stream. Patel has sought to project the vision of contemporary reality in varied hues of realism. In him the twentieth century literary scene
vibrates with vigour and vitality, deeply ingrained with intellectual mores. According to Homi K. Bhabha:

Culture becomes as much an uncomfortable, disturbing practice of survival and supplementarity – between art and politics, past and present, the public and the private – as its resplendent being is a moment of pleasure, enlightenment or liberation. It is from such narrative positions that the postcolonial prerogative seeks to affirm and extend a new collaborative dimension, both within the margins of the nation-space and across boundaries between nations and peoples. (51)

Generally people who have dislocated from their country of origin suffer a sense of displacement on losing their nativity. They confront an alien language and find themselves among people whose culture and codes are different from and sometimes offensive to their own. When India offered the Parsis a safe haven, they enjoyed relative freedom and improved their lot in life. During the colonial era they became affluent and very powerful; but the present day Parsis are relegated to a secondary position. Once they were resplendent and enjoyed the western magnificence but now they do experience ethnic anxiety, feel insecure, face identity crisis and suffer threat. They were decisively edged out of the central stage of power eventually by the post independence electoral democracy where numbers decide the political authority. There is no hope to regain the influence they once wielded in the colonial era and is nurturing a sense of being out of place. The community is grappling with the slipping numbers threatening its very existence with no major solution in sight to save it from extinction. While so, a segment of the Parsi community strives to work for the revival and renaissance of Parsi tradition and continues to refuse to sanction marriage, of its female folk in particular, outside the community, aiming at preservation of its exclusive identities, and yet the younger modern
generation confronted by reality is increasing, though not in enough numbers, marrying outside the fold.

Their present crises and challenges instil the stimulus into the eminent Parse writers to rise to the occasion in the defence of their community, whether they choose to stay back to live in India or to migrate to countries abroad. They pioneered writing about the predicaments of the Parsis. To shield their ethnicity, they adopted English as the medium to express their beliefs with inventiveness. This ambivalence, the sense of being out of place, is well reflected in their writings giving an inside-outsider’s unbiased perspective of the situation to which they belong. A majority of the Parse writers have sprung up to preserve their cultural identity through their creative writings and have contributed markedly in the field of literature in English. Consequently India has been blessed with several prominent Parse writers. These writers in turn significantly contribute to the Indian literature in English and the enterprise of the country as a whole.

Patel evolved himself in this stimulating atmosphere and became active during the 1960s, providing an exposure to the Indian situation with his cultural background by observing, scrutinising, expressing and even admonishing the situation of the self in retrospection of mankind through social commentary, taking it altogether to a universal level. He was nurtured both in the Parse rural area of Sanjan, where historically Parse landed first, and in the city of Bombay which saw both the Parse ascendancy to tremendous heights during the British regime, and later its sharp fall, into the present waning status, once the British left. Therefore, he is able to present their predicaments in a more appealing way, and with ease. He looks at the anguish of the Parsis with intense care and bestows the essence of Parse spirit in his writing.

The migration of Parsis from continent to continent, from country to country and within, has many psychological implications on the Parsis. According to Nilufer E.
Barucha, unlike the other writers of the colonial diaspora, the Parsis have diverse
diasporas that often run concurrently:

First of all there is pre colonial Indian diaspora, there is partition diaspora
where the division of the sub continent into India and Pakistan in
1947 found the Parsis on both the sides of the new blood- drenched border.
In this diaspora the Parsis have had to tread very carefully not to
antagonise either their Hindu or their Muslim hosts. In the post colonial
India and Pakistan Parsis have had to contend with the loss of the elite
status they had enjoyed in colonial India which in turn resulted in the
Western / First world diaspora in which Parsis have left India / Pakistan to
live in Britain, Canada, U.S.A. Australia and New Zealand. (58)

It is through such centre-staging of religion and the construction of a distinct Parsi
identity that the community has managed to retain a separate presence in India for over
thirteen hundred years. The fact that the Parsis, in spite of over 1300 years of stay in
India, have produced so little literature, especially in the period preceding British
colonisation, could have been the result of the loss of their ancient Persian Literature and
culture. A diasporic writer, “nostalgic about homeland,” as Salman Rushdie puts it, could
be a “. . . suspect in his narration; his mistakes are the mistakes of a fallible memory
compounded by quirks of character and of circumstance, and his vision is fragmentary;”
as he, “tries to reflect that world, he is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose
fragments have been irretrievably lost” (10). Parsi writers experience a similar situation
as they talk about the homeland of their ancestors. In their case, however, “the lost
fragments are very large as vast quantities of historical and scriptural material were
irrevocably lost when Alexander the Great burnt the library at Perspolis, the seat of
Ancient Persian Empire, in 331 B.C.” (Bharucha58). There are extensive references about
another instance of massive destruction of Persian literature about a thousand years later in 637CE. Lucien X. Polastron holds that, “. . . the libraries of the first countries to be invaded experienced no mercy. It was in fact the will of Omar or the interpretation of his orders, we owe the destruction in 637, of Tayasafun, or Ctesiphon” (43).

According to an account written two centuries later in Tarikh al-Tabari by the Persian author Al-Tabar:

. . . the Arab Commander Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas wrote to Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab asking what should be done with the books at Ctesiphon. Umar wrote back: “If the books contradict the Quran, they are blasphemous. On the other hand, if they are in agreement, they are not needed, as for us Quran is sufficient.” Thus, the huge library was destroyed and the books, the product of the generations of Persian scientists and scholars were thrown into fire or the Euphrates. (29)

Modern scholars like Franz Rosenthal and Bernard Lewis, however, have cast doubt on this incident, calling it a variant of a famous legend and holding that the story is fabricated.

The apparent lack of a literary tradition during the pre-colonial times is however, viewed as a natural diasporic phenomenon where the displaced community must come to terms with its new environment. According to Nilufer Bharucha:

It should create a space for itself, and safeguard its continued existence, only then they will be able to turn its attention to creative expression. This Parsi silence could also be explained as a self preservation device, a wise decision on the part of the miniscule group not to earn in anyway the ire of its hosts. What further deepened this silence in the pre colonial India was
the subsequent conquest of Gujarat where most of the Parsis then lived, by
the Muslim Sultans. The conquest of their land of refuge by members of
the very religious group they had fled from Iran created a deep sense of
unease among the Parsis. (58)

Consequently during the pre-colonial times not much literary work was produced
by the Parsis excepting a few writings in Gujarati. In the late sixteenth century a
Zoroastrian priest Bahman Kay Kobad composed a poem, *The Qesse-ye Sanjan* in Persian
couplets. *Qissa-i Sanjan* or *Kisse-i Sanjan*, transliterated as “The Story of Sanjan,” in the
absence of alternatives, is generally accepted to be the only account of the exodus of
Zoroastrians from Iran to escape Muslim persecution after the Islamic conquest of Iran,
and many members of the Parsi community perceive the epic poem to be an accurate
account of their ancestors. For long it tended to be regarded as a folk-chronicle from
which scholars have tried to work out a history of the Parsi transition from their
motherland to the first Parsi diaspora in India, in spite of the fact that it contains no dates
except one - that of its own composition in 1599. Translated into Gujarati, Urdu and
European languages, it serves, among other things, as a prototype for the subsequent Parsi
diaspora. Also a well documented collection of letters, *Rivayats* written between 1478
and 1766, exchanged by Iranian and Indian Parsi priests, consisting mainly of instructions
and advice given by the Iranian priests to their Indian co-religionists.

The Parsi Garbo, based on the Gujarati folk song and dance tradition, records the
arrival of the Parsis on Indian soil and their conditional acceptance in Sanjan. So the
existent literature, oral and written, of the pre-colonial period consists of religious tracts
and narratives of valour. The texts, *History of Parsis – Including Their Manners,
Customs, Religion And Present Position*, by Dosabhai Framji Karaka and *Les Parsis,
histoire des communautés zoroastriennes de l’Inde* (1898) – written in French by
Delphine Menant (1898) and translated into English in part by Ratanbai Ardeshir Vakil in 1902, display some of the classic features of diasporic discourse, the fostering of the myth of a motherland, insecurity and a sense of alienation from the host country; they serve as major writings on the community’s history captured in the known past.

Nevertheless Parsis came into prominence in the literary field through the medium of journalism, after Fardoonji Murazban launched “The Bombay Samachar” (Mumbai Samachar), the first newspaper in the Gujarati language, and the oldest surviving newspaper in Asia on July 1, 1822. Some stories based on Persian themes were published in this newspaper. Though they have adopted Gujarati after settling in India, many preferred to write mainly in English and not in Gujarati and have produced a very high-standard of literary works in English.

The Gujarati newspaper “Rast Goftar” (Herald of Truth), established under the leadership of Dadabhai Naroji in 1851, became the delegate for Parsi reforms such as female education, socialisation of men and women at public functions, abolition of child marriages and acknowledging the right of widows’ remarriage. Under the influence of the reformists, the scientific, natural aspects of Zoroastrianism were stressed and its monotheistic nature showcased. This equipped them with their self-esteem, enabling them in harmony to identify with the colonial rulers’ social norms and religion, maintain their elite status, and yet retain their distinct Parsi identity and Zoroastrian faith. Further, the Parsi reformists included within their circle are not only their co-religionists but also their Hindu brethren. “While at one level this might be seen as illustrating Parsi identification with their Hindu hosts, it was also often interpreted, by factions among the Hindu community, as unwelcome interference. This was particularly so in the case of the writings of Malabari” (Bharucha 62).
With the advent of British colonialism the celebrated Parsi writers like Beheram Malabari and Ardoshir Faramji started publishing patriotic poems of considerable merit. In the 1850s, noted Parsi writer Behramji Murzban translated *Gulban Kavali* and other works from Persian into Gujarati. At a time when Indians were barely heard in the late nineteenth century Behramji Merwanji Malabari’s (1853–1912) heartfelt cry against the ills he saw around him pierced the minds of the people. He was recognized as one of India’s first Parsi writers of repute, and was considered matchless in depth of thought, content and poetical expressions and was highly praised for his lyrical songs. Brought up as a gypsy lad, his ears were attuned to the melody of the ghazals rendered by the itinerant bards and wandering minstrels of Gujarat. They inspired and influenced his life and livelihood, and the couplets in consequence flowed naturally. His *The Indian Eye on English Life* is a scathing account of the life, times and ‘manners’ of the English. As early as 1875, Malabari published a volume of poems in Gujarati followed by *The Indian Muse in English Garb* in the year 1877 which attracted attention in England, notably from Alfred Tennyson, Max Muller and Florence Nightingale. In 1882 he published his *Gujarat and the Gujaratis: Pictures of Men and Manners Taken from Life*.

Malabari was agitated over the social evils of child marriage and child widows among the Hindus. The widowhood of his mother and her difficult experiences made him tirelessly argue for social reforms with regards to child marriage and the remarriage of widows. His position as a Parsi writer, however, was not of advantage to him in promoting the reforms in Hindu Society and he was branded a heretic and an infidel. He “called himself a ‘Parsee Hindu’. . . the pre-nationalist ‘Hindu’ tag – can be traced back to his childhood in Gujarat” (Bharucha 63). Malabari’s book *Niti Vinod*, written in Gujarati, portrayed the sorrows of Hindu widows and in the process he did not restrict to the considered arguments to support his case but freely embarked on exaggerations to
paint a graphic picture of the social evils. Malabari published on August 15, 1884 a set of “Notes” on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India which drew attention to the social evils of child marriage and child widows. Nilufer Bharucha describes that Malabari was emotive in his fight:

Malabari’s identification with the plight of Indian women who were married at ten and often widowed at twelve manifested at the emotional level: “The sights burn themselves into my brains. It is not merely that I know the miseries of widowhood, not merely I feel them, feel for and with the widow; I am the widow for the time being.” (64)

While Malabari was advocating legislation to curb the evil practice, eminent leaders like Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak found legislation by the occupiers as not the right course to reform the orthodox and advised Malabari to look after the interests of women in his own community. But Malabari relentlessly persisted in his efforts and succeeded. The ceaseless efforts of Malabari’s publicity in his newspaper, Indian Spectator and Journal East and West, culminated in the passage of the Age of Consent Act, 1891, also Act X of 1891, in British India on 19 March 1891 that raised the age of consent from ten to twelve.

As a pilgrim reformer, Malabari travelled beyond British India to London and was instrumental in raising the Age of Consent in Britain as well. The travelogue of visit to London in 1890 was published as *The Indian Eye on English Life; or, Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer*. His reformist zeal burnt right up to his death in 1912.

Ardoshir Faramji Khabardar (1881-1953) who was a poet of considerable merit after Malabari had published several collections, including *Kavyarasika* (1901) and *Vilasika* (1905) under the influence of Gujarati poems “Dalpatram” and “Kant.” The
trend of writing quality English poems, prose, short stories and novels was set by him. He was also known for his ardent advocacy for the protection of the rights of women.

Another prominent colonial writer of the period was Cornelia Sorabji, a pioneer in the tradition of Indian-Parsi women's literature in English. She was the first woman graduate of Bombay University, the first woman to study law at Oxford University, the first Indian national to study at any British university and the first woman to practise law in India and Britain. She later wrote about many of her experiences in her short stories Love and Love Behind the Purdah (1901), Sun Babies (1904), Between the Twilights (1908) and in her two autobiographies in English. Though an Indian Parsi and a woman of those days of prejudice, Cornelia Sorabji attained an unimaginable position in social life and in the realm of Literature in English.

During the colonial era, Dosabhai Framji Karaka’s (1829 – 1902) History of the Parsis published in 1884 in two volumes authentically documented the culture contours of the Parsi community in terms of their history; the early years, the age of opportunity and their manners, customs, religious practices like purity and pollution, initiation, marriage, funerals, calendar differences etc. Also these books have reviewed their self-perceptions and the demographic statistics in the 19th century. His grandson D. F. Karaka (1911-1974), was an outstanding Parsi writer and journalist of the post colonial era. He wrote several non-fictions that dealt with the colour bar and the position of Indians in the British Empire and Britain, most notably The Pulse of Oxford, I Go West, and Oh! You English. All his later works were based on the historical events that affected India in one way or the other. There is almost nothing left untouched: all aspects of life, from freedom struggle to every facet of life, criticizing its leaders, exposing corruption and hypocrisy, etc. find a place in his writings.
But the young Parsi writers were immensely influenced by the English Romantic and Victorian poets. They wrote Sonnets and Odes imitating Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson. Most Colonial writers imitated their colonial experiences but Parsis attempted at assimilation into the coloniser’s culture. As a minority group, they always believed that they could survive only by being loyal to the ruling authority. Hence they closely imitated as far as possible every aspect of the British, including art and literature.

Though the nineteenth-century Parsis were becoming Anglicized they were sensitive to the danger of over-identification with the British. “There was also the very real danger of westernised Parsi youth becoming attracted to Christianity and abandoning their Zoroastrian religion” (Bharucha 62). They were aware of the widening gulf between the Gujarati-speaking rural Parsis, still under the influence of Hindu society and culture, and the English-speaking, westernised, urban Parsis. Even as the Parsis sought affiliation with the British, they retained their steadfast religious faith in their later writings.

Thus the colonial Parsis were an elite community and the writers of the period exhibited considerable assimilation within the Indian milieu; Malabari had called himself a “Parsi Hindu” and Sorabji had said that her heart was forever with India. However in the case of the Parsi writers of the post-colonial era, the exalted position enjoyed by the Parsis during the Raj has been shattered and the increasing dominance by the majority Hindu community has marginalised them. Parsis today are trying to re-orient themselves to the new, much reduced role. Some seek to assimilate to the Indian mainstream, while others in a bid to escape this changed status, moved to the west. In both the cases Parsi identity is a casualty.

In the post-colonial India, although the Parsis are not influential in terms of political authority, they are a respected minority. The preferential status that they enjoyed in the colonial India slipped away from their hands. Their adopted mother tongue Gujarati
was relegated to an inferior rank, in their favoured city of Bombay, with the bifurcation of the bilingual Bombay Presidency into the Maratha state of Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital and the Gujarati speaking Gujarat with Gandhi Nagar as its capital on May 1, 1960. “Parsis started feeling further threatened by the linguistic rise of the regional powers like the Shiv Sena” (Bharucha73). But there has never been any direct persecution of Parsis, nor has their self-worth been affected, nor their religious rights endangered from external sources. It is this erosion that drove a good number of Parsis into a western diaspora still burdened with the tender sentiments of having abandoned the land of refuge. “So, in this diaspora, too, there is a physical separation from the ‘second homeland’ (India) as there was from the ‘original homeland’ (Iran) in the first diaspora” (73) which in turn made the Parsi writers assert a lot of ethnic identity in their writings. Though their works reflect their ethnicity, they are equally concerned in varied ways with the history of India to which they have become an integral part.

After Karaka, many celebrated Parsi writers like Bapsi Sidhwa, Rohinton Mistry, Boman Desai, Firdaus Kanga, Farrukh Dhondy, Meher Peustonjee, Ardhashir Vakil, Gieve Patel, Keki N. Daruwalla and a host of others emerged. Generally, the 20th century Parsi novelists who write in English are differentiated into two categories; expatriate writers and stay-at-home writers. “The Parsi novelist writing in English fall into two different categories: stay at home writers and expatriate writers. The Parsi novelist like B. K. Karanjia and Dina Mehta are stay at home novelists, whereas Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Farrukh Dhondy, and Bapsi Sidhwa are expatriate writers” (Dodiya vii).

There are a lot of assertions of ethnic identity in their writings. Bapsi Sidhwa is an award winning Pakistani novelist who has published four novels to her credit. She was born in 1938 in Karachi, Pakistan (then part of British India), but her family migrated shortly thereafter to Lahore. Like Karaka, the young girl, Sidhwa too was a witness to the
bloody Partition of 1947 and her themes deal with partition crisis, expatriate experiences, women’s problems, the Parsi milieu, patterns of migration and above all the social idiosyncrasies of the Parsi community. Her novels *The Crow Eaters, The Pakistani Bride, Ice-Candy-Man and An American Brat* are about her perceptions of life as a Parsi, Punjabi, Pakistani and American woman respectively. The obvious affection for the community is visible in almost all her writings though she wrote in secret.

Sidhwa's first three novels focus on Parsi families and the Parsi community in the city of Lahore and outlying areas that were incorporated into the newly formed nation of Pakistan. Her second novel, *The Crow Eaters* is named after the derogatory slang referring to the Parsi people, in reference to their supposed tendency for loud and continuous chatter. It is a comedy, which signals an abrupt change from her earlier work. Her third novel marked her move into international fame. *Cracking India* was published in several other countries in 1988 under the title *Ice-Candy-Man*. “The reflection of the Parsi ethos and comic tones in her writings make her a trendsetter for other later Parsi novelists” (Dodiya 17).

Farrukh Dhondy (1944- ) another well-known Indian-born Parsi writer, settled in Britain is a playwright, screen writer and left-wing activist of Parsi descent. His first book, 1976's *East End at Your Feet*, profiles young adults in London's ethnically diverse East End neighbourhood. In *Dear Manju*, he chronicles the life of a traditional Indian family living in London. In *Keep Britain White*, a white teen tries to make sense of the violence and racism that drove his friend's Bangladeshi family out of the neighbourhood. *Come to Mecca, and Other Stories* showed Dhondy's talent for dealing honestly and openly with the racial problems of Asian and West Indian teenagers in Great Britain. Written for a broader adult audience, *Poona Company* contains stories about the gossip-
filled, spirited atmosphere of a Poona gathering place, where locals gather to catch up and tell tales. His *Bombay Duck* (1990) is a diasporic novel with several cross-cultural references. It highlights several aspects of Zoroastrianism. It dramatizes a misfit’s quests for “home.” He proves that “the migrant will always be linked with his or her original habitat from other’s point of view” (Dhodiya 71). Though the Parsi community figures in his writings, his address to the adults in his writings appeals to readers of all ages and all cultures.

There are more positive portraits of the community in Boman Desai’s writings. He refuses to convert himself to Christianity and rejects many things western. He has authored novels like *The Memory of Elephants; Asylum, USA; Trio 2; A Woman Madly in Love; Servant, Master, Mistress*. Mostly, his protagonist will be a young Parsi straddling the cultures of India and America, and one suspects a hint of an autobiographical thread running in his stories. His first novel *The Memory of Elephants*, published in the year 1988 is a culturally rooted fantasy, specially designed to record the history of the Parsi - exodus and to restore it to the collective memory of the community. The Parsi community figures every-where in his novel. Indira Bhatt asserts:

> The novelist unfolds the Parsis arrival in Sanjan, giving details of how they were welcomed by Jadhav Rana, the Maharaja of Sanjan, with the jug of milk into which their Dastur dropped at first a coin indicating repayment of Rana’s hospitality and then a pinch of sugar indicating sweet merger of the Parsis with the people of the land. . . . Boman Desai has clearly presented the two aspects of the Parsi characteristics. They are peace-loving people as also some of them are industrialists and have brought this land reputation in industry. . . . It is interesting to know that the Parsis had to accept the life style of Gujarat and the Gujarati language.
Their positive effort to adopt Gujarati traditions and became an integral and prosperous part of Gujarat, India is fully explained. (215)

Among the contemporary Parsi writers, Rohinton Mistry, the socio-political novelist, has emerged as a formidable writer on the world literary scene. He is an Indian born (1952 - ) Canadian author who has published within a short span of twelve years three novels and a collection of short stories. He has received worldwide acclaim and is considered a major voice of the Parsi community. His writings reflect the Parsi traditions and his upbringings in the Parsi community of Mumbai. His short stories describe the characteristics of middle-class Parsi life, the struggles between modernity and tradition, and their religious beliefs in the larger community, and also the common human issues of spiritual questions, alienation, fear of death, family problems, and economic hardships. He has been endorsed with prestigious awards and accreditations and he stands elevated among the notable Parsis. His first novel Such a Long Journey, (1991) heralded the arrival of a gifted novelist; then followed his maiden anthology of short stories Tales from Firozsha Baag. A Fine Balance, Family Matters and The Scream are some of the later noted works of Rohinton Mistry; all reflect his position as a member of a twice-displaced people, and explore his relationship with the Parsi community in India’s troubled historical context.

Mistry attracted wider attention when he won Canadian Fiction Magazine’s Annual Contributor’s Prize in 1985. His collection of short stories, Tales from Firozsha Baag 1987; also published as Swimming Lessons and Other Stories from Firozsha Baag, was warmly greeted by critics and general readers alike for its insights into the complex lives of the Parsi inhabitants of Firozsha Baag, an apartment building in Mumbai. Mistry’s debut novel Such a Long Journey (1991) is set in India in 1971 at a time of domestic turbulence and war with Pakistan. A Fine Balance (1995) is another study of
Parsis living at close quarters in varying degrees of harmony during India’s 1975 state of emergency.

Mistry’s third novel, *Family Matters* (2002) is set in a tiny two-room flat in modern-day Mumbai and presents a compelling portrayal of a family of Parsis living in exigent circumstances. It also won the Kiriyama Pacific Rim Book Prize. His novella *The Scream* (2008) is a reflection of an aging isolated resident of a Mumbai apartment building, who is angry at the predicament of old age, at his isolation from his family and from a world that no longer understands him. “Thus Mistry has once again shown that Parsi life with all its idiosyncrasies and peculiarities is full of stories with universal appeal as it is rich in human texture” (Dodiya 62).

Another constructive writer of the community is Firdaus Kanga (1960 - ) whose writings centre on the themes of disability and sexuality. He was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, a condition also known as brittle bones disease which left him with several painful fractures throughout his childhood and adolescence in India. He grew up in a family of five, in a one bedroom Bombay apartment. His first major achievement was *Trying to Grow* (translated into French and Italian) a semi-autobiographical novel exploring culture, disability, sexuality and above all the protagonist’s quest for identity. It is a deeply moving novel built around the experiences of a physically handicapped boy, Brit, a boy born with brittle bones who never grows taller than four feet, turning into manhood. He is bright, spiky, opinionated and selfish with a razor-sharp wit who does not allow gender or disability to come in the way of his desire for sex and love. The time span of the novel is Brit’s growth from childhood to his youth. His struggles to grow, his dilemmas and desires aptly blend in with the subsidiary themes in the novel like the hybrid existence of the Parsis in Bombay and “his fortitude, his courage and
determination to fight against his handicap reassert the faith and strength of humanity to

tide over surmounting physical and social problems and crisis” (41).

Among the women writers who had contributed more for the positive portraits of
the Parsi community is Thrity Umrigar (1962- ), an Indian born American writer who
works as a journalist for seventeen years in U.S. and authored novels like Bombay
Time, The Space Between Us and The Weight of Heaven. She has written for the
Washington Post and Cleveland Plain Dealer, among other newspapers, and regularly
writes for The Boston Globe's book pages. Set in Bombay, The Space Between Us is a
wondrously imagined, emotionally rich snapshot of modern India. Her First Darling is
about a poignant and brave exploration of childhood’s less lovely spaces. It is a brilliant
memoir told with amazing honesty that captures the innocence and confusion of a small
Indian girl struggling against the paradoxes that rock her life and paints an unforgettable
picture of middle-class Parsi life in contemporary Bombay. The Weight of Heaven
continues with her exploration of cultural divides through an American couple's
experience in India. Bombay Time exhibits the life of a small group of closely-connected
people, all members of the minority Parsi community and all life-long residents of a
single apartment building - Wadi Baug, Bombay. The novel focuses on a single important
event, the wedding of a young man who has grown up in Wadi Baug, and exposes the
account of almost a dozen of the residents, their life, and their participation in the
wedding feast. It also gives us a sense of how this close knit community copes with
individual struggles through humour, hope and courage, reflecting the Parsi culture.
Similarly in all her novels she lucidly captures the social struggles of the minority Parsi
community living in modern India.

All these Parsi novelists who had settled abroad are gifted story-tellers with good
command over the language. They are at their best, writing about their small circle of
Parsis. None went beyond: their plots became conventional with in expatriate writers’ limits such as hegemony, identity crises and the struggle to create their own space. They have the clear perception that the Parsi community is disappearing rapidly. Therefore they give importance to their ethnicity in their writings. All the concerns of the community like declining population, brain-drain, late marriages, funeral rites, tilted sex ratio and attitude to girl child, urbanisation, alienation, conflicting attitude to religion and the existence or non existence of ethnic anxieties are aptly delineated in the works of these writers. As Barucha says:

The early Parsi writers mostly did not give much stress on the question of Parsi identity, that they did not highlight the identity of Parsis in India as a distinct ethno-religious minority. It was however the later Parsi novelists like Bapsy Sidhwa, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Farukh Dhondy and Boman Desai who asserted the ethnic identity of Parsis in their novels.

(74)

The outstanding stay-at-home Indian writer of the Parsi community and a noted Communist leader, who married outside the Parsi community, Perin S. Bharucha (1918 – 2015), was the first novelist to highlight the contentious issue of inter-community marriages through her novel, The Fire Worshippers and had rejected the concept of ethnical purity and revolted against the artificial restrictions on inter community marriages. According to Novy Kapadia, Perin Bharucha was:

. . . quite clairvoyant. In the 1960s, the trend of mixed marriages amongst the Parsis was a trickle but as the author subtly hints, it could become a deluge. Within the space of three decades, the trend of inter- faith marriages has increased rapidly amongst the Parsi community. So in the
novel we find Pestonji objecting to his son’s marriage because he felt it would become a trendsetter. (102)

Nergis Dalal, one of the prominent feminist writers of India, has authored a few novels, over 125 short stories, and more than 2000 middles, besides hundreds of articles and essays. *Never a Dull Moment* (1970), *The Sisters* (1973), *The Inner Door* (1975), *Girls From Overseas* (1979), *The Birthday Present* (1998), *Skin Deep* (2005), and *The Nude: Collected Stories* (2007) are her famous works. She has also written *100 Easy-To-Make Puddings*, a cookery book, and *Yoga for Rejuvenation*, a best-selling book on yoga. “Very few can write so prolifically and in such a consistent manner as did Nergis Dalal for more than seven decades” (Kanwar1).

Porus Homi Havewala’s *The Saga of the Aryan Race* (1995) was a semi-fictional historical epic focusing on the history of the Zoroastrian and Aryan people. The first two volumes of the Saga were first published in the Mumbai newspaper Jam-e-Jamshed in 1987-1988 and 1992, and they proved to be very popular. They were then published in book form in India in 1995 (First Edition), 2000 (Second Edition) and in 2011 (Third Edition) and reprinted several times. The author aims to inspire his fellow Aryan Zoroastrians, especially the young, with faith and righteous pride in their religion like their Aryan ancestors in ancient times, as well as to educate others about their remarkable history and beliefs and to enthuse the dwindling Parsi and Zoroastrian communities of the world to once again find pride and joy in their rich heritage. The first volume of *The Saga of the Aryan Race* describes:

the Great Migration of the ancient Aryan from their homeland at the North Pole following the sudden climatic change and the Ice Age glaciations that took place there. Drawing inspiration from the sacred Scriptures of the Aryan Zoroastrians, in which the great journey is authenticated; the book
unfolds the trials and tribulations that befell the ancient ancestors of mankind in their great journey to the South and the South-West, towards Iran, India, Greece, Russia, Germany and the other nations of Europe. (1)


In short, the Parsi novelists of the 20th century have tended to focus on the contemporary issues. Most of the Parsi novels of the current era can be viewed as either distinctive for sociological reasons, or as part of the genre of Indian writing in English or in the context of creative alienation. Recent Parsi fictional writers like Ardashir Vakil (1962 - ), settled in London and Meher Pestonji (1946 - ), settled in Mumbai focus on the marginalisation of the Parsis of the 1990s, dilution of values, isolation in the urban scenario, hybrid personality traits, the struggle to preserve identity in a multi cultural society and the influence of massive commercialisation on the psyche. V.L.V.N. Narendra Kumar describes Parsi novel in English as:

. . . a potent index of the Zoroastrian ethos. It voices the ambivalence, the nostalgia and the dilemma of the endangered Parsi community. In Parsi novel in English, the ‘operative sensibility’ is Zoroastrian. The novelists have forged a dialect, which has a distinct ethnic character . . . . Their prose is interspersed with Persian words and Gujarati expressions. Besides being innovative, the Parsi novelists describe in detail, the esoteric rituals, and the Zoroastrian customs such as Navjote. Parsi novel in English in short gives us a peep into the turbulent Parsi mind of today. (17-18)
Apart from the novelists, this period also saw the growth of Parsi poets and playwrights. Poets like Keki Daruwala (1937 - ) and Adil Jussawalla (1940 - ) and playwrights like Cyrus Mistry (1956 - ) and Gieve Patel (1940 - ) flourished. The post-colonial Indian Novel in English has many high-profile Parsi writers but the field of drama has fewer Parsis. Gieve Patel and Cyrus Mistry are the only Parsis among the better known contemporary Indian English Playwrights like Pratap Sharma, Gieve Patel, Gurcharan Das, Cyrus Mistry, Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan. Neither Patel nor Mistry writes in the tradition of the old Parsi Theatre of Colonial India, which had tackled large, epic subjects from Indian history and was nationalistic in tone. Both these dramatists in fact actively resist the overblown style and melodrama of the old Parsi Theatre. Like most Parsis today, Mistry and Patel disassociate themselves from these caricatures, but these clownish characters could have been clever ploys on the part of Marzban representing the plight of the Postcolonial Parsis who once enjoyed elite status in the colonial period. Parsis were portrayed as rather comic but in the hands of Marzban, they became harmless minority and plotted as the objects of love and affection among the majority of the Gujarati Hindu community. Both Patel and Mistry have been inspired by European and American dramatists. Patel’s acknowledged influences are Ibsen and Racine, while Mistry has been inspired by Chekov, Ibsen and Eugene O’Neill.

Meher Pestonji and Dina Mehta are prominent contemporary novelists and playwrights. Pestonji’s first play, Piano for Sale had a successful run in Bombay, Delhi and Jaipur in 2006 - 2007. The story emanates from the Parsis of Mumbai and reflects the changing, and continually evolving urban social landscape and the relationships of human beings in the contemporary society. The piano acts as a catalyst in the plot as it brings the two extremely diverse Parsi women together and forces them to introspect upon the Parsi past. Music is the thread that runs through the play and connects the
characters from the joyous New Year Eve celebrations to the everyday humdrum of piano lessons. *Feeding Crows*, her second play, is about the clash that emanates among the people of old traditional belief and custom in the modern day Mumbai. The collection of stories under the title, *Mixed Marriage and Other Parsi Stories* deals with a gallery of characters, some sensitive, some prejudiced, some generous and some plain odd ball characters, provide an insight into a closely-knit community.

Dina Mehta (1928 - ) is yet another prominent stay-at-home writer who has several short stories and plays to her credit. Her first full length play *The Myth Makers* (1969) won an award from the Sultan Padamsee Playwriting Competition in 1968. Her *Brides Are Not for Burning (1993)*, a play on dowry deaths, won the Commonwealth award. Her other famous works are *Getting Away with Murder, And Some Take a Lover, One Plus One Makes Nine, Sister Like You, Mila in Love, Miss Menon Did Not Believe in Magic, The Other Woman and Other Stories* etc. Her first novel, *And Some Take a Lover* (1992) highlights typical Parsi paradoxes, identity crisis, and apprehensions and was set in the background of political events in India like the Quit India Movement and the Naval Ratings Mutiny. It also tells of the conflicting loyalties experienced by a Parsi girl caught in between her westernised family and her own attraction towards Mahatma’s Swadeshi and Satyagraha movements.

Coming to the Parsi poets, Gieve Patel is regarded as one of the four prominent Parsi writers in English; the other three being Keki N. Daruwalla, Adil Jussawalla and K.D. Katrak. They penetrated into the field of creative work and their works in English brought them immense fame. They concentrated on themes such as the decay from the perceived stability, authority and righteousness of the past and the anomaly, the ambivalence, the sense of being out of place, and have also exhibited a tremendous vibrancy to live up to the international standards.
Daruwalla’s “Parsi Hell” memorialises the community’s as well as the individual’s decay. “There is no real hell after death, he says, but the Parsi hell is here on earth as the community falls apart at its seams. Parsi literature seems to circle ceaselessly around this sense of a decaying, sexually devitalised community” (Luhrmann 52). His collection of poems include: Under Orion (1970), Apparition in April (1971), Crossing Rivers (1980) and The Keeper of Dead (1982) for which he won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1987. His Landscape won him the Commonwealth Poetry Prize for Asia in 1987. His latest publication is The Map-Maker (2002). “As an Indian poet writing in the English language, he does not wish to be further characterised as a Parsi poet. For him, his Indian identity as a creative writer is more important than the label of a Parsi poet” (Dodiya 20).

Jussawalla, another Parsi voice of Indian poetry in English, was born in Bombay in 1940. Though raised in the Zoroastrian faith he was educated in an Anglican School which gave him a Christian vision and this is apparent in his first volume of poems “Land’s End; Poems” (1962). His displacement in England during 1950s and 1960s, first for his B.A. from University College, Oxford and then for a time in teaching at the International Language Centre, London, occasioned the poems of Land’s End, which, Jussawalla “tried to show the effect of living in lands I can never leave nor love properly, or belong to” (Luhrmann 53).

Jussawalla’s “Indifference,” an essay from the collection Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian and West Indian Students (1965) is a record of his disillusionment abroad. When Mahatma and his followers got what they wanted, the Parsi community was unsure about its future in independent India. There remains “. . . Uncertainties / About the growth of “parasites” (so a Hindu called us then)” (55). The elders advised their youth to pack and leave and some of them migrated to England. His
“Missing Person” (1976) appears to be the alter ego of the poet himself and typifies a middle class intellectual, educated abroad trying to relocate himself in his own but no longer familiar with the social milieu. He sees himself as almost an insult, as eliciting rage and laughter from those around him, and he feels that he has no identity but that of a missing person. He is confused, angry and tormented by his own being. His “The Exile Story” is the tale of a Parsi emigrant to England. “Approaching Santa Cruz Airport, Bombay,” “Nine Poems on Arrival” and “Immigrant Song” deal with the theme of the return of an exile.

K. D. Katrak’s poetry is characterised by a reflective strain borne of personal experience. His two collections of verses, A Journal of the Way and Diversions by the Wayside, came out in 1969. He moulds his poems through several minor details to reach a sudden focus of revelation, exaltation or terror. One of his recurring themes is man’s struggle through a hostile world. However he recoils from the unpalatable encounters with this outer world and tries to take refuge in domestic love and the comforts of home. He focused thematically on men-women relationships, love, sex, frustration and fulfilment the dreary ugliness of contemporary existence, violence in the society, urban man’s predicament, his agonies and lacerations, agony of loneliness and separations – in short the whole spectrum of man’s struggle through a hostile world. His terse lines are marked by a colloquial vigour and his images sharply outline the sentiments expressed.

Gieve Patel, the distinguished poet, painter, playwright and physician - all at the same time is one of the prominent Indian literary personalities who write in English. He is an important charisma in the history of modern Indian poetry in English. As V. P. Rajappan says, “He is the belated link between Romantic tradition represented by Sarojini Naidu and Modernist tradition represented by Nissim Ezekiel” (2). Patel has never been a formal student of literature or linguistics. As a doctor he rationally and genuinely exhibits
the survival instinct in all creatures. Arundhati Subramaniam describes the enduring concerns in Patel’s poetry as:

the besieged terrain of the human body, its frailty, absurdity and perishability; the vulgar social inequalities of caste and class that continue to assail post-independent India; the predicament of the subaltern perennially relegated to the sidelines of history and art; the daily catalogue of violence, conflict and pain that make up “the century’s folk song”; the perpetual looming shadow of physical death and a probing curiosity about what – if anything – lies beyond a world of fraught materiality. (1)

Born in 1940 in Bombay Gieve Patel grew up in Cusrow Baug a block of buildings inhabited by Parsis in Colaba, South Bombay and has worked as a medical practitioner both in rural and urban India and is currently living in Mumbai. His career as a doctor began with his first posting as Medical Officer, PHC, Sanjan, a small town (historically Parsis landed first in Gujarat) near Nargol, where, Patel’s grandparents lived. He started writing poetry quite early and got due recognition in 1966 with the publication of his first poetic collection, Poems. He has not confined himself only to poetry, but also established himself as a playwright and painter besides displaying a profound liking for music. As a Parsi writer he has become one of the prominent writers of the post-colonial era and stands incomparable with the other Parsi writers of India.

Nargol played an important part in the shaping of Patel’s self-awareness during his early years. His grandparents both maternal and paternal were from this small village in Gujarat. It is a seaside village and his father’s father was a landowner and they were village people and they had property in the Dahanu area and his mother’s father was a village doctor at Nargol. It stood for all that was idyllic and romantic, and has associations of freedom, affection and warmth. It becomes a note of significance that he
has written a poem using Nargol as its title. All through his early childhood the contact
with Nargol remained because of many of his cousins, uncles and aunts. They used to
visit Nargol every vacation. Several of his role models were living and working there;
Dr. Cawas Mehta, his maternal grandfather, and Dr. Phiroze Mehta, his uncle were
among them. He had spent many hours with them at the hospital and this contributed to
his interest in the medical practice and in the wide range of people who came to them as
patients. All this contributed greatly to his art. His father Dr. Gustad Patel’s gentleness
and kindness towards the patients in his dental practice in Bombay, and his mother’s
interest in embroidery and gardening also contributed enormously towards his
development.

When Patel’s father chose to study dentistry they moved to Bombay, where he
was born. It was there that Patel attended Kindergarten and Nursery schools. He disliked
the end of every vacation when he had to return to grimy Bombay which seemed, in
contrast, a dirty place where one had to go to an awful school and confront hostile school
mates and indifferent teachers. At five Gieve Patel started his schooling in St. Xavier’s.
When he was about twelve, Fr. Bonnet of his school published a poem by him in the
school magazine. This first effort described the tragic death of Grace Darling, a
lighthouse - keeper’s daughter, who died in some kind of tragic circumstances.

In his last years at school, Patel began reading the kind of books that would
contribute to and enrich his feeling for Nargol. The writers who seemed to do this the
most to him were the Russians, and by the time he entered college, he became a voracious
reader of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. He was fascinated by Tolstoy’s vision of love, life,
and the diverse ways of serving other people. Tolstoy’s view of understanding that “All,
everything that I understand, I understand only because I love” (1), attracted Patel much
but the Dostoyevsky appeal is not, as he says, is easy to explain. It might have arisen due
to the wildness of passion and the untamed emotions about which Dostoyevsky wrote. Dostoyevsky's literary works which explored human psychology in the context of the troubled political, social and spiritual atmosphere of 19th century Russia might have made him think about his community.

Medical College was a phase Gieve went through unenthusiastically. It had been more or less determined in the family that he would become a doctor, and he enrolled for the course in a similar spirit. He hated it all the way, and was very unhappy with it. He did not welcome it at the time it was being shaped; he felt it was thrust on him. The transition from a Parsi kindergarten to a Catholic school and then to a multi-communal medical college in which prevailed the complex, divided sense of being Indian, affected him much. However, when he began to practise, the intense resentment he felt against his choice of profession slowly disappeared. Patel tells Kendre that the medical profession “is terribly important to me. . . . Every evening when I go to the clinic, I come back at night healed”(7).

A major influence on Gieve was his mentor Nissim Ezekiel (1924 – 2004), who broke away from the bounds of the tradition and voiced his feelings and experiences in his poetry. Incidentally, Ezekiel himself was a Bene Israel (Sons of Israel), a historic Jewish community that migrated from Israel. He was probably the most influential poet of the post-Independence era which witnessed the birth of modernism in Indian English poetry. A teacher by profession, he has painstakingly nurtured many of the budding talents of his time in Mumbai. The new poets like Dom Moraes, Adil Jussawalla and Gieve Patel are among those who benefited from Ezekiel's creative inputs. Ezekiel drew Patel’s attention to a crucial aspect of poetry, the question of the specific attitudes towards the writing of it in English by Indians who live in a developing country. Patel having impressed by him greatly, opened his eyes to the commitment of the creative
writer to his surroundings and the poem “Nargol,” derives directly from his musing on Ezekiel’s views.

Patel adds a novel aspect to Ezekiel’s hierarchy of socio-realistic poems by integrating his knowledge as a doctor to his poetry. Unlike Ezekiel, Patel does not harp upon the theme of alienation; on the contrary he almost always tries to define his identity in terms of his close environment peopled by peasants, servants, lepers, beggars, invalids, old men and women. Patel himself makes it clear that he writes about Parsis because he feels confident of being able to present them accurately. But he discovers that since “Parsis share many of the problems and a good deal of the ‘life-quality’ that this subcontinent gives to the people living in it, well, writing about them is writing about larger aspects of the subcontinent” (Patel 8).

Patel enjoys great literary circles of famous contemporaries like Nissim Ezekiel, A. K. Ramanujan, Shiv K. Kumar, Vikram Seth and Kushwant Singh. Ezekiel published Patel’s first poetic collection Poems in 1966 and he found an everlasting friendship in him as well as in Ramanujan. The two poets with whom Gieve has had a very specific professional, literary relationship are Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujan, says Patel. His meeting with Ramanujan soon after the publication of his first book of poems became an event. Patel, while in conversation with Arundhati Subramaniam, recalls:

I was twenty-six, he was older and well-known, and the admiration he expressed for Poems meant a great deal to me. His positive feedback for the second book meant even more because it initially received ambivalent reviews. . . . Our journeys were very different but we knew we were carrying all this difficult baggage with us. It was the case of one fellow profane monk recognising the other. (4)
Around 1957, Patel met Ebrahim Alkazi of the Theatre Unit in Bombay. Alkazi, who had been a major influence of Ezekiel, became important to Gieve as well. Like Ezekiel, Patel was also inducted into theatre by Alkazi. The apprenticeship began in 1958 while he was still an undergraduate and lasted for three years. During this period, he helped Alkazi’s Theatre Unit Productions and did a minor role in one of them. The experience of watching Alkazi at work, the frequent conversation with him on theatre and the training he received now and then in acting while in school and college helped him mould his vision as a playwright.

Gieve Patel’s life bears more than just a passing resemblance with that of Chekov. The Russian playwright too was a doctor by profession like Gieve Patel. His writing and painting was done alongside the day’s job. Both their works are full of acutely observed, but warmly depicted, studies of human failings. Both display a strong connection with the land of their ancestry. In his conversation with Karen Smith Patel says, “I read Chekov repeatedly when I was working on Princes” (Patel 5). It helped him to handle large numbers of people on the stage in the same scene. Moreover similar situations like the cultural milieu, ethos and landowners’ crisis are also there but Patel was very careful to avoid Chekov. He at root was, “very, very un-Chekhovian” (6) for India is not nineteenth-century Russia and Patel assures that “I could only do that by getting to know him very well” (6). Another influence which Patel had was, Henry James. “I read and enjoyed a lot of James when I was writing Princes” (6). Yet another influence is from Racine who inspired him to, “cutting up the action into small scenes. . . . His plays are extremely musical; the notion of phrases, stops, intervals” (5). The final very strong influence was from the Book of Job for the last act he says, “I read Job very closely for the ranting and lamentations. To get anywhere near that depth of passion!”(6).
Patel writes, paints, and professes as a physician; these three different activities are equally important to him. He started to paint while in college in pencil and water colour, from an edition of Rubens in a Pocket Book series on painting then available. Like most young people in India then, the Modern art and painting came to him as a great discovery. Thus he becomes a self-instructed poet, playwright and painter. He has written three books of poetry: *Poems*, (1966) *How Do You Withstand, Body*, (1976) and *Mirrored Mirroring*, (1991) and three plays: *Princes, Savaksa* and *Mister Behram*. Some of his poems were published in *Illustrated Weekly of India - Poetry India, Young Commonwealth Poets*, and Adil J. Jussawalla’s *New writing in India*. A few of his notable poems like “On Killing a Tree,” “Nargol,” “Servants,” “Naryal Purnima,” “O My very own Cadaver” and “Commerce” have also appeared in *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets* edited by R. Parthasarathy.

Patel has been conducting a poetry workshop for school students annually at Rishi Valley School, Andhra Pradesh, for the past two decades. *Poetry with Young People* is an anthology of poems written by the students in the course of the workshop. The book includes a lively and detailed essay by Patel, discussing the process by which the poems are to be written. He belongs to that avant-garde grouping of artists based in Bombay and Baroda and has held several exhibitions of his paintings both in India and abroad. His first show in Mumbai in 1966 went on to have several major exhibitions in India and abroad. Patel Participated in the Menton Biennale, France in 1976, Indian Myth and Reality Academy, Oxford 1982; and Contemporary Indian Art, Royal Academy, London 1982. He has also exhibited for contemporary Indian Art, Grey Art Gallery, New York, 1985, Indian Art from the Herwitz Collection Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts 1985 and “Coups de Coeur” Geneva, 1987. He has written Essays on Art, which includes: “To Pick up a Brush,” Contemporary Indian Art from the Chester and Davida Herwitz Family

Patel has been exploring the human conditions in exquisitely sensitive paintings, drawings, and sculptures for nearly half a century. As an artist, his themes are diverse. He often produces series of works on selected subjects. Some of these include battered heads, skulls, wells, and clouds. His figures are often placed within cityscapes and as they move about executing their chores there is a close observation of their postures, clothes and stances. The human situations with its rough edges which are at the same time devoid of poetry are transmuted on the canvasses of Gieve Patel. Acutely conscious of the ordinary man, his figures are often set within cityscapes and as they go about performing their chores, there is close observation of their clothes, postures and stances.

Patel’s paintings, all vibrant acrylic on canvas, are inspired by Mumbai, the city he lives in and are packed with the realities of labour, gender inequality, alternative
sexual preference and the grotesque within this new spectrum of possibilities. While blending abstraction and figuration, Patel depicts the prosaic and the poetic as well as the horrific. He has produced spare sketches from newspaper photographs of women in the throes of mourning, abstract line drawings of the movement of clouds, and conceptually driven paintings of water at the bottom of wells. The scenes of the abject that Patel paints are, therefore, most often distressingly rooted everyday in their surroundings, the bloated body of a drowned woman or the human remains of a car accident etc. Patel’s subject is not only the suffering of the body, but the hazards of making that suffering visible. As an artist and a human being, Patel never wants people to be habituated to tolerate and remain insensitive to the sufferings of fellow men; so he repeatedly exposes them with visible contempt in his paintings. The artistic creative interests in him can be traced in his poems also as they are the contents of his interactive relationship with his time and space. Patel in his conversation with Karin Zitzewitz says, “If the subject matter does not totally absorb me, I am unable to proceed with work. The formal aspects of a work are all - important too, because they are the means by which the ‘charge’ contained in the subject matter will be realized” (154). Nature is of crucial importance to him, and has been all his life; a stirring force long before he could articulate to himself that it is so. His work is strongly rooted in external reality. He likes and enjoys the physical world, as the early Parsis did. It means a great deal to him.

The reflection of the Parsi consciousness in him is visible in his paintings touted as “little slices of life.” In a few paintings he captures the rare quietness and desolation in Mumbai. “Bicyclist in a field” shows the serene yellow fields in the background ready for harvest. “Lighted Platform” is an image of an empty railway platform at Victoria. “Peacock at Nariman Point” reflects a beautifully coloured bird held carefully by its keeper against a sky of blue. “Near the Bus Stop” shows a limbless man being fed by a
young girl, possibly his daughter, while “Stroll” shows a child sitting on an adult’s shoulders against an alarming cityscape backdrop. Also of interest to the artist is the ship-building area in the south of Mumbai, a strange space of semi-urbanisation. “Ship Building in Mumbai,” with four figures, including a dog standing in the foreground, and the city as the backdrop far in the distance, may be a reminiscence of the Parsi longing for identity through hard work. Patel in a conversation with Janice Pariat tells:

Shipbuilding is something that happens in the south of Bombay. It’s a little fishing village which has claimed the shore area . . . . I have the actual ship building depiction and, in the foreground, there are four large figures who are standing like four pillars. They’re not having any obvious discussion or interaction but they’re not alienated from each other. Bombay particularly has this sense of intermingling of people, which takes place naturally, unlike many other cities in the world or even in India. In the trains you have a lot of people who are very close to each other and they’re not talking to each other, they have nothing to do with each other, yet their presence together is not that of strangers. (2)

This idea is repeated in one of his poems, “Mirrored Mirroring” where Patel says he sees the numerous human beings as mere replication of animals of varied kind, who behave irrationally and stare at each other blankly and impassively.

Gieve Patel’s, “Off-Lamington Road” (1983–1986) is a study of the crowd from a very short distance. He does not view the crowd as a mass; instead, he is concerned with the multicultural existence of Mumbai individuals who make it up. He shows how street spaces are governed by continually shifting relations of dominance and social distinction. The dress of the women, for instance, marks the crowd as communally mixed, with a woman in a blue sari tied in the Marathi style at the left and two women wearing the veils
associated with the Muslim community approaching each other in the centre. “Patel’s painting is a study of the crowd from a very short distance away. In a kind of balancing act, the artist is able to observe without being overrun, but despite his distance, he does not view the crowd as a mass” (Karin155). The studies were portraits of his patients whom he saw as a general practitioner in his clinic in Lamington Road.

In a series of paintings ironically titled, “The Gallery of Man” Patel dedicates to the victimised, featuring among others, a eunuch, a drowned woman and a leper. He continues to offer us a range of survivors from the margins of metropolitan life in “Man in the Rain with Bread and Bananas” (oil, 2001), and “Sending a Home” (acrylic, 2002). In a clear depiction of the social disconnect in the Metropolis, the “Man in the Rain” crouches beneath his umbrella and negotiates during a stormy rain that has engulfed houses, streets and gutters and deprived him of his livelihood; the residues of buildings loom up through the downpour, but the man battling the torrent is excluded from their roofed warmth and terraced shelter, grappling with his means of subsistence in solitude beneath the umbrella, his only shelter then. “Sending a Letter Home” is dominated by the figure of a scribe who writes letters for illiterate migrant workers in the city. It sketches the unequal relationship between the scribe and the unlettered, with authority weighted over vulnerability - the scribe sitting confident on a coir mat writing for his client who sits beside him, waiting upon his pauses, apparently dictating, but in fact dictated to. In fact the paintings speak more eloquently than their implied words. The letter is being composed in Telugu and Gieve also makes a subtle political point by acknowledging that Andhra Pradesh, a far off state provides Bombay with large numbers of the Parsi construction workers who sustain its manic programmes of urban development. Patel tells Janice Pariat that his paintings are inspired by things that he has seen; he adds:
I have seen, but I do not paint them till they have been with me in my memory and repeatedly come to my consciousness. Sometimes, over a period of several years . . . . For example, there’s “Sending a Letter Home”. I saw this man taking dictation from another person for a letter, in one of the streets of Bombay, say four or five years ago. In that period, the image kept coming back to my mind because it stands for an important point in our civilisation. And then finally, I feel at a certain time that I’m ready to put it down as a painting. (1-2)

All his sketches, paintings, engravings, and sculptures are, however, not this calm and pastoral; some are harrowing and sickening like “Crows with debris,” “Crows tearing at a carcass,” and his engravings entitled “Dead Politician” and “Monument.” His early sketches from the 70s, for instance, are portraits of women, whose pictures he had seen in newspapers, probably in connection with the Kashmir issue. They are all in various postures of mourning and what stands out are their eyes filled with fear, sadness or just plain grief. Some paintings describe the universal experience of isolation in eloquent representations of the urban industrial landscape and common people, sites, and even animals in Bombay. While continuing to build on these themes, Patel began a distinct way of representing violent deaths in the 1980s. In works like “Crushed Head” (1984) and “Battered Man in Landscape” (1993), the artist rendered victimized heads and torsos detached from specific aggressors and locations. Patel’s early sketches of minimal pencil impressions of Indian women have been done from newspaper photographs in the ’70s; Patel tells Pariat that:

They’re of women in mourning, women who have faced a terrible tragedy in their lives – the loss of their husbands or something close to that. These newspaper photographs were recording something important and I wanted
to re-record them in a certain kind of way. It’s like reiterating it. And you’ll notice that sometimes there are three or four versions of the same picture. Each time you draw it, you’re reinforcing the acknowledgement of the tragedy. Each one of them is differently done. (1)

Patel dedicates to the victimised, featuring among others, a eunuch, a drowned woman and a leper first in his poetry and then in a series of paintings ironically titled, “The Gallery of Man.” As he writes he works in a land of continual underlying violence – of human beings against human beings - adults against children, men against women, the strong against the weak, he finds little comfort in the thought. Hence Patel’s subject is not only the suffering of the body, but the hazards of making that suffering visible. In short all his paintings are portraits of his Parsi experiences which he encounters in the new settled land.

There is a glimpse of transcendence in Patel’s “Well” series through the recurrent motif of the changing and magical reflections held by a deep well; Patel, as he tells Arunthathi Subramaniam, believes that a work of art must be born of a state of “inner necessity,” to use the phrase of the influential Russian painter and art theorist, Kandinsky, and declares that: “And for some reason the inner necessity in recent years seems to be operating very intensively in the area of painting, rather than poetry”(1). In all his paintings of wells, “Looking into a Well: Full Moon” (2001) “Looking into a Well: Foliage”(2002), “Looking into a well: A spray of blossoms” (2010) Patel shifts into a freer, abstract and more lyrical world: each well is distinctive, animated, disturbing and a site of revelation for him. Since 1991, Patel has been attracted towards this enduring motif: wells and he says that he started simply recapturing the delight of a boyhood experience of looking into wells and it continues to enchant him even today. Artist Sudhir Patwardhan, a contemporary of Patel notes:
Patel is an artist who spends a lot of time looking - looking at nature, looking at people, and also looking at his own work in progress. The need to look for long and again comes from a commitment to try and see everything in its wholeness and to take note of and accommodate all aspects into the complete picture . . . . The artist enjoys just looking. Be it a tree trunk, the sea, or the body of a labourer, close observation opens up for the artist the many nuanced shades of the character of his subject. At the same time . . . his own act of looking exposes the complex and at times contrary impulses that attract him to his subject. (2)

In the Press Release that preceded the display of Patel’s paintings “Wells, Clouds, Skulls” in February, 2011 at The Guild, Mumbai, Nancy Adajania observes that:

These works are evocations of the splendour of the physical world, while at the same time suggestive of explorations of the complex inner world of the human psyche. Patel’s drawings of clouds give us a vision that challenges our notions of artistic form. As he points out clouds are always in the process of forming and dissolving, and since both these activities happen congruently we are witness to a world of endless instability. (1)

The works replicate the process of migration and are suggestive of the Parsi cycle of fortunes.

Similarly his “Sculpture creations” can be interpreted with the Parsi resistance to suffer silently. The sculptural work on display is also an evidence of his interest in mythology - both Hindu and Greek. In his recent works “Eklavya and Daphne” he juxtaposes the story of Daphne and Eklavya to surprisingly moving results. The two figures from the legend, one from the Indian epic Mahabharata and the other from Greco-
Roman mythology, are maturely conceived images that are precisely executed, to unfold the very provocative themes as that of desire and wound, lust and betrayal.

The depiction of the epic tragedy of Eklavya by representing a thumb-less hand gives us a visual shock because the hand is defenceless, and mutely uncomplaining. Similarly the beautiful wood-nymph who is saved from Apollo’s rape by being transformed into a tree allows the sculptor to explore the physical and emotional trauma of metamorphosis. The irony is that Daphne saves her reputation, but tragically loses life; Eklavya reminds one of Parsi’s own choice, to suffer silently. Patel has tried to interpret both the figures to explain the present Parsi situation; he is at his creative best in the chosen medium. The idea of sticking to resistance unmindful of the sufferings attended to it can be seen as analogous to the Parsis’ sticking to their age old customs, identities and beliefs unperturbed by the dynamics and realities of the world surrounding them. This idea gets repeated in some of his poems like “Squirrels in Washington.”

There is something unique, special and refreshing about his paintings. The sources Patel uses for making both painting and poetry have been inter - complementary to each other. The various characters from the busy day to day life have developed a very special bond with him, bringing out the hidden beauty in them in a specific smartness, imagination and observation. As painting is seen as a kind of visual poetry and poetry a kind of verbal painting, one may be inclined to borrow the words of Janine Catalano on T. S. Eliot: “It is through this verbal crafting of the visual arts that Eliot employs the modern art and artistic theories he so respects” (6) and apply it in appreciation of Patel’s expertise in painting and poetry. Patel represents the very ordinary, scratch, the abandoned of the society, where their survival is a big question. The poetic career of Patel strikes a perfect balance with his distinguished career as a famous painter who has been in the limelight in various art exhibitions, at the national and international level. All such abilities aptly
contribute to make him a poet of realistic attitude towards life. His language is simple and
even over rules strict grammar limitations to become the language of the local people. His
language is clearly poetic and lyrical and bears the stamp of local flavour.

Gieve Patel as a poet, physician, playwright and painter all rolled into one and a
“Retrospective of his works at Chemould Gallery, Mumbai from the 1970 to 2007” is
evident of how he has managed to skilfully juggle all these varied interests. Perhaps what
helps is that he believes each one is separate and independent of the other. He is never
tired to be multi-disciplinary and sees each discipline as wholly integrated by it. He tells
Arundhati:

I am very aware that they should not be muddled together. . . . So, some of
my medical experience is reflected in the poems and paintings; but at
different periods - medical images are present in my poetry of the ’60s and
’70s, but in the paintings only in the ’80s. Life at the clinic is integrating-
both for the peace that it gives and the disturbance that it precipitates.(4)

Since the clinic is on the main road, he gets to meet a variety of people that gives him a
sense of being part of the bazaar. It makes him feel part of the city in a comforting way.
Patel, in David Mc Cutchion’s words, is “a man educated to think and feel in western
categories confronting the radically different culture around him” (15).

There is a creative continuity in all his works which attempts to project the
Parsiness as well as the Indianness with the contemporary relevance. As a Parsi his choice
of words indicate a personal dilemma. Perhaps it correlates directly to the kind of poetry
he writes. Both the most urbanised Bombay and the ruralised Nargol provide him with the
space for his thematic contents in his works. Although he was brought up in Bombay, the
link with Nargol was retained and this village becomes central to his life and his
creativity. His exposure to the Warli presence from a very early age has been very important for him because the Warli poise is like a breath of fresh air so there is always the Warli aura in his plays, although in the first two plays it is a very muted presence but it is a very important one and in *Mister Behram*, one of the most important characters is a Warli. Patel’s upbringing in this close-knit Parsi Society makes his musings into a fine ironic commentary in a fairly large poem, “The Ambiguous Fate of Gieve Patel, he being neither a part of Hinduism nor Islam in India.” He grieves at the isolation faced by the Parsis in the opening line, “To be no part of this hate is deprivation” (1). His sense of non-belonging impels him into seeking his cultural roots and most of his poems are remarkable for what he calls intellectual heartburn.

Patel’s first book of poetry, *Poems* was published in 1966 when he was 26, still studying medicine at the time; his second, *How Do You Withstand, Body* was published ten years later, in the Clearing House series, was dedicated to his wife Toni and his third, *Mirrored Mirroring* in 1991. The first book prefigures several of Patel’s abiding concerns: the fascination with that of things, with the finite embattled materiality of the human condition and death. Patel tells Arundhati: “In *Poems*, I was feeling my way around. The book deals with early experiences of death, with early experiences of painful social reality and what it means to live in this difficult country. There is also a certain reaching out towards wider issues” (4).

The thirty poems in his first book reveal the physician’s awareness, responsibility and a moment of alertness and moral involvement with the realities of experiences. It successfully conveys the uncertainty of a sensibility groping for an identity. Poems like “Catholic Mother,” “Cord – Cutting,” “Post – Mortem,” and “The Difference in The Morgue” deal with a physician’s perspective. Poems like “Grandfather,” “Servants,” “Nargol,” “The Solution of Servants,” and “Vistasp” relate to Nargol and his relatives,
both there and in Bombay and poems like “On killing A Tree,” “Old Man’s Death,” “Tourists at Grant Road” and “To A Coming Love” - express Patel’s concern for the poverty-stricken society as well as his conflicts with the society. In short all the poems in the first volume concentrate on Patel’s longing for the Parsi identity.

Patel chose to highlight the Warlis in his Poems as peasantry, not tribals. This is because he says he was reading Tolstoy at the time. In his speech at the inaugural edition of “Creative Journeys,” a new series of talks organised by “Toto Funds the Arts” which hopes to bring together a mix of established and young artists, he claims: “This is how literature affects one’s life . . . . Had I not been reading Tolstoy, I wouldn’t have had such a close connection to the issue. To me, they were Tolstoy’s peasants” (2).

Many critics have drawn attention to Patel’s articulation of his social concerns in his first volume, Poems. K. N. Kutty observes: “His world is peopled by peasants, servants, lepers, beggars, invalids, old man and women . . . . His poems reveal the pain the boredom and the horror of the wretched existence of these people around him”(102).

In fact Patel’s poems do more than this. In “The Encounter Between, ‘Self and The Other’ in Gieve Patel’s Poetry” Sunil R. Savant says: “they do not simply express the condition of the deprived and the oppressed in India. They rather explore the mind of the sensitive human being in its attempt to come to terms with the situations of the deprived and the oppressed”(28).

The second collection, How Do You Withstand, Body as he himself acknowledges was more cohesive than the first. It focuses on the body, its needs and torments. It brings together his exploration of his own body and the savagery inflicted on the human body in various circumstances all over the world. He becomes more and more interested in the larger human perspectives rather than operating within the prevailing conditions of
restrictive essence of a personal vision. He is much obsessed with human violence as with a direct confrontation with the agonies of poverty which adds concrete crystallisation of social realities. For him human body is as important as his social commitments; the violence done to it is violence against all forms of human goodness and philanthropy. As Melanie Silgardo observes: “His subject is in fact the human body with all its literal and spiritual frailties and strengths. The Physicalness of the poetry is, however, always bound by the poet’s intellectual inspection of the wounded or the strained part, the constant need to analyse and lay bare” (4).

*Mirrored Mirroring*, which came out almost fifteen years later, shows in one way or other how adaptability emerges happily through accepting things as they are. The final transition into accepting the global reality and submitting to the adaptation and acclimatisation could be seen in most of the poems of this collection. The book takes a step towards what is known as the mystic dimension. Arundhati Subramaniam states:

Poet Keki Daruwalla once wrote rightly of Patel’s compulsion to conduct a post-mortem on every experience that came his way. It is an impulse, evident in all three books: a fierce, almost brutal need to look daringly at the grimmer, darker, baser and more angular aspects of the world. It is in the third book that the possibility of ‘the meditation on the nature of truth and beauty’ enters Patel’s careworn poetic universe. . . . (4)

Patel tells Arundhati that most of his creative activity is motivated by the need for knowledge and adds: “My way of ‘knowing’ something is by writing or painting. This gives me a sense of having made it on my own. The end result is a move towards inner clarity, however clothed in ambivalence” (4).
All of Patel’s plays in the collection, *Mister Behram and Other Plays*, are tragedies focused on the Parsi world with elements of Parsi ethnicity presented through Parsi characters in typically Parsi social settings. They are directed and performed in quick succession by a generation of talented theatre persons, including Pearl Padamsee, Nosherwan Jehangir, Roger Pereira, Shernaz Patel and Rajit Kapur, to packed auditoria in south Mumbai. His apprenticeship and association with the legendary Ebrahim Alkazi largely facilitated his understanding the nuances of drama and impacted his writings.

Pearl Padamsee directed *Princes* in March 1970 and Alyque Padamsee played the lead role apart from designing its sets and lights. Nearly 12 years later, Pearl directed Patel's second play *Savaksa* which opened in 1982. *Mister Behram*, which premiered at the Bombay Arts Festival in 1987, was directed by Toni Patel.

As far as his plays are concerned Patel is equally clear about the focus on Parsi race and Zoroastrian religion. He says that he has done this deliberately as he is most comfortable with that ethos and knows it most closely. However, he is quick to add that his plays are not just document of the Parsi race and religion. For him the ethno-religious nature of his drama is a means of reasserting the Parsi space within the wider Indian context. Popular culture has often reduced Parsis to shrewish or oddball caricatures who habitually debase their own emotions. In a set of interviews accompanying the plays, Patel confesses that it was very important for him to avoid these stereotypes. He succeeds in showing us a world and a way of life built around a single ethnic identity but by universalizing their triumphs and failures, makes them speak for all. The difficulty of his task must have been compounded by his refusal to play up a few stray examples of ethnicity as local colour. Thus he writes in English without using a sprinkling of Gujarati words, a device that many writers have used liberally.
Gieve Patel’s depiction of Parsis has a universal resonance. In fact he is the first Parsi playwright to treat Parsis seriously and not as the comic types made popular on the Parsi-Gujarati stage by popular playwrights like Adi Marzban. The three tragedies are in the classical mould, with irremediable and rounded characters having only the essential features that are inevitable concerning the path their characters take. His first play *Princes* is not primarily sociological in intention, but displays an understanding of the forces at work on two Parsi families engaged in a savage struggle for the possession of a small boy. The complexity of the characters and the cultural reflections of their activities are the major strengths of the play.

The second play, *Savaksa*, set over a decade later, expands upon some of the themes presented in *Princes*. The setting of this three-act play is Southern Gujarat in a large village working its way to becoming a small town in the late 1960s. By depicting the collapse of an intended marriage, Patel examines the fragile state of traditional authority within the family and a rural community. He explores the theme of the use of power in intimate human relationships through the device of an older, prosperous landowning Parsi man who is enamoured by a young impoverished Parsi girl from Mumbai. Dhiren Bhagat aptly observes: “Savaksa is . . . quite possibly the first great English play to be written by an Indian. There is no simple moral debate in progress here, but a careful representation of conflicting forces and the checks they exercise on each other” (6).

*Mister Behram*, possibly the most powerful and disturbing of the three plays explores the major argument on whether to accept converts to Zoroastrians as Parsis; the issue of conversion, though evasive of a solution, is all pervasive among Parsis in India. The play is located in the colonial era and it centres on the elite Parsi community’s proximate yet complex relations with the rural tribes and the ruling British. As Bruce...
King says: “The work is rich in themes. . . . This work suggests that the Indian English drama is likely to join the Indian English novel and poetry as worthy of international attention”(727).

Parsi theatre has traditionally been associated with risque, low brow comedies. Gieve Patel breaks away from this mould: “I am not interested in the Parsi as a caricature but as a person who has joys and passions like any other human being. The stereotypes are so dreadful that seeing them repeatedly has created a false image of the Parsi even in the Parsi’s own mind”(206). Patel’s late wife Toni was a theatre director with her own company called Stage Two. Most of Patel’s plays as well as that of Mistry’s have been put up in “Stage Two.” Patel’s first play, Princes, written for the Sultan Padamsee Award Competition held in 1968 was awarded a certificate of merit and was later staged by the Theatre Group in 1970.

Patel’s interviews and reviews by scholars throw a panoramic view on the quality and contents of Patel’s writings. Rajeev S. Patke finds Patel’s poetry as: “poetry of situations. Beginning with a real life situation, Patel hardly uses any metaphor or symbol and relies heavily on irony and direct detail. His descriptions remain bare and naked”(296). Arundhati Subramaniam in her conversation with Gieve Patel talks about his slightly sick concern with the body saying:

There is nothing showy about Patel’s versatility. Unlike so many self-conscious neo-Renaissance multi-disciplinarians, he never gives the feeling that he’s a mere collector of nouns. Instead, there’s the sense of a doer, a sleeves-rolled, willing-to-get-hands-soiled attitude of a worker that makes one trust his varied creative engagements . . . he is able to exude the air of a man so genuinely comfortable inside his skin. The boldness to strike sensitive issues like pathetic conditions of women, cold attitude of
high class people towards the poor and downtrodden and social problems like eco-friendly environment etc. make him a writer par excellence. His thoughts are always profound and explore the harsh realities of an issue with the help of symbolic interpretation. (5)

Being a medical practitioner by profession, Patel is: “all too familiar with pain, disease and death and tries to talk about them with clinical detachment, which cannot, however, completely obliterate his human sympathies” (Naik 204). Nandini Bhaskaran finds Patel’s plays rooted in the Parsi context; she writes:

Gieve’s plays are unique, says eminent theatre critic Shanta Gokhale, because he is perhaps the only Parsi playwright writing about the community in a rural milieu, particularly the middle-class, impoverished Parsi city-dweller coming to a village. But his locales - village and district town in late 19th century Gujarat, with evocations of the city too – constitute “three microcosms of India” as the playwright points out. So while being rooted in the searing specificity of the Parsi context, he is able to address quite electrifying themes.(2)

To conclude, all the Parsi novelists who have settled abroad have tried their best, writing about their small circle of Parsi Bawajis. Their plots become predictable and obviously reflect their ethnicity, identity crises and their struggle in a hostile world to create their own space. The stay- at- home novelists of the 20th century have tended to focus on the contemporary issues along with their survival. Most of their novels of the current era can be viewed as either distinctive for sociological reasons, or as part of the genre of Indian writing in English or in the context of creative alienation. The stock themes like East-West encounter, the frustration and despair of the inner lives of the foreign women, the cultural encounter and existential query, the dividing line that
separates two cultures from which they can never come out, are given more importance.

Recent Parsi Fictional writers like Ardashir Vakil and Meher Pestonji focus on the marginalisation of the Parsis of the 1990s, dilution of values, isolation in the urban scenario, hybrid personality traits, the struggle to preserve identity in a multi cultural society and the influence of massive commercialisation on the psyche. No doubt all their literature dealing with their community, its religion, its customs and traditions, its likes and dislikes and their role in the development of the country to which they originally do not belong certainly records their ethnicity for the posterity.

Patel overtakes all of them by his portrayal of the enduring motif of the Parsi resistance freely, on and off, in his works whatever it may be whether it is a poem or a play or a sculptural work or a painting, sticking on to their age old customs, identities and beliefs unperturbed by the dynamics and realities of the world surrounding them. He entices the readers to a great extent closer to the tiny community’s traditions, culture and customs, loyalty, philanthropy, religious faith, and also manifests the Parsi experiences, the unconquerable spirit of mankind, endurances, acceptances, anxieties, adaptability and progressiveness as they live in a dominant situation. His commitment to realistic attitude towards life besides going into the depth of human psychology in the context of the troubled political, social and cultural atmosphere makes him a brilliant ace among his race. There is something unique, special and refreshing in him, in his writings, in his paintings, in his sculptural works and everything he does.