

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Among many other things, the colonial encounter led to much destruction of trees and wild life in India. Both the British and under their influence, the natives initiated and geared up the process of destruction and degradation of environment by over-exploiting our natural resources and by clearing land for human settlement and for carrying out economic activities. Before the arrival of the British, Indians used to find their village the most suitable habitat for meeting their requirements, which were simple and based on the basic needs for their sustenance. Earlier, Indians knew how to harmonize their agricultural activities with their natural environment and adapt themselves to the rural environment for their sustenance and survival. They also knew very well that through the protection of their natural environment, they could survive generation after generation. They used resources wisely to provide themselves with food, shelter, fuel, medicines, etc. Though the British left, they have left behind the legacy of commercial exploitation. Today, due to wrong economic and cultural policies, India suffers from the terrible growth in human population and over-exploitative economic activities. Among others, it is the community of poets, which was the first to sensitize us to a variety of environmental hazards.

Different Indian poets writing in English such as Gieve Patel ("On Killing a Tree"), A. K. Ramanujan ("The River"), Nissim Ezekiel ("Island" and "In India") have expressed their concern for

environmental decay in India. Unlike one or two poems written by Patel, Ramanujan, Ezekiel and others on the theme of the relationship between man and the physical environment, majority poems in Dilip Chitre's *As Is, Where Is* (2007) express feelings of disinheritedness, alienation and unrelatedness of modern man due to his dissociation with social and natural life. The event of breaking away from his ancestral house located at Baroda was a turning point in the life of the poet. This event has left a lasting impact on Dilip Chitre's Marathi as well as English poetry. The present study is an attempt to examine the theme of dislocation reflected in Dilip Chitre's English poetry due to the rupture in the life of the sensitive poet from his physical environment.

1.1 ORIGIN OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM:

A number of studies with reference to Dilip Chitre's contribution to Marathi and English poetry are available.

D. B. Kulkarni, in his article "Dilip Purushottam Chitre" published in the Marathi journal, *Satyakatha* (October 1964), draws attention to the existentialist dimension of Chitre's literature.

In his own article entitled "Swathachya Lekhanasambadhiche Vichar" published in *Satyakatha* (July 1967), Dilip Chitre writes about the impression made by the surrounding life on his self.

In his elaborate entry written for Marathi Encyclopedia (volume-5) (1976), P. N. Paranjape throws light on the qualities of Chitre's Marathi literature. He, especially, points out how surrealism and expressionism have left a lasting influence on Chitre's generation.

In *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (1987), Bruce King has written a separate chapter on the nature of poetry of two Marathi poets,

Chitre and his contemporary Arun Kolatkar entitled “Two Bilingual Experimentalists: Kolatkar and Chitre”. King examines Chitre’s poems included in *Travelling in a Cage* from the point of view of the modernist aspect reflected in Chitre’s poetry.

In his Marathi book entitled *Satthottari Marathi Kavita Va Kavi* (1997), R.G. Jadhav, the wellknown Marathi critic, makes a comment on the symbol of the ‘grey hill’ used for society by Dilip Chitre and provides an elaborate assessment of Chitre’s Marathi poems in the context of ecological enlightenment of the post 1960s. He argues that “the perception [In “Bhundan Tekaad”] between personal existence and the outward world unconsciously created the harmony between his [Chitre’s] own music and that of the times. This music of the times, this voice of the zeitgeist was the voice of an organic environmental perception. It was the ‘concerto’ of the age of ecological enlightenment of the post-1960s” (Jadhav 1997: 90, translated).

F.A. Inamdar, in his article “Dilip Chitre’s Traveling in a Cage: A Critical Assessment” published in *Indian Writings in English* (1998), comments on the theme of alienation in Dilip Chitre’s poetry.

In “A Transplantation That Fails: Dilip Chitre” published in *Five Indian English Poets* (2001), Shirish Chindhade refers to the inner world of disintegration and spiritual desolation reflected in Chitre’s poetry.

The above review of literature on Chitre shows that majority of Chitre’s critics have commented on the poet’s sense of the existentialist *angst* and nagging death consciousness. Only R.G. Jadhav has written about the ecological dimension of Chitre’s poetry, but he has referred to

only Marathi poetry. Taking a step further, the present study is a modest attempt to conduct an ecocritical study of Dilip Chitre's English poetry.

1.2 HYPOTHESIS:

Dilip Chitre's English poetry is characterized by ecocentric values of meticulous observation, collective ethical responsibility, and the claims of the nonhuman world.

1.3 OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- a) To study the nature of Dilip Chitre's English poetry
- b) To explore Dilip Chitre's literary sensibility
- c) To examine environmental concerns in Dilip Chitre's English poetry
- d) To study Dilip Chitre's English poetry from an ecocentric perspective, with particular attention to the representation of the natural world
- e) To determine the place and significance of Dilip Chitre's poetry in the tradition of Indian poetry in English

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The scope of the present study is Chitre's English poetry, but the researcher intends to refer to Chitre's Marathi poems and Marathi and English criticism on Chitre wherever necessary.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Taking a point of departure from different ecocritical positions developed by British and American scholars, the proposed study seeks to undertake a study of the interconnections of man and nature in Chitre's English poetry.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN:

Chapter I consists of the statement of the problem, the review of relevant research literature, objectives, research design and significance of the present study. Chapter II provides a critique of the tradition of Indian poetry in English and Chitre's place in it. Chapter III deals with the making of the poet Dilip Chitre. Chapter IV introduces the discipline of Ecocriticism including its background, development, parameters and concepts in order to evolve the model of analysis for the study of Chitre's English poetry. Chapter V examines Dilip Chitre's English poetry included in *As Is*, *Where Is* in terms of ecocritical approach. Chapter VI summarizes the argument and makes a concluding statement on Dilip Chitre's English poetry.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Different scholars have made comments on existentialist and modernistic aspects of Dilip Chitre's poetry. However, the ecocritical dimension of Dilip Chitre's English poetry has not received the kind of critical attention it deserves. The present study seeks to fill this gap and examine the complex and dynamic relationship between Chitre's literary sensibility and the physical environment.