Abstract

Indian English Literature in the post 80's begins to flourish and becomes popular among many other new literatures. So many poets came into this period and among them Keki.N.Daruwalla is one of them. A close look into his poetry shows that his poetry is full of original thought with profundity, rich in subject matters, deep sound feeling, lucid and precise language. Not only this, but also we can trace socio-cultural and socio-political condition of India. A fine mixture of contemporary style with Romantic, modern and Victorian style and thought are also found in his poetry. He deals with so many themes in his poetry and his global thinking in local context takes him closer to his readers. But like many other Indian English Poets he also faces the same problem, the problem of alienation, rootlessness and cultural dilemma. As a result search for root and identity is obvious for him also. In this paper I have tried to show the rootlessness, sense of alienation and search for identity as seen in some of his poetry. And he shows these as universal problems and thus becomes the spokesperson for that human being.

1. Introduction

After a long experiment and struggle for innovation, tradition and imitation, Indian English Poetry reaches to a new status where development and growth of this literature go simultaneously. But among the era of Post colonialism, colonialism and imperialism still show its effect. And still modern man is helpless, alienated and rootless after their encounter with reality. As a result he becomes passive, emotionless, psychologically inactive and restrained. They have lost their identity and after the realization of it, they start to discover his root and identity. So many Indian English Poets face the same problem and Daruwalla is no more exception in this case. All these are found mainly in Winter Poems (1980) and partially in The Keeper of the Dead (1982) and Landscapes (1987).
2. Objective of Review

In this modern world, everyone is doing competition with one another for better status and position. But in doing so, man is now facing a crisis because he is not listening to his inner voice. He is now only imitating and this create identical crisis, rootlessness and he becomes helpless. He is in a dilemma what to follow and what to leave. He is in a helpless condition. He is now passive and restrained in psychological terms. He is now going backwards to the realm of darkness, alienation after his vain encounter with reality. He is now handicapped morally, physiologically, emotionally and spiritually. All the poets are also belong to the human being and they are no more exception in it. So many poets want to show this present condition of human being in their poetry. Keki.N.Daruwalla also has done the same thing. In this paper I want to show how he has shown all these in his poetry. Actually the main objective to this review of Daruwalla is nothing but to make us aware about the current situation and this will also help us to a certain extent to realize the source of it. Also through this review I want to highlight this naked truth and also a kind of hope about how we should deal with it.

3. Condition Of Modern Man And Daruwalla’s Vision

Daruwalla in his poems becomes the voice of modern man and wants to show their problems. In the same time he also deals with his own identical crisis and cultural dilemma. Man’s excess attachment with Western culture often makes him stranger to his own culture and to even himself. And at some point of time, he is sure to suffer from alienation, separation and loneliness. He then finds himself lonely among even crowds and in this condition it is very difficult to find appropriate poetic faculty to express inner thought and feelings. Darkness, fear and sense of disillusion are then become obstacle in thought process as these all capture one’s mind. In that condition, he turns towards religion but finds that his religious identity is also under crisis and scrutiny as he is surrounded by other religion and cultures. In ‘Through A Row of Doors’ he wants to show these as here A Jew discovers himself dislocated in other religion and in other city like Russia. In that condition to live among Christians is synonyms of exile condition as he belongs to ‘Minority Church Persecution’. Here are the lines:

“Who was afraid of exile?
A Jew in St. Petersburg, or Moscow
was a bit of exile, anyway.” (Through a Row of Doors)

In his ‘Winter Poem’, he shows that we are devoid of vitality and life is here nothing but a introvert condition of deprivation. He shows how the man along with their children becomes skeletal like figure. He compared this condition with a leafless tree:

“The tree is now all bark and bough
leafless twigs scratch
against the glass
like skeletal children
scribbling on a slate,
chalk-figured.” (Winter Poem)
Actually he is in a dilemma as what to follow the past or the present. Man is always haunted by his glorious past and compares it with present. And hence he finds that present is not so good as his past. He becomes frustrated and fear cross his mind. Daruwalla wants to show this typical condition in these following lines:

“I heard the thick waters of your dreams
lap the shores of your night:
behind your rhinestone eyes
flickered a flame of terror.”  (Winter Poem)

Sometimes it becomes tough to accept present situation and condition. He always wants to forget past and wants to fulfill his present demands. But the failure to do it haunts him till the end of his life. Here Daruwalla becomes the voice of these helpless frustrated common people and thus says:

“but you tucked the dream
within the sleeve of your body.
It lies coffined in your psyche.”  (Winter Poem)

In his ‘Nativity Poem’ from ‘Map Maker’, his sense of rootlessness is shown. Alienation and exile are found as he sometimes can’t match himself with other cultural ideologies. In this poem, he fails to identify his roots and therefore he wants to identify himself with Bethlehem, the wider community in general. Also his passing thirty long years and his attempt to acquaint that culture are found expression in these lines:

“For thirty years I have been
living with the Philistines,
and our people of the word,
worshipping Jehovah, our Lord.
But don’t ask me Mr Scribe
to which of Israel’s tribes
I belong. Suffice it then
to say I am from Bethlehem.”  (Nativity Poem)

In his ‘Migration’, again he wants to how rootlessness. He is in such a condition of cultural dilemma and loss that even his mother’s face is somewhat blurred in his memory. Actually he is tired in shifting and migration and as a result, family and all familiar incidents become obsolete in his memory. Long distance relation sometimes hard to maintain and along with it migration add a communication gap between relationship of a mother and a son. Hence it causes a sense of rootlessness, alienation and impassivity. He says all these in the following lines:

“Mother used to ask, don’t you remember my mother?
You’d be in the kitchen all the time
and run with the fries she landed out,
still sizzling on the plate.
Don’t you remember her at all?
Mother’s fallen face
would fall further
at my impassivity.” (Migrations)

One can’t live without family, relation and when alienation and loneliness come, it becomes tough for one to overcome it. Strange, peculiar and queer feelings cross one’s mind at that time. In his ‘Winter Poems’, he attempts to show exactly these kinds of feelings:

“We have come of age
those who grew with us
have started dying.” (Winter Poems)

Actually he is forced to bear such sense of alienation and detachment. Often it comes as a result of one’s own choice of living. Like other Indian English Poets, he realizes the reason for it and wants to utter the sermon of detachment to come out from the world of nothingness. As he says:

“and this grudging acceptance
from the heart we need like
glutinous mick from the
lanced poppy- that nothing but nothing
belongs to us.
Let’s adjust to shifts of light
and shifts of shadow.” (Winter Poems)

Daruwalla in such condition says that even imagination betrays us. We are not in a position to express us, our problems our inner crisis before others. Words are very hard to combine as our thoughts are engulfed by our alienation and fear issuing out of identity crisis. Even when the poet is going to show it he feels the same crisis in imagination and thought process. Here the poet says:

“and the forest of imagination
like the forest of the earth,
turning to deserts;
and the skies closing in
like claustrophic mist.” (Winter Poems)

Not only we have seen the struggle to retain religious and cultural identity in Daruwalla’s poetry but also we have seen rootlessness due to diasporic sensibilities. Further more, he is in different kinds of dilemmas and his oscillations of movement and between natural and artificial, belief and doubts, guilt and lust make the condition bitter and worse. In his ‘The Keeper of the Dead’, he has shown these:

“While we oscillate between the fires of lust and
guilt seeking our refuge in those air tight
air conditioned pharmacies of the heart
where the antidotes to the guilt are being prepared.”
(The Keeper of the Dead)

Daruwalla at first points out the position of man and his search for identity and on the other hand wants to point out also his helpless condition. Actually we are now devoid of affection, care and love. Pain, sorrow, alienation and detachment are now common to them. So always we are seeking for our root and identity. As he says in ‘Winter Poems’:

“Something to make the cross roads less cruel
something to hold back
the seething tide of memory…” (Winter Poems)

Throughout his search for root and identity, he compares past and present position. He wants to explore the source of man’s alienation, rootlessness and detachment and finds that too much emphasis on artificial and mechanical needs, man loses his love and life. Sometimes Daruwalla shows their lot along with himself:

“I quiver with flab and fatigue, bad reflexes and bad faith
yet across my jaded appetites a longing reaches out.”
(The Keeper of the Dead)

4. Conclusion

So, in the concluding lines it can be said that alienation from other national and cultural point of view, rootlessness and its cause, diasporic problems because of transmigration, quest for identity find poignant expression in the poetry of Daruwalla. Actually through these issues, he also wants to show his concern for society and socio-cultural issue in an objective way. But he is not at all successful as now man has accepted all these naked truth as it is tough for him to find his root. And what Daruwalla says about them is really true as they accepted their condition:

“The solitudes are beneath us now
of ice, of desert, of corrugated cloud.” (Landscapes)

5. References: