



## REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.2331(UIF)

VOLUME - 7 | ISSUE - 4 | JANUARY - 2018

UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514



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### ALIENATION: ONE'S OWN WORLD IN DILIP CHITRE'S POETRY

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#### ABSTRACT—

India being a country of diverse languages and cultures has created a class of people who remain aloof because of their differences with other people belonging to different cultural background. It is evident in the urban areas in India because people migrate to cities from rural areas in India for education and employment. Dilip Chitre has



pointed out the lives of people who have come to Bombay (Mumbai) from different cultural backgrounds. The [resent paper aims at analyzing the identity of those people from the point of alienation as a psychological term

#### KEYWORDS:

Alienation, Existentialism, Identity, Language, Indianness and Culture.

#### INTRODUCTION :

Indian poetry, once, was called an extension of English poetry. Now, it has establishes its unique identity having Indian content and form. Indian English poetry has got immense history which begins with an introduction of English in the school curriculum by Lord Macaulay, and still continues to meet new avenues. Indian English poets, especially before independence, can be seen being English at heart and imitating English poets in order to be good poets. Vilas Sarang blames: "Most pre-independence Indian English poets tried to be 'English' poets, or were Indian in superficial or heavy-handed way, when they should have tried, above all, simply to be *good* poets, letting the Englishness or Indianness take care of itself." After independence, Indian English poets have become conscious of Indianness and started writing in a quite different language, Indian English e.g. Kamala Das advocates use of English, natural to her in a poem *An Introduction*:

The language I speak  
Becomes mine, mine alone. It is half English, half  
Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest  
It is as human as I am human don't  
You see?

In most of the schools, English language has been made a compulsory paper/subject but in spite of this, English poetry has been limited to some metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Kolkata etc. and most of the

Indian English poets have roots in India and fruits in England and America. Poets like Dilip Chitre remain at home despite having international recognition.

Dilip Chitre is a bilingual poet, writing in Marathi and English language. He has equally contributed to these languages through translation works like 'Says Tuka', and his contribution to Marathi and English poetry fetched him Sahitya Akademi Award in 1994. Chitre's poetry seems to be rebellious and attacking fraudulent social norms. Alienation of self is also one of the issues, addressed by Dilip Chitre. He delves deep into the self to find out exact human behavior in modern world as W B Yeats has aptly remarked that "the modern man looks at the mirror to discover himself." The theme of alienation has found space in western as well as Indian Writing in English. Man and his alienation are reflected in modern fiction especially in Albert Camus '*The Outsider*', which presents figures, detached from the world. Meursault in *The Outsider* is seen visiting restaurants and indulging in wine and sex. He has lost his affinity to the world and as a result of this he doesn't worry about his arrest and trial. His beloved Marie tries to rescue him but he doesn't response to her efforts. Indian English novels such as Upmanyu Chatterjee's *English August* exhibits alienation through a character Agastya Sen who feels separated from the world which he belongs. He has no interest in administration in spite of being a civil servant; therefore he is seen giving himself to wine and sex. Whenever, he comes in contact with the people of his sort, he feels at home.

In order to have a look at alienation in literature, one must have, at least a brief knowledge of man and his journey towards his alienation in modern world. Man has gone through many changes in order to survive and make his life comfortable. He was leading a life of a savage, moving from place to place to fulfill the need of appetite by killing other fellow creatures. The discovery of agriculture made him to form groups and lead a social life. Due to agriculture, he became a physically and mentally social animal, sharing others' works for a better living. Then, Industrialization made him a source of labor and turned him into a machine without soul and mind. He was separated from his creation which means once he was a part of production, distribution and consumption of goods but technology made him feel alienated from his creation and naturally from the world as stated by Gordan Haim:

"Technological advance will move faster and faster. In this crisis we have been able to confront meditatively what is drawing in this age. With this technological perspective, spiritual goals are no longer meaningful and MYSTERY has no VALUE. Humans become raw material resources to be consumed."

Man and his self are two sides of a paper and are inseparable entities. Self has been a very challenging issue since the classical period of western philosophy. There are philosophers like Plato, Descartes, Hegel, and especially modern people such as Soren Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus and many more who have expanded the horizon of the being and its existence by relating it to world, religion, God, truth and 'being-in-itself'.

As religion and moral values had been defining things from classical to neo-classical period of the history of western philosophy, thinkers like Plato and Descartes linked it to spirituality, and contrasted being with an absolute, God or religion. By doing so, Plato addressed only one aspect of the man's being, while Descartes called man a rational animal by stating 'cogito ergo sum' (I think, therefore I am). Though, Plato and Descartes didn't explore all sides of being, they initiated the study which functions as a starting point for upcoming thinkers like Hegel and Emmanuel Kant. Especially, Descartes' above mentioned statement played a role of the foundation of enlightenment movement in western philosophy.

Nineteenth and twentieth century figures like Martin Heidegger, Kierkegaard and Sartre are associated with the term 'being'. They are observed going away from thinkers like Descartes, Kant and Hegel. Heidegger looks at it from phenomenological point of view, while, Kierkegaard and Sartre differentiate between being-in-itself and being-for-itself: "Being-in-itself includes all beings that lack consciousness; Being-for-itself is the term Sartre uses for human consciousness. .... Being in itself is determined as already there; it appears concretely as a world and as things in the world. Without consciousness, there is only Being, which in itself, forever what it is, with no inclination to reveal itself to consciousness."

Being is having a status of autonomy and should be studied for the sake of itself. Hegel and his predecessors engage themselves in identifying the relations between being and external entities like god, religion and society. After this fair amount of discussion about an account of man and his self, one ought to look into Dilip Chitre's poetry to trace man's estrangement from man-made world.

Jaspers, a German philosopher, while illustrating a term 'being one-self', states that being one-self means the displacement of self from daily life. Self feels alienated and disunited from the world. The following statement by Jaspers illustrates his stand: "Moreover, being-one-self is radically disjunct from what he calls being-there: the objectively determined empirical world." The dislocation of self is experienced in Chitre's poem '*The View from Chinchpokli*'. At surface level, the poem seems to be a horrible picture of Mumbai and its suburbs but actually, diurnal account of a commuter is portrayed in the poem. He begins and ends a day with at Chinchpokli, one of the suburbs of Mumbai. The speaker goes through some monuments in Mumbai without noticing their magnificence:

Of course, I will ignore  
The junk shops, the tea houses, the restaurants, the  
markets  
I zig-zag through. I shall smoothly go past  
The Institute of Art, Anjuman-e-Islam, The Times of  
India,  
The Bombay Municipal Corporation and Victoria  
Terminus  
If I glance at Flora Fountain or the Bombay High  
Court,  
It will be an absent-minded observation.  
(199:1993)

The extract, cited here from the poem, supports an idea of self's detachment from the world. Even the topography of the poem symbolizes the separation of man from physical world. In the above lines, Victoria is separated from Terminus and High from Court.

Repetition of images or dialogues is one of the distinctive features of existential literature, especially depicted in '*Waiting for Godot*' in which characters just wait and repeat dialogues. An alienated self finds surrounding monotonous as he experiences some incidents repeatedly and as a result of boring present, he becomes nostalgic to find solace. In the poem, At Midnight at the Bakery at the Corner, Dilip Chitre repeats images of bakery, bread and butter-biscuits which are not portrayed in pleasing manner. The above-mentioned images recur through following lines:

At Midnight at the Bakery at the Corner  
While bread butter-biscuits are being baked  
(32:1992)

After these two lines in the first stanza, the speaker becomes nostalgic and remembers his friends and lovely days, spent with them. Now he is alone and drinking without being consciousness of fried liver pieces, which have gone cold. Disjunction of self is observed in this poem. The man, portrayed in this poem, is alienated and suffocated which can be further explained by the given extract:

I am boozing alone in my room  
In front of me fried liver pieces gone cold in a plate  
All my friends migrated to the Gulf  
(32:1992)

Though, man is portrayed dejected and separated, he does not make an attempt to find comfort in sex unlike Upmanyu Chatterjee's hero, Agastya Sen in *English August*. Agastya Sen finds pleasure from drink and sex. Whenever he gets an opportunity to exhibit his love for drink and love, he seizes it. In spite of being heavily drunk, he rejects an offer of a woman to have sex in the subsequent lines:

At midnight in the bakery at the corner  
While bread and butter-biscuits are being baked  
The wife of the Pathan next door enters my room  
Closes the door and turns her back to me  
I tell her, sister, go find someone else

(32:1992)

Man finds himself detached because of uncertainty of life and anguish. Nobody knows his/her future and its consequences; therefore, uncertainty haunts heart and mind. It makes man to feel trapped in his world. Chitre, in his poem, A Gravel-Voiced Man' comes up with man's imprisonment in the natural cell, called heart. A metaphor of tiger symbolizes anguish and mystery of life. The following extract from the poem suggest the view, discussed above:

Life is one-dimensional.  
There is no place for eye outside these geometries.  
In a cage of heartbeats  
Your own mystery is a tiger.      (198: 1993)

The feeling of alienation can be realized when self is detached from the external world. It is being observed in Dilip Chitre's poetry. Alienation is, in the comparison of poetry, easy to present in novels as novelist gets freedom of space and time but in this case a poet has got limitation. Dilip Chitre has overcome the limitation of space by selecting a specific diction and places, especially urban scenario.

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