Chapter V

POST-COLONIAL CONCERNS IN THE POETRY OF KEKI N. DARUWALLA

Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla is ranked with A.K. Ramanujan, Nissim Ezikiel, Jayanta Mahapatra, Kamalas Das, Gieve Patel etc. As a young man he studied the history of two world wars and failed to compromise with the policies of Stalin. He had interest in a few Chinese poets as they described the agonies of common people. It is true that he studied the economic theories of Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin etc. and yet failed to propagate Marxism with his art. For him, art is the product of imagination and its propaganda value is meagre. While studying the translations of the Chinese poet Tu Fu (712-770) he felt interested in the life of common people who were tortured by monarchs. In the poem *Exile and The Chinese Poets* he mentions the loneliness, mental strength and agonies of the exiled poets of China. Common people could not help the situation as liberty of expression was not granted by the monarchs. The poet refers to 'endless plains' in which the poets survived. Yet they were in search of truth:

... Apart from a banished poet,
who in his senses
would seek out the south seas,
except the diver, year after year,
looking for his elusive pearl
and coming up, at the most,
with a handful of oyster seed?

And Tu fu venturing
into the screech-owl north,
watched the wintering mouse
drill his holes,
and the moonlight
mull over the bones
on an old battlefield. (22-35)

Su Man Shu, a modern poet (1884-1918) is famous for his poem *Ben Shi*. He had faith in Buddhism as he was a monk by profession. Yet he preferred a life of exile in Japan:

Su Man Shu, playing his flute
on some ramshackle balcony in Japan,
bemoaning his straw sandals
and his begging bowl, ruminated
if ever he'd be home again
to see the tidal bore
moving up the Cheking river once again. (36-42)

Quite often the exiled Chinese poets aspired to return home. Yet they were never certain of the conduct of Chinese authorities. Keki N. Daruwalla feels sympathy for them as they led a life of melancholy:

Wherever they went
melancholy hung around them
like a curtain of rain.
They saw roads turn into rivers,
And at the frayed edge of winter after winter
Wondered how many springs would pass them by
Before they got back home. (43-49)

After all these poets had their feelings, passions and dreams but the authorities ignored them:
And those who are not exiled from their dreams,
are they really far from home? (58-59)

Osip Mandelstam was tortured by the followers of Stalin after the death of Lenin.

In the poem *Speaking to Mandelstam Through Poem 119* the poet describes the agony of Russian poets who got no liberty of expression in the regime of Stalin. Men had no fundamental rights as state was an end in itself. It is said that even Homer could not raise his voice against Greek monarchs. Clarence Brown and W.S. Merwin also tried to analyze the poems of Mandelstam. Nights were long for those who feared arrest by the soldiers of Stalin. Trotsky, a wise Russian, had already been murdered as Stalin was not prepared to tolerate his intelligence. Keki N. Daruwalla sympathizes with Mandelstam and says:

We are still searching for yours. Osip.
But you were watching those resinous dots

sprout on the axe-bitten stockade —
you saw tears there —
while time kept side-stepping you all the time.

Morning tapped at your shutters and didn’t find you.

Later, night found you, along with time.

Nights in the cold can be pretty long, you know.

While you looked for Priam’s birdhouse perched on high. (11-18)

She was tortured and crushed in the regime of Stalin and Keki N. Daruwalla advocates liberty of expression.

When he visits Andaman Islands for a week in Post-colonial days he feels delighted with the beauty of the island though its natives could not be contacted without the permission of authorities. Here he had his dreams to support him in moments of loneliness. In the A Dream is also he admits:

A dream is also an island.
surrounded by the swirling waters
of myth-memory;
surrounded by the stillness of the night
and mother's anxiety,
which is only another word
for the currents of the night. (1-7)

He is prepared to enter into 'form within form'
as a dream seems an allegory to him. The memory of
dream is dear to him and at times, like Sigmund
Freud, he tries to explain the meaning of the dream.
He asks himself — Why do people have dreams?
What is the real language of dreams? Why are dreams
often different from reality? Why do they come in
numbers? Why is he unable to forget his past? Here
he relates past with present:

A dream is also an allegory:
only, I distrust its hierarchy of veils,
and the masks nailed to the doors
you have to pass through —
form within form.
For by the time
you've decoded the allegory,
dream and the memory of it
have both swept past
like a fish-shoal wrapped
in a darkening current. (8-18)

In the poem Of Fullness he says that nights are full when he sees dreams. The nights are empty if there are no dreams. Some dreams make him thoughtful throughout the day. Quite often 'sameness' of the days troubles him. But then there is no end of the rising of waves on the surface of water:

The nights are full
because of the dreams streaming through them.
The days are full
because of new skylines, new shoals, new tides.
The nights are empty, for the sea rolls and wrings the dreams out of the wet rag of your body.
The days are empty
because the skyline is the same and the light on the sea has a sameness about it that is killing, and the waves are another name
for repetition repeated endlessly.

(1-13)

But the objects of nature have life for him and he treats them as animate beings. Life may not change on the island and yet the poet feels the change of time — day, afternoon, night etc. He feels that —

An island sometimes
doesn't know where it is. (1-2)

Here the poet thinks of 'space', 'latitudes', 'curve', 'current', 'waves', 'compass', 'time', 'wind', 'tides' etc. so as to analyze the life of the island. All these objects remove his loneliness as he is lost in 'reverie'.

In the poem *The Stalin Epigram* he satirizes the choking atmosphere of Russia as the followers of Stalin made a lot of promises with the labourers and farmers. The citizens expected a lot with the fall of Czar (1917) and Lenin had created hopes in their heart. But powers were captured by Stalin by 1930 and things became dictatorial there. Keki N. Daruwalla uses the words 'words disappear' i.e. the
promises proved fake. Dictatorship was established in Kremlin in place of democracy and fundamental rights were indirectly and cunningly abolished. There was no rule of law and justice was denied to people. Now nobody could revolt against Stalin as his opponents had been killed in large number in the name of 'purgation':

His ten fingers are thick, grub-fat, great.
His words are iron measures of dead weight.

Roaches laugh on his upper lip and face.
The gleam on his boot tops cannot be effaced.

Half-men are mirrored in that shining boot rim.
Chicken-necked genuflectors who've surrounded him. (5-10)

The poet says that there was an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion in the country and even friends could not be trusted:
The anvil is littered with his horse-shoes and decrees,
One each for the eyes, groin, forehead and the knees.

Like berries he rolls executions on his tongue,
He could hug his victims like old friends from home. (13-16)

Nobody could demand equality and liberty and the concept of fraternity was ignored. The country labourers were promised the fruits of their labour. But surplus goods were exported to other nations. Nobody bothered to introduce scheme for the welfare of masses. Poem 8 can be cited here to confirm the working of Stalin's government. It was the age of 'steel' and human emotions were crushed in the name of production and economic progress:

The moment of metal arrives:
clang of wheel on rail,
the roll and reverberation of steel on steel;
the first jab of the piston,
the serrating lurch
of the panting engine;
steam-hiss
condensing to low cloud
in cold air. (5-14)

Many scholars, scientists and artists left Russia and migrated to America, Great Britain and other countries. Vladimir Nabokov was one of them who settled in U.S.A. All political powers were captured by the soldiers and people heard the sound of their boots regularly. Keki N. Daruwalla uses the term 'state's executioners' who were at liberty to create anarchy in the country:

Don't they see something strange here, something unseemly?
a man, a woman being herded into some kind of frosted hell where rats scurry and floorboards creak and the state's executioners are let loose on the wilderness?
Yet not one person on the swarming railway stations,
Not one of the half-starved men,
huddled in cattle trucks that pass us by, 
not one co-passenger on the river steamer 
looks us in the eye. (22-33)

Who could dare to ask the importance of judiciary? Who could dare to ask the need of elections? Who could ask for the illustration of national constitution? Everybody felt tongue-tied and ignorance became bliss. The poet describes this pitiable situation and says:

Knowing what is coming
Is worse than not knowing it.
To look for a specific sound
in the journey's clamour —
the click of a bolt pulled back —
is worse than the bold actually snapped back.

Where are they going to shoot me?

(34-40)

The farmers ploughed earth regularly and their products were taken away. The factories produced a
lot of goods but nobody could ask for the balance sheet. It was all dark, economy lost in wilderness:

The long nights of the Urals,
sidereal in expanse.
The white nights of the Urals;
Night smeared with rain,
Rain smeared with the night.
The first ice sketched upon the winter floor;
I find myself mirror-meditating,
and move, only to hear
my image rustle under the ice. (59-67)

Even the hospitals maintained perfect peace and patients could not ask for second opinion of other doctors. There was no political party in opposition and the Communist Party leaders were all in all. No discussions were allowed on any project as Stalin decided even the foreign affairs. Actually Keki N. Daruwalla fails to tolerate this tyranny of Stalin as the former wants to protect the democratic ideals. People were really afraid of 'That man in the red shirt'. (43)
He does not want to put the 'mask' of hypocrisy, affectation, artificiality as he is what he is. He does not love the present situation when dictators rule as democrats. After all he has his own hopes and finds difference between 'hope' and 'smog'. How can a man and a woman survive under one roof if they have no understanding of mutual love? To him it is essential to understand the conceptions of love, loss and despair. Everybody should be able to realize the feeling of love in family, society, nation and the world. Yesterday the radio gave signals and these signals may not be final. The poet asserts the need of world civilization based on love and says:

But happiness lies in the familiar,
in the penumbra one can sense.
Not soot from the heavens, necessarily
and the grit-encrusted air —
but yesterday's blue space still pulsing
with yesterday's light and radio signals.
Happy with just one boxed in sky,
one feeling — love,
one sense — of loss,
one window — despair. (26-35)
Inspite of all tensions of post-colonial world, people can survive with the feelings of brotherhood and love.

Even in the Post-colonial society tensions were found among various sections of society. Quite often communal violence spread and the police authorities had to take stern action against the anti-social elements. In the poem Curfew in a Riot-torn City he describes the chaos in a subjective manner and says:

The starch on your khaki back
turns soggy; the feel of things is queer.
You wish to forget it all,
the riot, the town, the people:
that mass of liquefied flesh
seething in fear. (15-20)

Many bullets are fired to create fear in the hearts of people. People fail to peep into the streets as the police officers and constables take round several times a day. All possible efforts are made to maintain law and order:
A gunshot scatters
the silence and the birds.
You rush there, pistol cocked,
Search the lanes and scan the walls of blood.
Weak with relief you praise the Lord,
the bullet hasn't claimed a corpse.

(36-41)

People reach the roof of houses as if they have an anxiety to see — What is happening in the town? The poet finds relation between death and curfew. The sick people are the worst victims of curfew. The press reporters want to gather latest news and need security. The town is full of mud houses and yet peace does not prevail in the streets easily. He finds himself in the world of madness. As a police officer Keki N. Daruwalla had seen such scenes and hence his portrayal of curfew scenes is real. He says:

Two days have passed
Without turning up a corpse.
Knuckles return to their original brown,
tomorrow you man come out with a press communiqué!
But the war has spiralled out.

Two men climb into a rickshaw
and drive into the dusk
where the town
dwindles into mudhouse and machan
over maize-fields. (62-71)

Due to disillusionment he fails to realize if it is 'curfew or contagion'. (80)

The poet's tone becomes highly bitter and vitriolic in the poem *Collage I* as he exposes the contradictions of Indian life. Indians feel highly elevated when the western people listen the classical music of Ravi Shanker and the lectures of Mahesh Yogi. The Beatles come to India and sing western songs. There is no limit to the joy of Indians when our R.N. Tagore got Nobel Prize for *The Gitanjali* (1913). Ironically he says:

They have a lot to learn
from the rages still, these bums!
It is that same sentiment
that Tagore-euphoria
after the Nobel prize.
At times we do well
in dog-shows. (5-11)

Indians feels overjoyed when the Europeans confess that they have learnt a lot of wisdom from *The Bhagwadgita* and the Indian epics. Quite often they admit that the western people learn a lot from Indian culture:

Since Oppenheimer quoted *Bhagwad Gita*
after the first A-bomb.
Since Allen Ginsberg and the psychedelics
wore dhotis, and with clanging cymbals
chanted cow and Krishna
I stand bowled by Indian culture
and Indian hemp. (12-18)

Indian politicians deliver lectures on the achievements of Indian government as they have abolished Zamindari system after Independence. Yet the conditions of Indian farmers are still miserable due to lack of economic resources. Even prostitution
has been banned on G.B. Road, Delhi. Women have been asked to come out of purdah:

Who says we have done nothing?
We have abolished zamindari
and liquor and English
and driven out the whores from the
G.B. Road.

What have we forbidden
veils in front of eyes
or eyes behind veils? (19-25)

Indian leaders inaugurate crematoriums though only a few persons are ready to make use of them. V.I.P. enjoys a life of luxury at the cost of poor people and politicians create hopes in the hearts of people though the promises prove to be futile. Nothing is being done for the lepers, beggars and the outcastes. All welfare schemes are false:

Some day, here
the sun will refuse
to light the path for lepers.
In India
the left hand is outcaste
because it cleans the ass. (32-37)

Politicians are conscious of their personal image and identity and don't really do anything for the welfare of common people. Rural people have been fully ignored and educational institutions are not being established for them:

Discussing personal destiny
and collective destiny
you turn bitter.
My horoscope is only a half-truth.
Where are inflation and taxes
floor-crossing and black gold
written on it? (38-44)

Common people are worst hit with inflation and rising taxes. Black gold is symbol of the growing wealth of black-marketeers and hoarders. Economic plague has spread in the markets of India and the politicians are worried of it:

If we had plague
Camus-style
and doctors searched for the virus
there would be black-market in rats.

(45-48)

Keki N. Daruwalla recollects the poems of W.H. Auden when he thinks of corruption in the country. He refers to Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of existentialism when he analyzes the causes of Indian social evils. Generally the country is called Bharat Mata though her face is totally lost in darkness. He bitterly uses the terms the 'vocabulary of defeat', 'landscape of meaninglessness', 'tone of darkness', etc. to assert the pessimistic picture of India. The leaders have not identified themselves with the masses and hence the gap has widened between the rulers and the ruled. Impotence is the word to illustrate the whole economic and social structure:

For impotence which is disembodied
and become a way of life ...
for greater insights into the fear of death
go here ...
and she's your girl for the abyss
she knows one tone of darkness from the other. (13-18)
Politicians are famous for affectation as their promises are never fulfilled. Even the second line of leadership is equally not reliable. Mother suffers a lot during days of flood and drought each year. The limbs of the body shrink due to hunger:

In the drought year
armlets couldn't stay upon the arm,
the limbs had shrivelled so.
Mother, some men have heard you
crying to yourself.

Mother, you are a floating foetus
around which we thrash about
'black colonies of summer fish'.

(23-31)

His tone becomes highly sarcastic when he observes corruption in very sphere of life. 'Empty slogan' is heard from every stage and slogans don't provide food to the hungry people:

Corruption is the chemistry of flesh.
No wonder the senses suppurate,
passions putrefy.
But you survey it all
With a smile pasted on your lips
Inanities passed on the smile.
Somewhere in the dust and drift of history
You lost your good-luck amulet
and your face.
Today you are an empty slogan
that walks an empty street,
walls tarred with slogans. (32-42)

In the poem *The King Speaks To His Scribe* the poet describes the agony of king Ashoka who felt restless and shocked after getting victory in the battle of Kalinga. Here he asserts that the colonial powers actually get nothing in reality. Violence is no solution to human problems. When king Ashoka saw bloodshed in the battlefield he was shocked as if he had committed a cruel crime. Now he has no pride in his mind and tells Kartikeya to declare that there will be no war in future:

First Kartikeya, there's no pride involved,
not humility; understand this. I speak of atonement, that is, if blood can ever
be wiped away with words. We will engrave
this message on volcanic rock, right here
where the earth still reeks of slaughter.
A hundred thousand courted death,
mind you.
The battlefield stank so that heaven
had to hold a cloth to its nose. (1-9)

Even the gods will have to put a cloth on their
nose to feel ease as there is terrible smell in the
battlefield. He never saw such destruction in the
battle. Actually he feels defeated as victory has no
meaning now. What has he achieved with such
violence? Who will remove darkness of the huts of
people? His agony knows no limits:

I trod
this plain, dark and glutinous with gore,
my chariot-wheels squelching in the
bloody mire,
Nothing stands now between them and
destruction,
neither mot nor bridge nor hut nor door-leaf.

It is to them that you will speak, or rather

I will speak through you. (9-16)

He does not know the ways to define his sin now. His father Bindusar became a saint in his old age. After this battle Ashoka also decides to follow Buddhism as he adopts the weapons of truth and non-violence. It is late — Better late than never. He tells Kartikeya:

... no aphorisms
which say that good is difficult and sin easy.

And no palaver about two peafowl
And one antelope roasting in my kitchen
Instead of an entire hecatomb as in
my father's days. There may be huts where
they have nothing to bum of the hearth-fires.
Spare me the shame. (17-24)
How can he boast of his royal deeds now? All his royal glory has vanished with this war. He is a mere loser as his loss is terrible. Perhaps he has created nothing so far. He is the only cause behind all this destruction:

And no taboos, please,

forbidding the caponing of roosters
or the castration of bulls and rains and
the branding of horses. So listen with care,
Kartikeya, and I will tell you what to write.
First talk about the sorrows of conquest
and other miseries attendant on enslavement. (24-32)

He tries to analyze the reaction of scholars, Brahmins etc. against this sinful deed. He has done nothing for social reconstruction as this deed had proved an obstacle in the path of social relationship. Will the future generations of mankind ever forgive him for this deed? Never. Even young children have been crushed badly. Who will sow the seeds here? Who will cut the harvest? Will the future generations
of Kalinga become friends of his kingdom? Now he recollects that he killed his brothers to become a king. His sorrow is unlimited and his repentance has got to be engraved on stones:

And about my sorrow what will you say?
How will you touch that weed-ridden lake-floor
or my despair and keep from drowning?
Say simply that of all the people killed or captured, if the thousandth part were to suffer as before, the pain would overwhelm me.
Tell them I have abjured pride, the lowest
Can abuse me now and I shall not answer.
Let the dust of humility cover my head. (42-50)

He fails to console himself as the dead bodies of enemies haunt his senses. Done is done and it can't be undone. Let the future citizens of his
k i n g d o m  l e a r n  l e s s o n s  o f  r i g h t e o u s n e s s ,  t o l e r a n c e ,  f o r t i t u d e ,  f o r g i v e n e s s ,  l i b e r a t i o n  a n d  n o t  v i o l e n c e .  
H e  t e l l s  K a r t i k e y a : 

C u t  d e e p e r  t h a n  t h e  c u t s  o f  m y  s w o r d  
so  t h a t  e v e n  a s  m o s s  c o v e r s  t h e  l e t t e r s 
they  a r e  v i s i b l e .  W r i t e  w h a t e v e r  
Y o u  c h a n c e  c h a n  o n .  D o n ’ t  l o o k  f o r  a 
white-quartz boulder.  
A n y t h i n g  w i l l  d o ,  a  m a s s  o f  t r a p  r o c k  
or  j u s t  a  s t o n e  s h e e t .  A n d  t h e  l a n g u a g e  
s i m p l e  
s o m e t h i n g  t h e  f o r e s t  f o l k  c a n  
un d e r s t a n d .  
I  a m  n o t  s p e a k i n g  t o  K i n g s ,  t o  
A n t i y o k a  
and  M e g a  o r  A l i k a s u d r a . (56-64) 

H e r e  t h e  p o e t  t o o  h a s  a  n  u r g e  t o  i l l u s t r a t e  t h e  
t h e o r y  o f  p o e t i c  b e a u t y .  L e t  t h e  l a n g u a g e  o f  h i s  
m e s s a g e  b e  t h a t  o f  c o m m o n  m e n .  L e t  a l l  t h e  t r a v e l e r s  
learn  l e s s o n  o f  e t h i c a l  v a l u e s  t h a t  t h e  k i n g  h a s  l e a r n t  
with  t h i s  b l o o d s h e d .  B l o o d  i s  c o s t l y  a n d  i t s  s t e n c h  
d o e s  n o t  w i t h e r  a w a y  e v e n  i f  h a n d s  a r e  w a s h e d  w i t h  
A r a b i a n  p e r f u m e s .

Here Keki N. Daruwalla takes an incident from ancient Indian history and condemns imperialism. There is no place for imperialism in the present world though neo-colonialism has established deep roots in several countries.

In the poem *The Ghaghra in Spate* he describes the flood scenes as created by the river. It is put in the category of the Ganges, the Yamuna, the Narmada etc. Yet it causes havoc in the lives of the people who live on its banks. Actually it has become a normal routine with these poor people to witness scenes of flood every year:

And through the village
the Ghaghra steers her course;
thatch and dung-cakes turn to river-scum,
a buffalo floats over to the rooftop
where the men are stranded.
Three days of hunger, and her udders
turn red-rimmed and swollen
with milk-extortion. (31-38)
Children don’t lose their cheerfulness these days and the matured people had stopped offering prayers to God for security. Why to offer prayers ‘to a wasted sky’? (45) The poet says:

Children have spirit enough in them
to cheer the rescue boats;
the men are still-life subjects
oozing wet looks.
They don’t rave or curse
for they know the river’s slang, her argot.
No one sends up prayers to a wasted sky,
for prayers are parabolic
they will come down with a plop anyway.
Instead there’s a slush-stampede
outside the booth
where they are doling out salt and grain. (39-50)

When the water recedes on the banks of this river, a lot of diseases spread in the villages. The poet uses the words — 'frenzy', 'havoc', 'pain',
'conspiracy' etc. though the water is useful for paddy fields.

In the poem *The Parijat Tree* the poet admits that the deserted Pandavas came to the banks of Ghaghra river. There are no huge temples on its banks. He fails to understand as to why the Pandavas, selected this place for shelter? —

Why did they come here at all?

the Ghaghra doesn't flow
down the valley of the kings.

Goatherds in the marshes salt-workers
on the flats
Melon-growers on the sands and on the
river fishermen
Spearing and netting fish. (16-21)

Then he recollects the existence of mythological Parijat tree here, so famous for Lord Krishna's love for it. As it is tree-god, the Pandavas came here:

Parijat tree

The implausible extravagance
In the outcrop of your limbs,
Your retrospective moods
The light in your aisles —
The smile of the Bodhisattva —
Speak of timelessness or the dawn of
time
Of peace beyond the regions of the
blood
And the days of the tree-god. (34-41)

As a supporter of marginalized people he describes the helplessness of the beggars in the poem *The Beggar*. Seasons change and bring no light for him. The system of political parties changes but alas! The beggar survives in the same miserable condition:

He just sits there, while time
wheels round him like a kite.
It is incarnations that come to him.
He sits there, with the same
Tired light in his eyes
Turning opaque.
Maggots, moments, worms
crawl like changing seasons.
He is a straw Buddha with sperm.

(17-25)

With the passage of time he makes compromise with his destiny.

In the poem *Ecce Homo* he offers prayers to Lord Christ as He is worshipped in the whole world by many races. Still He is found hanging on the cross and there is no limit to His agonies. Yet He is the symbol of truth, mercy, charity, generosity, righteousness, fortitude, compassion etc. The Christmas tree is ever fertile and fresh. The poet accepts His eternal mercy:

But I would go about it
in a different way.
First I'd mark a tree
Fluent with muscle
with limbs transverse
and on the form
nail a splay-winged Christ
— a tiny statuette. (19-26)
In the poem *Elegy I* the poet feels bewildered as the sudden accident of a young man creates many questions in his mind. The words of this dead man have no meaning now and yet the poet finds himself uneasy:

Your words
and my memories of them
turn meaningless, unreal now;
year absence is so irrefutable.

There were more gestures to your hands
than I have words. (18-23)

The poet recollects the 'sharpness' of his 'voice' and then his 'moods'. Now he realizes:

Your death was a state of mind
Before it even touched the body.

But I who saw the black snow flake by flake
am not so certain of things now.

(31-35)
In the poem *The Poseidonians* the poet describes the change that the Greeks feel while living with the Tyrrhenians or Romans. Their customs, manners, rituals etc. have changed in the last three centuries. Quite often they remember the customs of their ancestors. But in vain! Yet they observe a Greek festival together and recollect their memory. In the presence of everybody they lament loudly for what they have lost. With tears in their eyes they go away. They don’t care for the heat of the sun and the cold winds of the hills. Women and soldiers also join them. They are faithful and good people. Quite often they fail to distinguish between mother and daughter so far as the names of goddesses are concerned. Almost a new language emerges when they express their feeling of loss. After nearly three hundred years they accept the role of language as mere words are not enough:

... they discover there is more to language

than merely words, that every act,

from making wine to making love

filters through a different prism of sound,

and they have forgotten the land they set sail from
and the syllables that seeded their land. (26-31)

Yet they feel that they are basically Greeks:

What do they do, except once a year
at a lyre - and - lute festival,
Greek to the core, with dance and contest,
grope for memories in the blood ...

(32-35)

The poet adds:

And weep a little for the Greece they have lost ... (38)

It is a pity that the Greeks have been barbarized by the Romans.

As mentioned in the first chapter, Postmodernism is allied with Post-colonialism. In the poem The Glass-blower, he describes the process of glass industry. The chemical engineer knows the technique of converting the glass pieces into glass
goods. The small pieces of glass are converted after having melted them with heat in the boiler. The poet says that the chemical engineer's forefathers were alchemists and sublimators and prepared goods with zinc and lead. With the blessings of God they got success in their mission. Now pieces of glass have melted and final shape is to be given to them. The poet has the image of a child in his mind — the boy breathes into the hole of iron pipe and creates bubbles from the soap-water. A few questions arise here — Are human beings merely bubbles? Is their life short-lived? Is there no substance in them? How long will this process continue? Does God want only insubstantial human beings? The poet expresses the words — 'they aspired to mysticism'. (12-13) Here the poet refers to a boy in 'tattered vest' (22) and he blows the iron blower with his breath. There is a bubble in the boiler at the other end of the pipe. The poet says:

A blob ballooned
at the pipe's other end and froze into shape. (31-32)

As he is disgusted with the demerits of modern industrialization, he mentions the 'smell of burnt resin', 'fossil gum', and 'just-fallen lightning' (33-
Nobody cares for the effect of lightning in the boiler as the engineer succeeds in giving shape to hot glasses. To the poet this is all 'glorious deception' in the names of production and 'perception'. Such process goes on in several industries in the name of scientific progress and that too at the cost of human life. In a bitter mood he says:

The first time men saw this state of mist,
this veil that veiled nothing — O glorious deception —
and glass cool into color of space, did they cry out
'This is no object, it is thought, perception!' (37-40)

In the poem Map-Maker the poet asserts the well known theory — 'God made man and he made the town'. The poet asks several questions in this poem such as — What is the aim of the voyager? How long will the people quarrel in the name of national boundaries? Why are people differentiated in the names of caste and continents? Do the map-makers not create divisions in the nation? Who has
learnt the lesson of non-violence from the battle of Kalinga? Is it not enough to learn ethical lesson from the two world wars? Has the sea not put a dividing line among nations? Is it not the proper time for 'looking for something' else (5)? For example, India has her own map of Chinese border but the authorities of China government show a different map of the same place. Similarly the problem of Kashmir valley has created three maps — one with India, second with Pakistan and the third one with the natives of the valley as Independent country. Let the travellers travel anywhere without any restrictions of visa and currency. As a Post-colonial poet he wants 'clarity of a dream' as various controversies appear to be mere illusion. Why to fight with the feelings of mine and thine? Long ago India was a large country with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka etc. as her parts. But with the passage of time 'map-lines' have been drawn as ghosts dividing her. Even glaciers and desert areas have been divided among nations by the map-makers. In a disgusted mood the poet asks —

Does the world need maps, where sign and symbol,
standing as proxies, get worked into scrolls?
You see them, mountain chains with raingods in their armpits
And glaciers locked like glass-slivers in their folds. (15-18)

He feels restless with the divisions and fails to understand the man-made barriers among people:

Desert, scrub, pasture — do they need shading?
They're all there for the eye to apprehend.
A family of cactus and camel thorn tells you
Where one begins and other ends.

(19-22)

Who can divide thunder and the tempest? Who can divide the vision of God? Who can really divide the water of rains? He advises people of the world to get rid of narrow national prejudices and communal tensions as they are merely human beings. God has still hidden many secrets of birth and death, earth and next birth etc. The poet aptly says:
Forget markings, forget landfall and sea.

Go easy Man, I tell myself; breathe.

Gulls will mark the estuary for you,
Bubbles will indicate what the swamps seethe. (29-32)

There is a fear in his mind — If the map-lines are strictly followed, wrinkles will appear on the faces of people. These wrinkles will kill the feelings of love, harmony, unity, affection etc. After all, the meaning of order and discipline should not be exaggerated by the supporters of division. All these divisions appear merely 'barbarized border'. (36)
This is high time for people to understand the difference between love and hate, falsehood and truth, violence and non-violence, good and evil etc.

The poet blames the lust of politicians for these divisions. The big states are being divided into three/four states as the design of lustful politicians is successful. Such desires have got to be suppressed with love:

Reefes one can handle. It's lust that seeks
out its quarry that one cannot map, nor that

heaving salt of desire that floods the creeks. (40-42)

Earth is given different 'form' though God never wants such barriers among people of the world. Let there be eternal season of love. Let there be harmony between reason and faith. Another millennium has ended and the time has come to listen 'the voice of reason'. Let there be love for neighbours and the people living in other continents should not be ignored in the name of politics. He wants to draw the horoscope of whole mankind and not prepare map of any particular nation:

I put a clamp on yearning, shun latitudes, renounce form. (51)

Here the poet has a keen desire to get rid of all national prejudices and live in a new world without any divisions. He hates bloodshed at every stage:

And turn my eye to the far kingdom
of bloodless Kalinga battling with a storm.
Dampen your fires, turn from lighthouse, spire, steeple.

Forget maps and voyaging, study instead

This parched earth horoscope of a brown people. (52-56)

In the poem *Replies To The Questionnaire* Keki N. Daruwalla wishes for a feedback about his poems and says:

One does lack a real public — at least that is what a man like me would feel, living in outlandish places. There is little feedback from readers which, I think, is absolutely essential. Appreciation abroad, of course, does please, but so does appreciation at home — only it is so much harder to come by. (138)

In the same vein he expresses the importance of recreating things with his passion and accepts the importance of words:
He (a poet) acquires the right of changing or re-creating through the strength of his passion, his emotional immediacy. What is important is that the thing he wants to say must be powerful enough. Poetry, after all, is a state of feeling which has got to be explored and expressed. At times, the exploration itself is done by means of words ... (139)

Regarding a few particular poems of Night River Asha Viswas remarks:

The world of Night River is a world of intuitions, premonitions, dreams and reverie. The conscious mind, with all its logic, sits moiled in the backyard which the subconscious, equipped with its own logic, takes over. (68)

The poet makes use of the stream of consciousness technique in Dream Log, The Room, The House, Melons etc. He is seriously interested in his dreams and conveys the feelings of his inner-most core. In the beginning of Dream Log he admits:
I look in the black mirror-river
and cannot find my face.
Where could it have gone?
A search is always a tense affair.
Suppose, at the end of it
there is nothing left to find. (1-6)

He hopes the mist will find out the loss. Then
he associates mist with spirit. But in vain! He fails
to find his face:

I say aloud to no one in particular,
if I can't find my face
let the mist find it,
let the river find it,
let the spirit of the mountains find it.

(14-18)

In the poem The Room he looks towards the
river and finds several unknown people. He is almost
seeing a dream, far away from reality:

I'm on a hill in a large room
with only three walls.
The architect wanted it that way,
the missing wall opening up
to a vista that overlooks the river.
But I can see nothing. (1-6)

In the poem Melons he expresses the same
feeling as everything seems dark around him. He says:

I am looking for melons.
'you'll find vendors
Sitting by the river
With heaps of them'.
It's the same old story —
I seem to find nothing. (10-15)

Quite often he expresses his personal worries in
such dream poems. His rejection and suppression
result in pain. Like Freud, he tries to interpret his
dreams. In the end of poem Sidelines he confesses:

Live on the fringe, but die at the
centre.
A good aphorism is one
Which is true on the flip side as well.
So die on the fringe but live at the centre.

But don’t for Pete's sake
live on the fringe and die there too.

(18-23)

In the poem *Small Space* he gropes in darkness and finds nothing:

There is just one small darkness here
and it is not the world's.
It has nothing to do with night
with Ishtar's journey through the underworld.
Eclipse and blackouts are not part of it.
It is so small
That at times
I grope for this patch of darkness ...

(1-9)

Keki N. Daruwalla can be admired for his creative powers. As he studied a lot of poets, he had wonderful critical sense too. In the poem *The Trouble With Reviewing Seth* he mentions the
qualities of critic as the latter makes best ideas prevail in society. He says:

A critic needs a sense of space.
He doesn't just review a book,
but music too, verse in abstract,
tradition lurking in each nook.
But still if I go on and on
I know that my goose is cooked.

(69-74)

In the poem *Through a Row of Doors* he mentions the miseries of Russian poets who had to suffer a lot during the totalitarian regime of Stalin. No liberty of expression was granted in the Communist rule. The poems of Osip Mandelstern were analyzed to understand his political intentions and ambitions:

They go through his poems
looking for those bullets disguised as words.
This fear is lethal,
the word turning to lead.
You could aim at any forehead,
Fire from any line, resting your muzzle
on the sandbag of stanza.
This the Cheka always knew:
The rhyme as cartridge,
The poem as musket. (48-57)

The Russian poets were punished according to
the whims of political leaders. Quite often they were
tortured or exiled. The poet says:

That would be great — it could just lead to exile.
Who was afraid of exile?
A Jew in St. Petersburg, or Moscow
Was a bit of an exile, anyway.
A poet who stood by his feelings
Was always an exile in Stalin's Russia.
They hadn't got hold
of that other thing, had they?
Because that could have lead
to a chat with the firing squad.

(100-109)
Thus, Keki N. Daruwall's poems are a 'criticism of life'. Like Matthew Arnold, he attaches due importance to poetic truth and poetic beauty. Secondly, his poems answer the question — How to live? Thirdly, he follows Edward Said's theory and makes the readers think on several social, political and economic issues. Like Tennyson, he accepts that 'old order changeth yielding place to new'. Fourthly, his range is wide as he writes on the ugliness of life. Like T.S. Eliot, he deals with the complexities of life. Fifthly, he is conscious of the power of words and uses them carefully. In many poems the reader finds that he enters into his unconscious and subconscious mind with the help of conscious mind. His dreams are important for him. Like Shiv K. Kumar, he deals with the realities of post-colonial society.
WORKS CITED


