

**Indian Poetry in English**  
**Prof. Binod Mishra**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee**

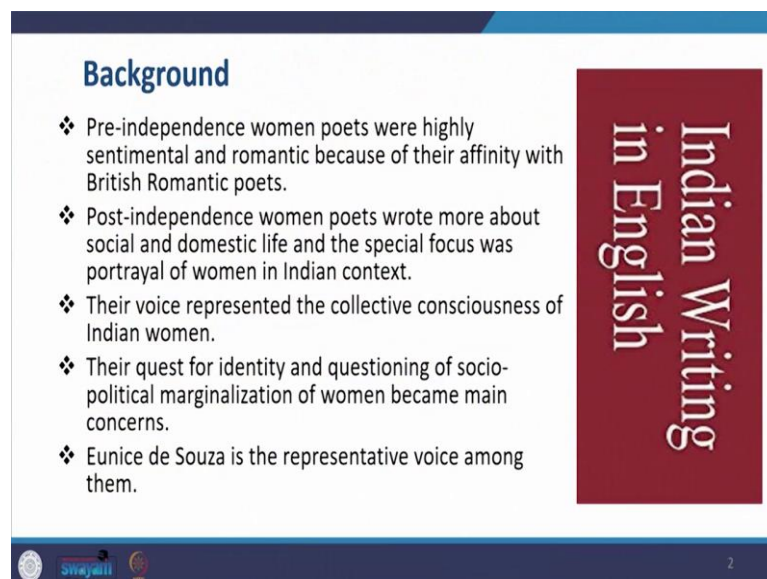
**Lecture - 24**  
**Eunice de Souza**

Good morning friends and welcome back to online lectures on Indian Poetry in English and I do hope that all of you are enjoying these NPTEL online lectures on Indian Poetry in English by me. My dear friends, we have already come a long way, we have already discussed different categories or different classifications of Indian English poetry. And, today we are going to start a new phase and we can call that postmodern Indian English poetry.

But, curiously enough in this phase we shall be taking up some contemporary Indian English poets and the poets that I have chosen for this section majority of them are women poets. So, today I am going to begin one very significant, very celebrated struggling and also an established voice namely that of Eunice de Souza.

But, before we go into the nitty- gritty of post modern Indian English poetry, let us also see what was the background and in which way did these Indian English women poets contribute to the making of Indian poetry in English a different at the same time a distinct voice.

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**Background**

- ❖ Pre-independence women poets were highly sentimental and romantic because of their affinity with British Romantic poets.
- ❖ Post-independence women poets wrote more about social and domestic life and the special focus was portrayal of women in Indian context.
- ❖ Their voice represented the collective consciousness of Indian women.
- ❖ Their quest for identity and questioning of socio-political marginalization of women became main concerns.
- ❖ Eunice de Souza is the representative voice among them.

**Indian Writing in English**

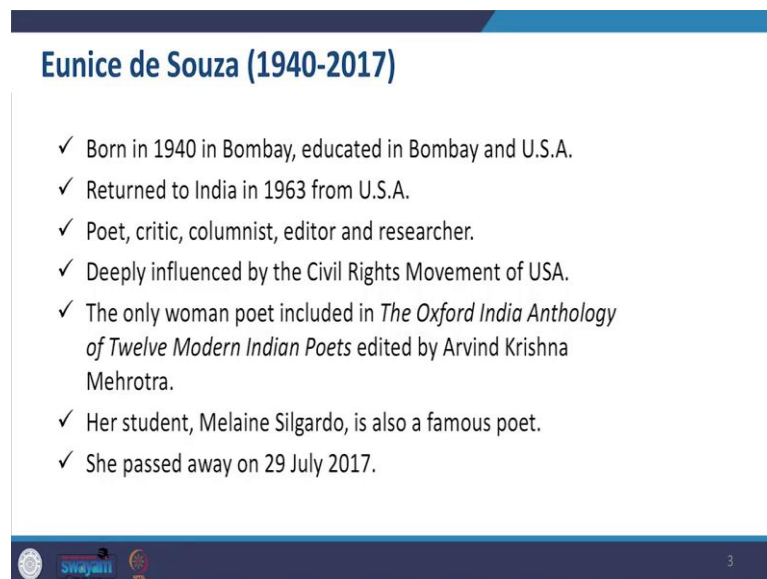
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So, let us talk about the background. We have already discussed how pre- independent women poets were soaked in sentimentality, fine? They were sentimental, some of them were also very romantic because, majority of them imitated British Romantic poets. And, then after this I mean the post-independence Indian English poets and especially these women poets actually wrote more about social and domestic life. And, the special focus was portrayal of women in Indian context.

We have already discussed the condition of women even in other ages, we have also talked about the diasporic Indian English poetry. And, now when we are going to discuss the contemporary scenario, we find the portrayal of women in the present day Indian English poetry's context. So, in this regard, the voices of these poets can be considered to be a sort of representative voice of the collective consciousness of Indian women.

It is not about only the new women, but these women poets they actually represented the collective consciousness of majority of Indian women. Of course, when we talk about that, the question of identity comes into force. So, majority of these poets-- their quest for identity and questioning of socio-political marginalization of women became their pet subjects. Now, in this regard where did Eunice de Souza stand and what was her position? So, Eunice de Souza is a representative voice among these women poets.

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**Eunice de Souza (1940-2017)**

- ✓ Born in 1940 in Bombay, educated in Bombay and U.S.A.
- ✓ Returned to India in 1963 from U.S.A.
- ✓ Poet, critic, columnist, editor and researcher.
- ✓ Deeply influenced by the Civil Rights Movement of USA.
- ✓ The only woman poet included in *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets* edited by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra.
- ✓ Her student, Melaine Silgado, is also a famous poet.
- ✓ She passed away on 29 July 2017.

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Of course, because we are talking about Eunice de Souza all of us would like to know what was her background, where did she take birth, what were her educational

background? My dear friends, De Souza was born in 1940, she was born in pre-independent India, but she saw more of post-independent India. And, she was born in Mumbai and she also got her education not only in Mumbai, but in USA as well.

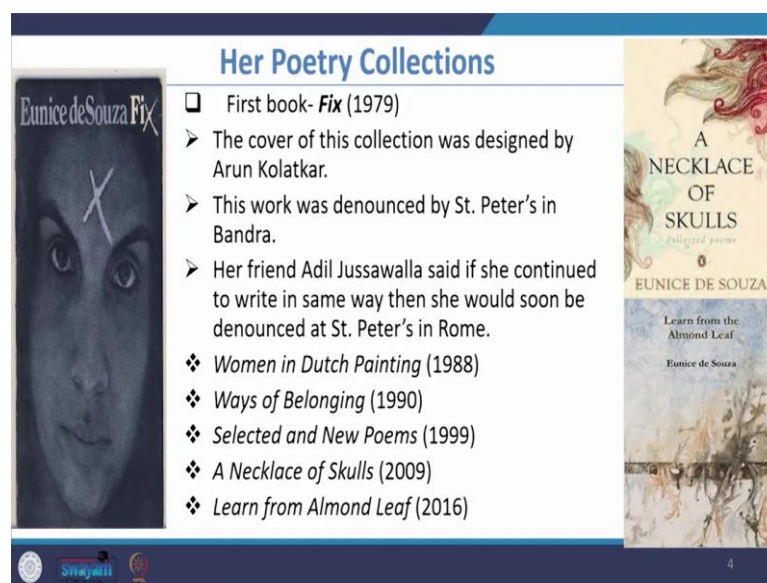
She also had a brief stint of teaching career in England and then she returned to India in 1963 from USA. Now, Eunice de Souza is a poet, critic, columnist, editor and researcher. You will rather be surprised to note that when Indian writing in English began, many women poets also contributed and not only poets, but novelists, writers as well. And, earlier we had been talking about R Parthasarathy's, you know, anthology of Twentieth Century.

But, it is quite surprising that there was not the mention of Eunice de Souza though she had done a lot. So, in this regard, credit goes to A K Mehrotra who in his own anthology *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets*; he actually included Eunice de Souza. And, she was the only one, she was the only women's voice included in *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian English Poets*.

Of course, one of her students, Melaine Silgado, is also a very famous poet. This poetess Eunice de Souza passed away on 29th of July 2017. So, having understood the background of Eunice de Souza, now it is time to know what did she work on, what were her poetry collections. And, then did she because we have already mentioned that she was not only a poet, but she was a writer, a columnist, a short story writer.

So, the very first book that Eunice de Souza wrote or her first poetry collection was entitled *Fix*. Actually, Eunice de Souza came from Goa and this first book *Fix* can be considered and many of the editors have considered this *Fix* as snapshot of memory. Snapshot of memory which includes majority of the experiences that Eunice de Souza experienced as a growing lady, as a growing women poet. There is also an attack on religiosity in this collection that is *Fix*.

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**Her Poetry Collections**

- ❑ First book- **Fix** (1979)
  - The cover of this collection was designed by Arun Kolatkar.
  - This work was denounced by St. Peter's in Bandra.
  - Her friend Adil Jussawalla said if she continued to write in same way then she would soon be denounced at St. Peter's in Rome.
- ❖ *Women in Dutch Painting* (1988)
- ❖ *Ways of Belonging* (1990)
- ❖ *Selected and New Poems* (1999)
- ❖ *A Necklace of Skulls* (2009)
- ❖ *Learn from Almond Leaf* (2016)

The slide includes three book covers: 'Fix' (a dark face with a white 'X' on the forehead), 'A NECKLACE OF SKULLS' (a yellow cover with a red skull), and 'Learn from the Almond Leaf' (a blue cover with a tree). The Swajathi logo is at the bottom left, and the number 4 is at the bottom right.

And you know the cover of this beautiful book was designed by none other than Arun Kolatkar, who was himself a very rational and a very celebrated poet. This work because of its attack on religiosity was also denounced by Saint Peter's in Bandra. In fact, Adil Jussawalla one of de Souza's friend said if she continued to write in the same way, then the day is not far when she will be denounced even from Saint Peter's in Rome.

Actually, de Souza was not soaked too much in too much in religiosity rather a rational hurt always craved for bringing things to light. I mean there were quite a good account of suffering that de Souza had also suffered and on the part of de Souza in particular and women in general, de Souza actually got the opportunity to express all these things through her writings.

Next to that came *Women in Dutch Painting* which actually is a bit different from *Fix*, it has got varied landscapes, then came *Ways of Belonging* in 1990. So, you can understand from the title itself, that it could be a sort of existential search and then followed by this was *Selected and New Poems*, then *A Necklace of Skulls* and *Learn from Almond*. So, these are her poetry collections, but as de Souza was not confined only to a poetry, she had some other works also to her credit.


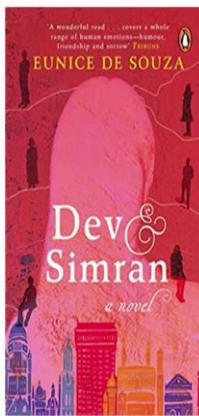
Namely two novels entitled *Dangerlok*, then *Dev and Simran*, and then two anthologies also. You know, one of the very significant pieces of information is that de Souza because she was not included in R Parthasarathy's anthology and she was the only one to

be included in Mehrotra's anthology what she did, she herself compiled and anthologized one *Nine Indian Women Poets*; where there are nine women poets' voices and majority of these poets are quite good.

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### Her Other Works

- Two Novels:-
  - Dangerlok*** (2001)
  - Dev and Simran*** (2003)
- Two well-recognized anthologies:-
  - ***Nine Indian Women Poets***
  - ***The Penguin Book of Indian Poetry***, collaborated with Melaine Silgado
- Written four books of folk-tales for children
- Also wrote for *Bombay Chronicles*

And, it can be considered to be a sort of response to the anthologies which were actually dominated by celebrities and majority of them being males. Actually, she has also written four books of folk-tales and she also used to write for *Bombay Chronicles* because, she was a columnist, my dear friends.

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### General Themes of Her Poetry

- Self-revelation and Confession
- Family, Marriage and Relationship
- Love and Sexuality
- Detachment
- Self-doubt and Self-criticism
- Feminine Sensibility
- Attack on dogmatic religion, patriarchal framework
- Domestic life of Indian Women
- Existential Search

Now, you might be interested to know as to what could have been the themes of her poetry. De Souza, being a woman, naturally when a woman poet writes, she takes up the issue of women and de Souza also was not an exception. One can find a detailed description or a detailed mention of the feminine sensibility throughout her works.

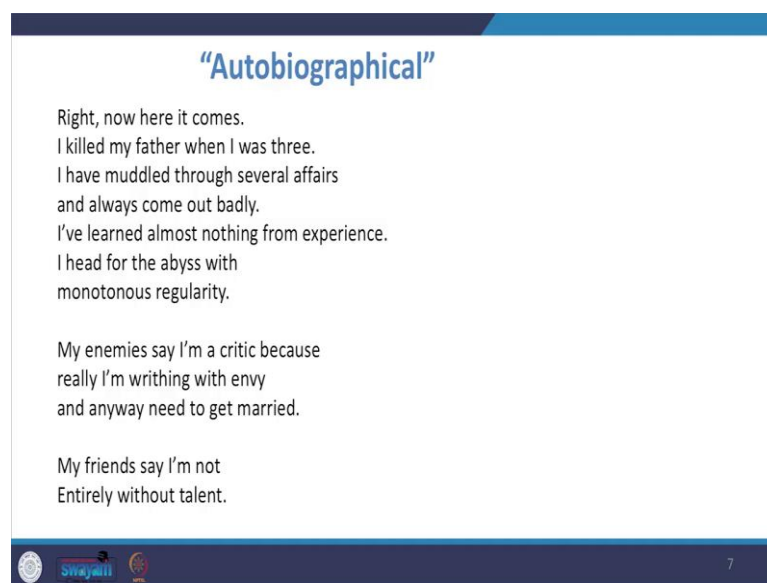
And, there are many poems where you can find a sort of self-revelation and confession, then she also talks about marriage, family and then relationship, love and sexuality is also a part of de Souza's poetic oeuvre.

But, at times one can also find a sort of detachment while she is struggling for her own self, she is actually trying to make a sort of existential enquiry and anguish. So, from time to time we can find a sort of attack on dogmatic religions and this patriarchal framework which has actually been a pet theme for majority of the women poets. And, then the domestic life of Indian women gets a lot of space in de Souza's world; for all these one cannot deny the fact that even though as a woman, de Souza was on a sort of existential search, my dear friend.

We shall take up some of the poems of de Souza in order to understand the nuances, the depth of de Souza's world and as to what she used to say. So, in this regard we can find as we have already said that de Souza also had in her poetry a good amount of self-revelations.

It appears in many poems that the poet herself is the narrator and when the poet herself or himself is the narrator, the tone becomes very autobiographical. Like all modern poets de Souza also does not confine herself to any traditional methods of meter and rhyme and all, but then there is a sort of flow in de Souza's world that we can find when we come across the lines of de Souza.

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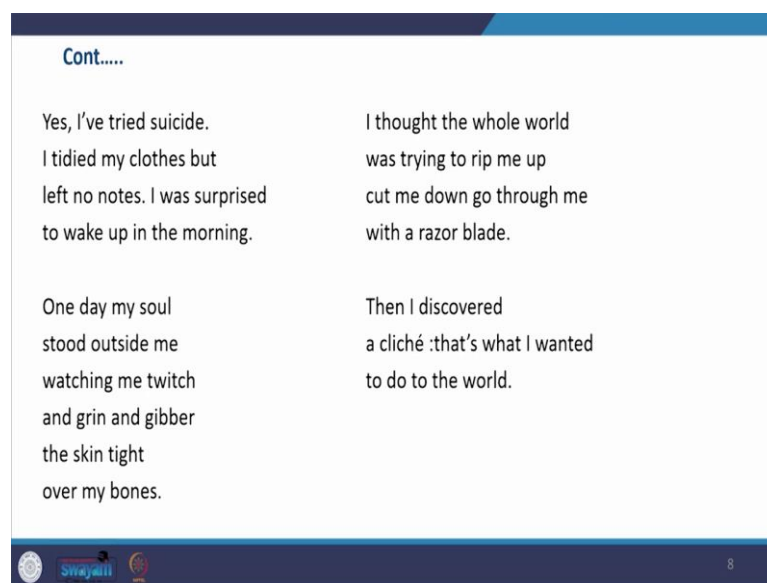
So, first let us take some of the points from our very first collection that is entitled “Autobiographical.” “Autobiographical” is a poem which has been taken from *Fix*, let us read the poem and you know I will not try to impose my views on you rather I would leave it for the readers and the listeners are to find from the lines as to what the words actually relate to and what do they indicate. Let us read the poem.

Right, now here it comes.  
I killed my father when I was three.  
I have muddled through several affairs  
and always come out badly.  
I have learned almost nothing from experience.  
I head for the abyss with  
monotonous regularity.  
My enemies say I am a critic  
because really I am writhing with envy  
and anyway need to get married.

So, you will find in a very subtle way there are attacks on religiosity, you know.

And you know why time and again she used to bring in these topics like marriage, family and all because, there used to be some amount of restrictions and not only in one religion, but in several religions. And of course, de Souza being or de Souza coming from a different you know because she was a Goan and she was from a sort of a Catholic background fine, Christian background rather.

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So, she says: “my friends say I am not entirely without talent,/ they realize that I am not without talent./ Yes, I have tried suicide/ I tidied my clothes but/ left no notes. I was surprised/ to wake up in the morning.” So, when she says wake up one can relate it to the waking up of the consciousness. “One day my soul/ stood outside me/ watching me twitch/ and grin and gibber, /the skin tight over my bones./I thought the whole world/ was trying to rip me up.”

Once you become a rebellion, once you actually start acting against the tides, the entire world will appear to be indifferent to you rather the entire world is upon you. And, and de Souza says was trying to rip me up, ‘cut me down, go through me/ with a razor blade/ then I discovered/ a cliché, that is what I wanted/ to do to the world.”

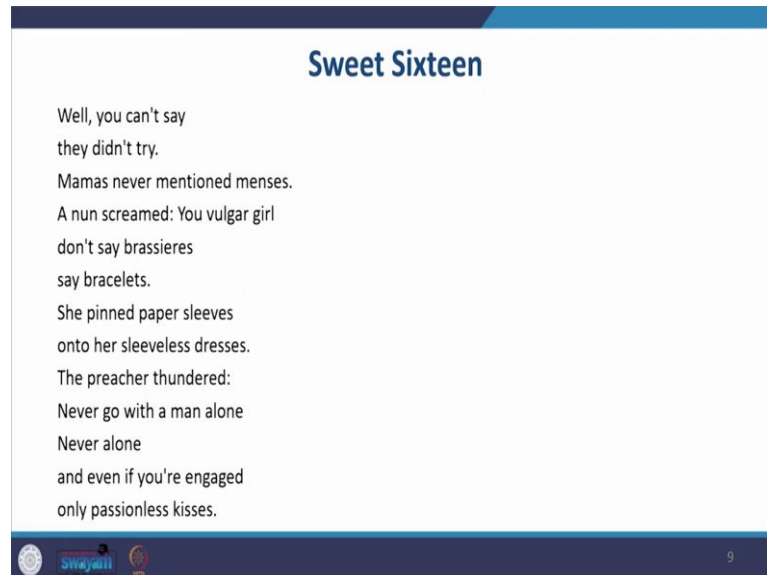
So, I did not want to follow the traditional modes, I did not want to follow a pattern; I had my own pattern because I also wanted to fly like a bird. I also want to have a choice of my own, I also wanted to have my wings, but then traditions always came in and between. Restrictions were always there in my way and that is how in the poem “Autobiographical” she talks.

We can also take some other poems and see how de Souza further goes and describes. So, we take another poem and this poem actually reminds us of a sort of romantic illusion which majority of us have either as a girl or as a boy and the poem has here been titled “Sweet Sixteen.” Now, one can imagine how a girl at the age of 16 can have



imaginations and these romantic imaginations which can be considered to be romantic illusions rather.

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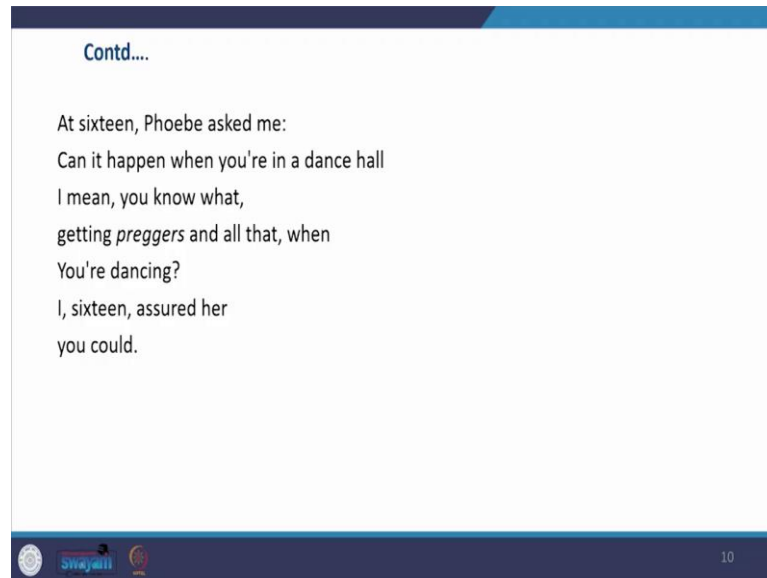
“Well, you cannot say/ they did not try,/ Mamas never mentioned menses,/ a nun screamed you vulgar girl/ do not say brassieres say bracelets.”

Now, how time and again traditions, social conditioning comes in and between you know there are so many things which are not discovered, which are not shared with the growing up children. But, then she says, “she pinned paper sleeves/ onto her sleeveless dresses,/ the preacher thundered/ never go with a man alone/ never alone. Even, if you are engaged/ only passionless kisses.” Now, what we can find here is that even when you are in a sort of at a sort of period in your life when you feel that you are free to have romantic imaginations. But, then restrictions are always there in your way and the traditions always come in and between and put impediments. So, you are not even given a choice, people do not share with you the real things and all.

And, then they always come with a sort of instructions as to never go with the man alone while she is talking about she might be talking about her own self, but then she is actually addressing the entire women folk; how they are always said. And, once they are in religion they are always said never go with a man and even if you are in a relationship please do not go with a man alone, even if you are engaged only passionless kisses. So,

even in a sacred relationship like love what you can simply offer is a sort of passionless kiss.

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“At sixteen, Phoebe asked me,”

Phoebe is a biblical character.

“Can it happen when you are in a dance hall,”

Now see, how when you are enjoying yourself, how when you are in a different condition and how when you are thinking of romantic imaginations and all and when you are celebrating. I mean you know what ‘getting preggers and all that, may be that at times you are carrying something within.

“When you are dancing? I, sixteen assured her you could.” So, as a poet she says that I sixteen assured her you could, meaning thereby I could say that despite all these restrictions you can really have your own choice, you can really think of your own choice. But, then society will always come in and between regularities, regulations, restrictions will always come in and between and will not allow you.

Time and again, in majority of the poems you can find de Souza addressing and making use of the words like I, we, they and all these are very symbolical, they have got certain meanings. When she says ‘I’ not only does she mean I means a woman or women in

general, but when she says they, she actually means the patriarchal order against which she wants to raise her own voice.

Now, when we talk about when you have a look at her poetic numbers, you can find some of the very important characteristic features of her poetry. You can find that her poems are not long, the poems have got a sort of economy of expression. She actually uses words which are very familiar, the endings are very abrupt, very saddened, very sudden and what she excels at is ironic juxtapositions.

She has something to say, she has her own point to make, but how does she make? She will create a sort of ironic juxtaposition. Lyricality is there in terms of meaning and Christian myth abounds in majority of her poems. One can also find de Souza moving from bondage to freedom. So, all sorts of bondage she actually wants to rebel, she actually wants to revolt against.

There is a sort of indecision at times to self-assurance, she wants to assert, but then there is a sort of indecision and it is actually a sort of weakness to her strength. Even though she may not talk of sexuality in a very frank and candid manner, but there is a sort of hidden sexuality. 'I also wanted to marry' in one of the poem she says fine, there is another poem 'marriages are made' and there again there is a remark that marriages are made in heaven.

And, you know in one of the poems what is her age when the girl is going to be married and then she has also to put herself to a test in order to prove in order to prove her own purity and for that she has to undergo several tests, blood tests fine and then there is one line which you will remember. So, that there may not be a seed.

So, that there may not be seed fine, if time permits we will come to that. Now, we have already been saying that de Souza was such a poet who did not confine herself only to a dig taking a dig at religiosity rather she was also struggling for her own self. And, there was a sort of existential search which she also mentions.

We can take a poem from her another collection named "Women in Dutch Painting", where de Souza in the poem actually makes road a metaphorr. Whenever she uses road or many of us who think of road, road actually denotes so many things, freedom,

continuity fine, endlessness. And, then through this road what de Souza actually tries to decipher is as we came out of the church into the sunlight you see into the sunlight.

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**“The Road”**

As we came out of the church into the sunlight a row of small girls in first communion dresses I felt the occasion demanded lofty thoughts.	Nobody said, even the young must live.
I remember only my grandmother smiling at me.	In school I clutched sister flora's skirt and cried for my mother who taught across the road. Sister flora is dead.
They said now she wears lipstick now she is a Bombay girl they said, your mother is lonely.	<u>The school is still standing.</u> <u>I am still learning</u> <u>to cross the road.</u>

(from Women in Dutch Painting)

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So, whenever and she uses this word sunlight, it has got a sort of metaphorical expression: into the sunlight a row of small girls in first communion dresses, I felt the occasion demanded lofty thoughts. So, when you look at the small kids, small children especially girls; now you imagine you think of a beautiful future and you think of some lofty thoughts.

But, then impediments are always there and she further says—“I remember/ only my grandmother/ smiling at me.” So, the grandmother’s smile is a sort of very ambiguous smile, she smiles in order to see what the world is going to and how there is a change how the change is on the anvil. But, at the same times he recalls her own past days when she could not have all these freedoms and then she says they said now.

They who are these they? They are the people of the society with a rigorous sort of attitude, they said now see wears lipstick; society always comes in and between. So, “they said now she wears lipstick,/ now she is a Bombay girl.” So, when she says Bombay girl meaning thereby, she is a metro girl advanced, fine. She does not believe in traditions, ‘they said your mother is lonely.’

So, this loneliness actually suggests so many things because the mother used to teach in a school and that school was under the control of one community and that community perhaps did not allow a lot of freedom. “Nobody said even the young must live’. We all find that majority of the people working in such atmosphere, they either become sisters, fathers whatsoever.

But, then what de Souza tries to say is—“In school/ I clutched sister flora’s skirt/ and cried for my mother/ who taught across the road across the road./ Sister flora is dead./ Now, one sister flora who I clutched because, I wanted to reach my mother. “The school is still standing,/ I am still learning to cross the road.” Now when she refers to the school, the school means a sort of institution, the school means a set of rules, the school means a set of instructions.

And the school still stands, but I am still learning, I as a child as a growing child I as a young child I am still growing to cross the world. My mother could not cross the world and then I simply came to know that my mother is lonely and you know poems after poems, in one of the poems when she talks about loneliness she says that look at the cat. How lonely the cat is, the meekness of the cat is symbolical of the meekness of the women.


And, then she says the cat actually stands for a sort of otherness in terms of love and she says that in love also there is no short of faith, there is no short of there is no short of faithfulness. And, that is why she says that look at the cat how the cat actually is experiencing this sort of otherness fine. We have already been saying that de Souza’s poetic world is full of suffering, full of suffering and then de Souza also tried to bring a sort of change. We have had poems from *Fix--* the first collection. We also had poems from the *Dutch Painting* and then *Ways to Belonging*.




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### Her Later Poetry

***A Necklace of Skulls & Learn from Almond Leaf***

More of Nature imagery:  
"The hills heal as no hand does.  
The heart is stilled by the blue flash  
of a lone jay's wing.  
Impossible to forget, you think,  
the shadows of the sun here ever purple,  
the receding plains where the wind still blows."  
➤ an appreciation of life  
➤ less confrontational  
➤ flow of time  
➤ life and death-  
"The golden orioles have gone  
The warbles are silent.  
The last red leaf on the almond tree  
refuses to fall."



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We can also have a look at her late poetry entitled *A Necklace of Skulls* and *Learn from Almond Leaf*. You see, de Souza is not confined only to women's question rather she also has her eye for nature and then in the later poetry we can find more of nature imagery, more of nature imagery. Because, there is a sort of shelter in the nature, nature can relieve, nature can actually bring a sort of relief from the boredom and the envy.

And, especially for those who feel are the bouts of loneliness, they can really find themselves relapsing in the lap of nature and getting some sort of strength. So, we can take some of the lines from one of our poems where she says the hills heal, look at the musicality. "The hills heal as no hand does,/. It is only the nature that can provide a sort of shelter. It is only the nature that can provide a sort of recuperation, it is only the nature that can provide a sort of relief in this world which is so dominated by men.

In this world where you are so lonely "the hills heal as no hand does,/ the heart is stilled by the blue flash./ So, referring to the sky 'of a lone jay's wing impossible to forget,/ you think the shadows of the sun here ever purple,/ the receding plains where the wind still blows."

We are reminded of Wordsworth who says nature never betrays the heart, that loved it or that it loved. So, here we can find a sort of yearning for life and appreciation of life. Here, the poet is not confrontational, here the poet actually finds a sort of succour in the

beautiful, vibrant atmosphere of nature where the sky and the earth meet and then there is a marriage of true minds.

But, then the marriage in the world is completely different where you yearn for love, but you are not able to earn the love that you deserve. Time which is actually in a flux, it always flows continuously, but nature stands still. And, nature is not as changing as the attitudes of man, as the attitudes of human being on this earth. There are questions of life and death because, this entire world has a sort of mundane you know has a sort of mundane. Because, we all most of the time we live in a sort of ordinary world and out of that ordinary world we never come out. And, this ordinary crass- commercial world love also becomes a commodity only to be vouched for, love only becomes a sort of burden. Love only becomes a sort of prison from which you want to come out. Again, the lines that follow: “The golden orioles have gone,/ the warbles are silent,/ the last red leaf on the almond tree/ refuses to fall, refuses to fall.”

So, there is a continuity in nature and nature is never still, it always observes, it squeezes everything and it actually is always there for people who are lonely, because all their chases have ended only in nature. We can also take a look at some other poems from her later collections where she also attacks on social dogmatisms, dogmas know the blind faiths and all. As I was mentioning when a girl is going to be married; so, how.

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**Themes Explained**

<input type="checkbox"/> Attack on Social Dogmatisms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Love and Relationship
<p>“Her family history examined for T.B. and madness Her father declared solvent, her eyes examined for squints her teeth for cavities, her stools for the possible non- Brahmin worms.”</p> <p>( from Selected Poems,4)</p>	<p>“ Keep cats if you want to learn to cope with the otherness of lovers.... That stare of perpetual surprise in those great green eyes will teach you to die alone.”</p> <p>(Advice to Women)</p>

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So, let us take one poem- some lines from that: “Her family history examined/ for T.B. and madness,/ her father declared solvent,/ her eyes examined for squints,/ her teeth for cavities,/ her stools for the possible/ non-Brahmin worms.” So, how blind how rigid a system can be and there a girl or a woman does not have any choice. She is simply put to test, she is always put to test and not only she, but the her family is also tested.

So, that they are not insolvent because a girl becomes simply a sort of commodity, isn’t it? And, you know the people who are going to pop up the question they always have a lot of expectations and that is why the poet takes a dig on this dogmatism. All love and relationship also she’s very critical, in one of the poems entitled “Advice to Women”. as I said women who are mostly cheated in love, women who are mostly left alone, who are abandoned.

And, the poet says: “Keep cats/ if you want to learn to cope with the otherness/ of lovers...” The indifference of lovers, you always whenever you feel indifferent please look at the cat who is actually a symbol of indifference, but still she is very meek, she actually walks, she always has her own aim and whenever opportunity so demands, she knows where her goal is. She is actually so determined.

“The stare of perpetual surprise,/ the stare of perpetual surprise in those great green eyes;/ There is a musicality also. ‘will teach you to die alone.’ It is better to die alone than to be cheated in love, to feel this sort of indifference, to feel this sort of callousness my dear friend. And that is what is from the poem which is entitled “Advice to Women.” Actually, when we think of several themes which are prevalent in de Souza’s poetic world; we can find that domesticity or the domestic life and sexuality have actually taken more space in de Souza’s world.

And, she at one stage of life while she actually admired the Marathi poet saint Tukaram, but when she came to know him, she wrote a poem what she says, “You made life hard for your wife and I am not sure I approve of that.”



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The slide is titled "On Domestic Life and Sexuality" in a blue serif font. Below the title is a bullet point: "• Portrayal of Indian women and their domestic life have become the main focus of her early poetry. She disapproves the Marathi poet and saint Tukaram for the neglect of her wife-". Below this are two large blue circles. The left circle contains the text: "You made life hard for your wife and I'm not sure I approve of that. Nor did you heed her last request: Come back soon." (Return). The right circle contains the text: "It pays to be a poet. You don't have to pay prostitutes." followed by a line of dots and then "I hope you realize I do this with other women." (Poem for a Poet). At the bottom left of the slide are three small logos: a circular one, a Swajati logo, and another circular one. At the bottom right is the number 15.

On Domestic Life and Sexuality

- Portrayal of Indian women and their domestic life have become the main focus of her early poetry. She disapproves the Marathi poet and saint Tukaram for the neglect of her wife-

"You made life hard for your wife and I'm not sure I approve of that. Nor did you heed her last request: Come back soon." (Return)

"It pays to be a poet. You don't have to pay prostitutes." .....

"I hope you realize I do this with other women." (Poem for a Poet)

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People actually-- men appear to be very decent, very decorated, full of discipline, but then de Souza says—"You made life hard/ for your wife/ and I am not sure I /approve of that/ nor did you heed her last request:/ come back soon." Every now and then these words are always prevailing on the lips of a woman to her paramour or to her husband—come back soon.

But then while she is talking of disapproving of her you know disapproving of Marathi poet saint Tukaram, she always has in her mind the entire world of men, the entire world of men. And, you know not only this she actually says this is actually a world where give and take, give and take is the rule.

This is actually a world which is androcentric, this is a world which is phallocentric and you know there have been people who always in order to give you a chance either to become a poet or to be a writer, you actually have to oblige them.

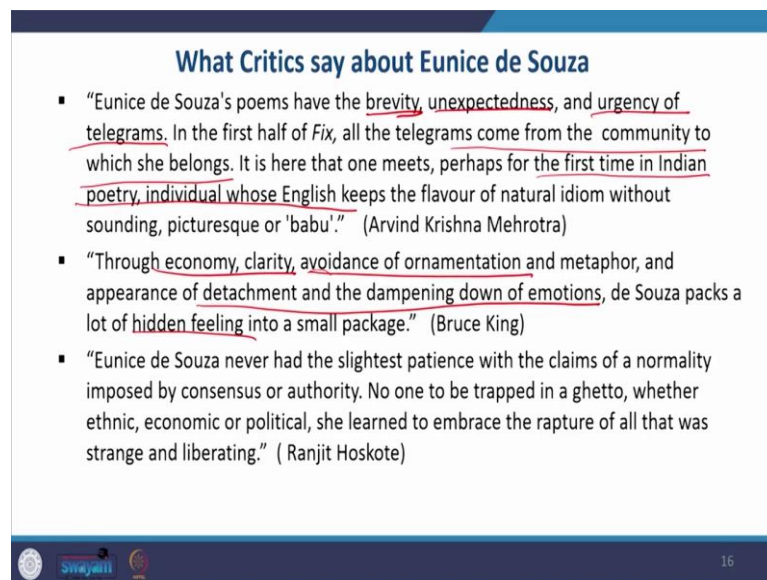
And she takes a dig when in one of the poems entitled "Poem for a Poet," she actually writes, scribbles some lines. "It pays to be a great poet, it pays to be a poet, you do not have to pay prostitutes." She actually brings the inner world of creation where even if you want to be a poet and want to come into the limelight, men do not have to go to prostitutes rather the fellow poets they can only get assisted by great poets only when they sell their body, only when they sell their soul.

So, this is actually a dig and later on she says--- “I hope you realize, I do this/ with other women.” This is actually a voice, maybe it is a sort of fictive one, but then as she says that those four famous poets might often tell you: “I hope you realize, I do this with other women.” So, when the person admits and then this admission of other poets in order to make their fellow women poets come to the light.

And, he says I hope you realize I do this with other women, they actually have no conscience and it appears as if they are suffering from a guilt. But then the guilt is not a guilt, this is actually admission and they do not have any regret and this has actually been attacked by Eunice de Souza. Now, having discussed the poetic oeuvre of Eunice de Souza, I think you know you can take up some more poems in order to broaden your horizon and discussing Eunice de Souza.

But, since time is always at our back, I have simply tried to provide you a sort of outline, but let us also try to understand what contemporary poets and critics have said about Eunice de Souza, because that will provide you a food for thought.

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**What Critics say about Eunice de Souza**

- “Eunice de Souza’s poems have the brevity, unexpectedness, and urgency of telegrams. In the first half of *Fix*, all the telegrams come from the community to which she belongs. It is here that one meets, perhaps for the first time in Indian poetry, individual whose English keeps the flavour of natural idiom without sounding, picturesque or ‘babu’.” (Arvind Krishna Mehrotra)
- “Through economy, clarity, avoidance of ornamentation and metaphor, and appearance of detachment and the dampening down of emotions, de Souza packs a lot of hidden feeling into a small package.” (Bruce King)
- “Eunice de Souza never had the slightest patience with the claims of a normality imposed by consensus or authority. No one to be trapped in a ghetto, whether ethnic, economic or political, she learned to embrace the rapture of all that was strange and liberating.” (Ranjit Hoskote)

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Now, one of the fellow contemporary poets, editors, critic who actually helped de Souza a lot says: “de Souza’s poems have the brevity.” We have already seen the poems are short, subtle fine, unexpectedness and urgency of telegrams. “It appears as if a sort of telegram. “In the first half of *Fix* which is which was a first poetic collection, all the

telegrams come from the community to which she belongs”. Naturally she has talked about the Christian myth and all.

It is here that one meets perhaps for the first time in Indian poetry, individual whose English keeps the flavour of natural idiom without sounding, picturesque or babu. So, she does not imitate. So, we gather one comment from it, there is a sort of finding that de Souza does not imitate other poets rather she has her own voice. She has her own pattern, she has her own language. It appears as if it is a rural language, a sort of Goan landscape where she writes in a sort of economy of speech and that speech appears to be very familiar.

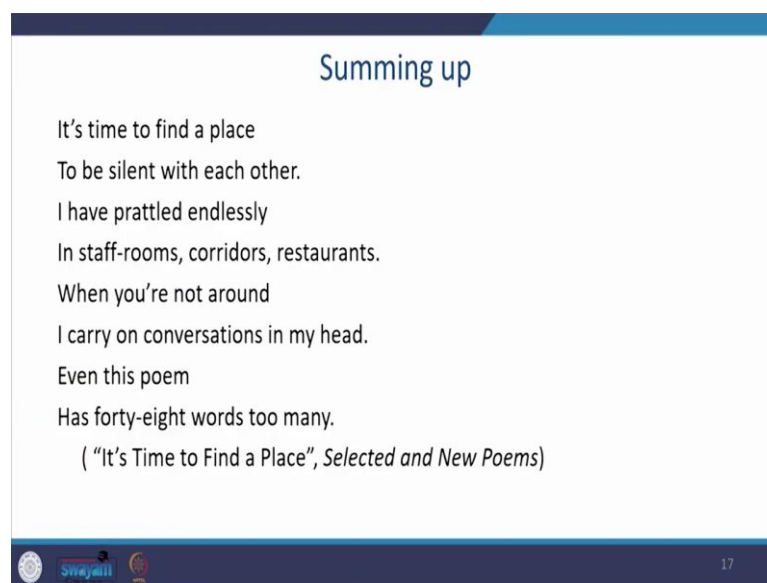
We can also take another comment by Bruce King, who says--- “through economy, clarity, avoidance of ornamentation; it is not very difficult to find the layers of meaning in de Souza’s world and metaphor, appearance of detachment and the dampening down of emotions, de Souza packs a lot of hidden feeling into a small package.” The poems may be short, simple, but they are full of meaning, fine?

And, one very important quote by Ranjit Hoskote-- another contemporary poet which actually deserves mention here, who says, “de Souza never had the slightest patience with the claims of normality imposed by consensus or authority.”

I mean she was completely aloof from what the world thought of her and she did not practice even any normality. No one to be trapped in a ghetto, whether ethnic, economic or political, she learnt to embrace the rapture of all that strange and liberating and that is what she had said, she wanted to be what she really was, what she really wanted to be.

So, my dear friends, having discussed all these about de Souza, the time has come to wind up this talk. But, before winding up let me sum up this talk by taking some very beautiful lines from de Souza’s selected new poems where one can find a sort of existential search, a sort of identity crisis where the poet is actually trying to carve a niche for herself and she says.

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Summing up

It's time to find a place  
To be silent with each other.  
I have prattled endlessly  
In staff-rooms, corridors, restaurants.  
When you're not around  
I carry on conversations in my head.  
Even this poem  
Has forty-eight words too many.  
( "It's Time to Find a Place", *Selected and New Poems*)

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So, in a way what she says is not only about her search for self, but also her search for a place, also her search for putting her emotions on the paper and what she says even this poem has got forty-eight words and these are also too many. So, by this she is not only deriding those people who come up with their readymade comments and says the poem is too long.

So, through this she not only sums up her own, you know, line of thought, her own yearnings, imaginations, her own understanding of poetic world and also her understanding of the real world, that there stood for Eunice de Souza. My dear friends, whenever anyone has tried to bring something new they are called rebellious.

But, then in rebelliousness lies reality which always have been distanced and which always have been smothered under the rigours of society which frames rule for us;

sometimes becoming patriarchal, sometimes becoming dominant. With this we come to the end of this talk; thank you very much, I wish you all a good day.

Thank you.