CHAPTER: I

INTRODUCTION:

“TRADITION OF THE NEW”

In Western Cultural history, certain pairs of terms have an overriding significance in shaping the debates of a particular period. ‘Romanticism’ and ‘Classicism’ moulded the debates from the Renaissance right up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Much of the twentieth century art discourses were influenced by the debate between ‘Modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’. However, much like the earlier set of seemingly opposing terms, modernism and postmodernism were extremely problematic and contested. While modernism defined itself against the Victorian and the Romantic tendencies, Postmodernism often defined itself against modernism. At the same time, there were often continuities that were crucial. The present chapter does not offer a survey of vast literature available in the domain of modernist studies, but provides an overview of key issues and debates associated with these movements, so as to comprehend the remarkable aspects of the poetry of Arun Kolatkar and Dilip Chitre by situating them in the phenomenon of modernism in western and the Indian context while analyzing the contribution of these writers. The dissertation argues that Chitre and Kolatkar belong to what can be understood as Indian modernism which is a distinctive type of modernism. This distinctiveness can be found in what the Czech comparative scholar Dionyz Dursin terms as the ‘interliterariness’ of a special kind. Their works belong to the international modernist movements, and shares some of its basic features like the metropolitan background, impact of Euro-American avant-gardes, little magazine movements, the themes of alienation, sexual agony, myths, existential angst, rebellion against the middle-class values, cultural decadence and the desire to invent a tradition and so on. Moreover, it also exhibits its affinities with other modernist poets on the Indian subcontinent.


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too like intense preoccupation with the Bhakti literature and critical engagement with the questions of caste, religion and gender repression in India.

The study follows a qualitative exploratory research design. The method is eclectic. It draws also from rich archive of modernist studies, cultural studies, postcolonial studies and combines close textual analysis with comparative literary studies framework. The thesis follows *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, seventh edition* (2009). The thesis has been organized into four chapters entitled (I) Introduction: Tradition of the New (II) Tukaram in Heaven, Chitre in Hell: Modernism in the Poetry of Dilip Chitre (III) A Pun On the Present: Modernism in Arun Kolatkar’s Poetry and (IV) Conclusion: Modernism in Poetry of Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar. The subtitle of the first chapter is taken from the title of Harold Rosenberg’s book *Tradition of the New*, the subtitles of the second and the third chapters are taken from the lines of of Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar.

### 1.1 MODERNISM AND MODERNITY: THE WESTERN CONTEXT

The term ‘Modernism’ is not unequivocal but a deeply problematic one. Chris Baldick in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines modernism as:

"a general term applied retrospectively to the wide range of experimental and avant-garde trends in the literature (and other arts) of the early 20th century.... Modernist literature is characterized chiefly by a rejection of 19th-century traditions and of their consensus between author and reader: conventions of realism ... or traditional meter. Modernist writers tended to see themselves as an avant-garde disengaged from bourgeois values, and disturbed their readers by adopting complex and difficult new forms and styles. In poetry, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot replaced the logical exposition of thoughts with collages of fragmentary images and complex allusions..... Modernist writing is predominantly cosmopolitan, and often expresses a sense of urban cultural..."
dislocation, along with an awareness of new anthropological and psychological theories. Its favoured techniques of juxtaposition and multiple point of view challenge the reader to re-establish a coherence of meaning from fragmentary forms.\textsuperscript{(159)}

Though many of these features can be found in the poetry of Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar, it can be seen that one of the problems with such definitions is that its significance has been volatile and has shifted throughout its history. Peter Childs charts out the historical trajectory of the elusive term ‘Modernism’ in brief. He notes that etymologically the term Modernism, like the term ‘modern’ is derived from Latin root ‘\textit{modo}’ which means ‘current’ or ‘now’. He points out that in the late fifth century, the Latin \textit{modernus} referred to the Christian present in opposition to the Roman past and the term ‘Modernist’ in the late sixteenth century denoted a modern person and by eighteenth century to denote a follower of modern ways as well as a supporter of modern over ancient literature. By contrast, ‘Modernism’ was first used in the early eighteenth century simply to denote trends characteristics of modern times, while in the nineteenth century its meaning encompassed a sympathy with modern opinions, styles or expression. In the later parts of the nineteenth century, it referred to progressive trends in the Catholic Church. In literary criticism, it emerged with Robert Graves’ and Laura riding’s \textit{A Survey of Modernism Poetry} in 1927. It was only in the 1960s that the term became widely used as a description of a literary phase that was both identifiable and in some sense over (12-14).

One of the critical problems with the notion of Modernism lies in the term itself which indicates ‘current’ or concerned with the present. While Encyclopædia Britannica defines Modernism as ‘a radical break with the past and concurrent search for new forms of expression’ (Modernism, www.britannica.com), the well-known art critic Clement Greenberg says that, ‘it consists in the continuing endeavour to stem the decline of aesthetic standards
threatened by the relative democratization of culture under industrialism; ... the overriding and innermost logic of Modernism is to maintain the levels of the past in the face of an opposition that hadn't been present in the past. Thus the whole enterprise of Modernism, for all its outward aspects, can be seen as backward-looking.” Greenberg notes that the term ‘avant-garde’ was what Modernism was called first and emphasises the fact that ‘Contrary to the common notion, Modernism or the avant-garde didn't make its entrance by breaking with the past. Far from it. Nor did it have such a thing as a program, nor has it really ever had one -- again, contrary to the common notion. Nor was it an affair of ideas or theories or ideology.’ (‘Modern and the Postmodern’)

The ‘high modernism’ of Eliot, Wallace Stevens or Rilke can thus be understood not just as a break from Romanticism but also its continuation. Commenting on modernism in American poetry, the critics like Gelphi point out that the High Modernists were trying to create a ‘coherent splendour’ and he notes,

‘In fact, despite the manifestos and axiomatic pronouncements against Romanticism, Modernism represents an extension and reconstitution of the salient issues that Romanticism set out to deal with. In the face of the intellectual, psychological, moral, and political turmoil which had propelled the last two centuries into more and more violent crises, Modernism continued to exalt the imagination as the agency of coherence. Not, the Modernists insisted, the Romantic Imagination with its capital I; but an imagination that, though shorn of mystical and idealist claims, was still the supreme human faculty of cognition, empowering the artist (echoing Stevens again) to decreate disordered experience into aesthetic order.’(Gelphi)

Jurgen Habermas on the other hand remarks that ‘aesthetic modernity is characterized by attitudes which find a common focus in a changed consciousness of time.’ These
contradicting statements reveal the essential ambivalence and ambiguity inherent in the term. The ambivalence and the ambiguity arises from complex dialectic of the past with the present as well as the problematic of the terms ‘past’ and ‘present’ (1750).

Susan Stanford Friedman observes, “Modernity and tradition are relational concepts that modernity produces to cut itself off from the past, to distinguish the “now” from the “then.” Modernity invents tradition, suppresses its own continuities with the past, and often produces nostalgia for what has been seemingly lost. Tradition forms at the moment those who perceive it regard themselves as cut off from it.” (Friedman “Periodizing Modernism”)

The noted deconstructionist Paul de Man remarks on the paradox of Modernist impulse, ‘the appeal of modernity, the desire to break out of literature towards the reality of the moment, prevails and, in its turn, folding back upon itself engenders the repetition and continuation of literature.’ (162) The deconstructive reading of modernism underscores the fact that the desire to break out of literary tradition in order to capture the present moment is in itself a ‘literary’ desire, and hence part of the structure of tradition. This problematic relationship with the past which is critical for the western conceptualization of modernism can also be found in the works of writers like Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar, especially in their fascination for the Bhakti poetry and their rejection of the precursor romantic poetry. The following chapters dealing with their individual works will look at this aspect more closely.

Clement Greenberg points out that Western civilization is not the first civilization to turn around and question its own foundations, but it is the one that has gone furthest in doing so. Greenberg identifies Modernism with the intensification, almost the exacerbation, of this self-critical tendency that began with the philosopher Kant, because he was the first to criticize the means itself of criticism. This makes Greenberg conceive of Kant as the first real Modernist. The essence of Modernism lies, according to Greenberg in,’ the use of
characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence’. He notes, ‘Kant used logic to establish the limits of logic, and while he withdrew much from its old jurisdiction, logic was left all the more secure in what there remained to it’. (Greenberg, ‘Modernist Painting’)

Jean-François Lyotard’s provocative characterization of modernity is crucial for understanding of modernity and postmodernity. He points out the distinction and the conflict between ‘science’ and ‘narratives’ in the contemporary society. He notes that in spite of the dismissal of narratives by scientific discourse as fables, science seeks to legitimize the rules of its own game by making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth. Such a science, in Lyotard’s view is ‘modern’. The postmodernity, in his famous definition, is ‘as incredulity toward metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it.’ (xxiv)

Regarding the contrast between modernist and postmodernist aesthetics, Jameson notes that ‘the death of the subject’ becomes a prominent theme in the postmodern discourse which implies an end of individualism at the heart of modernist discourse. He remarks, ‘the great modernisms predicated on the invention of the personal private style, as unmistakable as your fingerprint, as incomparable as your own body. But this means that the modernist aesthetic is in some ways organically linked to the conception of a unique self and private identity, a unique personality and individuality, which can be expected to generate its own unique vision of the world and to forge its own unique, unmistakable style.’ As there is no such thing as unique and individual personality and self, there is no such thing as a unique and individual style in Jameson’s conception of modernist and postmodernist style. He notes that all that is left is mere pastiche of the past styles in postmodernism. While modernist style
is about creating an individual and unique voice, the postmodernism is about ‘the failure of the new’ and ‘imprisonment in the past’. (1964)

At this juncture, it is important to make the distinction between ‘modernity’ and ‘modernism’, or between modernity as a condition of society and artistic or aesthetic modernity. Modernity is the social, ideological and historical phenomena and modernism can be understood as artistic attitude toward modernity. Commenting on modernity, Anthony Giddens points out, ‘At its simplest, modernity is a shorthand term for modern society or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which unlike any preceding culture lives in the future rather than the past. (94). Modernism, on the other hand is associated with aesthetic and artistic movements which developed in response to modernity. At times these movements were often very critical of modernity and at times, they echoed the spirit of modernity. The relationship between ‘modernism’ in aesthetic and artistic sphere and ‘modernity’ as a societal category remains an essential and yet contested issue in our understanding of modernism.

The significance of this distinction is critical for the analysis of modernisms in the Indian context. As Rajeev Patke argues, “the tension between artistic modernism and societal modernisation characteristic of European culture in the early part of the twentieth century is reproduced — or, more precisely, transfigured — in postcolonial contexts during the latter half of the twentieth century in differential ways that go beyond the initial correspondence or indebtedness to European forebears.” (‘Literary Modernism in Asia’, 18)
Modernity is said to have its roots in the European Renaissance period (roughly 14th to 17th century) which saw the rise of humanism, scientific revolution, the protestant Reformation, and collapse of the feudal structures of the Middle Ages. The roots of modernity strengthened further in the period of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century which is also called the Age of Reason. The precursors of the Enlightenment can be traced to the 17th century and earlier. They include the philosophical rationalists René Descartes and Baruch Spinoza, the political philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, and various sceptical thinkers in France such as Pierre Bayle. Equally important, however, were the self-confidence engendered by new discoveries in science—by Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo, for example—and the spirit of cultural relativism encouraged by the exploration of the non-European world in the Renaissance. In the eighteenth century the French philosophers like Denis Diderot, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire and the German philosopher like Immanuel Kant defined European Enlightenment. Of the basic assumptions and beliefs common to philosophers and intellectuals of this period, perhaps the most important was an abiding faith in the power of human reason. During the Enlightenment, people came to assume that through a judicious use of reason, an unending progress would be possible—progress in knowledge, in technical achievement, and even in moral values.

The German philosopher Jurgen Habermas points out that the ‘project of Enlightenment’ or ‘the project of modernity’ consisted in the efforts to ‘develop objective science, universal morality and law and autonomous art according to their inner logic. At the same time, this project intended to release the cognitive potential of each of these domains from their esoteric forms. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilize this accumulation of specialized culture for the enrichment of everyday life- that is to say, for rational organization.’ (1754). From this perspective, Habermas sees ‘aesthetic modernity’ that is, what is understood as ‘modernism’, as being an integral part of cultural modernity.
However, he does not recognize the distinction between modernity and modernism. He points out that aesthetic modernity is characterized by attitudes which find a common focus in a changed consciousness of time and this consciousness expresses itself through metaphors of vanguard and the avant-garde which ‘understands itself as invading unknown territory, exposing itself to the dangers of sudden, shocking encounters, conquering an as yet unoccupied future’. He also observes that this aesthetic modernity revolts against the normalizing function of tradition and lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative. (1750).

However, modernism as a literary and artistic movement also drew heavily from the philosophers like Nietzsche and Freud who laid a great emphasis on the power of irrational and questioned the basis of modern civilization. Thus modernism with its emphasis on irrational and illogical was very often in contradiction to modernity which underscored reason and logic.

The critics like Steve Giles point out that ‘if we follow Giddens and Harvey by retaining the term modernity as a general societal category, then we could perhaps conceive of modernism as a cultural phenomenon which, though located within the ambit of modernity, is post- or even anti-modern in ideological terms.’ (181-182) Giles argues that the understanding of the ambiguous and ambivalent relationship of modernism to modernity is crucial for understanding the phenomena of postmodernism and postmodernity. As Linda Hutcheon notes it is because Jameson fails to distinguish between the two that he fails to distinguish between ‘postmodernity and postmodernism’ (25) that he fails to understand the political vocation of postmodernity.

One of the important aspects of modernism was the cosmopolitan experience of metropolis. Raymond Williams focuses on the relationship between Modernism and metropolis between the second half of the nineteenth century and of the first half of the
twentieth century. He notes that Modernism has seen in ‘the new and specific location of the artists and intellectuals... within the changing cultural milieu of the metropolises.’ (164 -170) He notes that the key cultural factor of the modernist shift is the character of metropolis. He points out that immigration to the great cities had direct influence on technical and formal innovations of this period. It also influenced the themes of alienation, strangeness and distance so common in the modernist writings. Raymond Williams is also critical of ideological underpinnings of the entire retrospective project of constructing modernism in a rather selective way.

As Tew and Murray note, “Modernity is largely defined by urban experience and the city occupies Modernism’s centre stage.” In Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930, Malcolm Bradbury argues that ‘In many respects the literature of experimental Modernism which emerged in the last years of the nineteenth century and developed into the present one was an art of cities’ (96). Charles Baudelaire describes modern man as a flâneur, milling amidst the crowds, an urban dweller and mover soaking in the experience of ‘the ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite’.

Monroe K Spears’s book Dionysus and the City like William’s work examines the relationship between the Nietzschean Dionysus and the context of urbanization in the development of modernism in the West. He says:

‘Dionysus presides metaphorically over most of the recent trends in theater, from cruelty and absurdity to audience participation, nudity, and the tribal rock musical. On and off the stage, he is apparent in two contemporary figures: the black militant, violently releasing dark and repressed forces both in society and within psyche, and the rock musician, with his female devotees and his orgiastic cult of collective emotion.’ (35)

Spears in his discerning examination point out that the word City etymologically
comes from the *civitas*, city-state, which is properly an aggregation of *cives*, citizens and the term civilization too comes from the same root. As a poetic trope, it stands for both the city within and the city without. Spears, drawing upon ideas from Walter Pater’s essay ‘A Study of Dionysus’, comments that modernism began when Dionysus entered the city. In earlier times, *Civitas Terrena* or the Earthly City was seen as striving towards a Heavenly City, *Civitas Dei*, but for moderns, says Prof Spears, it is seen as falling or fallen and moving towards the Infernal City the City of *Dis*, the city of Dante and Baudelaire, and of Eliot. In short, when the modernist poets paint the city in dark and sinister colours, they are in many ways censuring and negating the process of urbanization as well as the entire foundation of civilization, they are criticizing the city within and without. If modern city stands for modernity, then modernism, as a cultural movement often stands in contradiction and negation to modernity.

This essential link, which Williams and Spears underscore, between modernism and metropolis, which is both capitalist and imperialist, is decisive for analysis of Modernism as an international movement as both capitalism and imperialism have their impact on a transnational scale. There will be more detailed discussion of this aspect in following chapters on Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar.

The Dionysian impulse often manifests itself as avant-garde art. The Avant-garde phenomenon is considered by most critics to be a prominent feature of modernism. The term ‘avant-garde’ is a metaphor used to describe the foremost part of an army advancing into battle (also called the vanguard) and now applied to any group, particularly of artists, that considers itself innovative and ahead of the majority. The vanguard, a small troop of highly skilled soldiers, explores the terrain ahead of a large advancing army and plots a course for the army to follow. This concept is applied to the work done by small collectives of intellectuals and artists as they open pathways through new cultural or political terrain for
society to follow. Importance of the idea of avant-garde in comprehending the complex phenomena of modernism can be understood by Greenberg’s remark that ‘avant-garde was what modernism was called first (Greenberg, ‘Modern and the Postmodern’). Poetry of Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar show a distinctive relationship with these avant-garde movements and though it will be taken up at length in the respective chapters on these poets, it will be useful to look at them more closely here.

Modernisms, especially in their avant-garde variety world over, were very often announced through manifestoes. The Symbolist Manifesto ("Le Symbolisme", Le Figaro, 18 Sept 1886) was published in 1886 by Jean Moréas. The label "symbolist" itself comes from the critic Jean Moréas, who coined it in order to distinguish the symbolists from the related decadent movement in literature and art. Symbolists believed that art should aim to capture more absolute truths which could only be accessed by indirect methods. Thus, they wrote in a highly metaphorical and suggestive manner, endowing particular images or objects with symbolic meaning. Moréas announced that symbolism was “inimical to pedantry, to declamation, to false sensitivity, to objective description, Symbolist poetry tries to house the Idea in a meaningful form not its own end, but subject to the Idea.” (Caws, 2001:50)

Imagism is historically important because it is first organized Modernist English language literary movement or group. Pound's provides a definition of an image as that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. Pound goes on to state that it is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works. These ideas are central to the Imagist movement.

Imagism influenced a number of poetry circles and movements in the 1950s, especially the Beat generation, the Black Mountain poets, and others associated with the San Francisco Renaissance. Among the Beats, Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg in particular were influenced by the Imagist emphasis on Chinese and Japanese poetry. William Carlos
Williams was another who had a strong impact on the Beat poets, encouraging poets like Lew Welch and writing an introduction for the book publication of Ginsberg's *Howl* (1955).

After breaking off from Flint, Ezra Pound baptized another avant-garde, ‘Vorticism.’ The Vorticism group began with the Rebel Art Centre which Wyndham Lewis and others established after disagreeing with Omega Workshops founder Roger Fry, and it has roots in the Bloomsbury Group, Cubism, and Futurism. Lewis himself saw Vorticism as an independent alternative to Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism.

The Vorticists published two issues of the literary magazine BLAST, in June 1914 and July 1915 which Lewis edited. It contained work by Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot as well as by the Vorticists themselves. Its typographical adventurousness was cited by El Lissitzky as one of the major forerunners of the revolution in graphic design in the 1920s and 1930s. Some of Arun Kolatkar’s poems experiment with the idea of ‘Concrete Poetry’ in which the typographical arrangement of words is as imperative in conveying the intended effect as the conventional elements of the poem, such as meaning of words, rhythm, rhyme and so on.

Cubism is another very influential avant-garde movement in arts in first two decades of twentieth century. It was pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. In cubist artworks, objects are broken up, analyzed, and re-assembled in an abstracted form—instead of depicting objects from one viewpoint, the artist depicts the subject from a multitude of viewpoints to represent the subject in a greater context. Often the surfaces intersect at seemingly random angles, removing a coherent sense of depth. The background and object planes interpenetrate one another to create the shallow ambiguous space, one of cubism’s distinct characteristics. The written works of Gertrude Stein employ repetition and repetitive phrases as building blocks in both passages and whole chapters. Most of Stein's important works utilize this technique, including the novel *The Makings of Americans* (1906–08) Not only were they the first important patrons of Cubism, Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo
were also important influences on Cubism as well. Picasso in turn was an important influence on Stein's writing. The poets generally associated with Cubism are Guillaume Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars, Jean Cocteau, Max Jacob, André Salmon and Pierre Reverdy.

Dadaism and Surrealism are probably most radical artistic avant-garde movements of the early half of twentieth century. Dada or Dadaism is a cultural movement that began in Zürich, Switzerland, during World War I and peaked from 1916 to 1922. The movement primarily involved visual arts, literature—poetry, art manifestoes, art theory—theatre, and graphic design, and concentrated its anti-war politics through a rejection of the prevailing standards in art through anti-art cultural works. It started in 1916, with the artists like Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Tristan Tzara, Jean Arp, Marcel Janco, Richard Huelsenbeck, Sophie Täuber, Hans Richter, along with others who discussed art and put on performances in the Cabaret Voltaire expressed their disgust with the war and the interests that inspired it.

Hugo Ball’s Dada Manifesto of 1916 defines Dada in the following way:

Dada is a new tendency in art. One can tell this from the fact that until now nobody knew anything about it, and tomorrow everyone in Zurich will be talking about it. Dada comes from the dictionary. It is terribly simple. In French it means "hobby horse". In German it means "good-bye", "Get off my back", "Be seeing you sometime". In Romanian: "Yes, indeed, you are right, that's it. But of course, yes, definitely, right". ("Dada Manifesto 1916", Hugo)

The techniques of Dada include collage, photomontage, assembly and the use of ‘readymade’ stuff. The movement influenced later styles like the avant-garde and downtown music movements, and groups including surrealism, Nouveau réalisme, pop art, Fluxus and punk rock.

One of the most famous techniques of writing a Dadaist poem is described by Tristan Tzara in the following way:
"Take a newspaper.

Take some scissors.

Choose from this paper an article the length you want to make your poem.

Cut out the article.

Next carefully cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them all in a bag.

Shake gently.

Next take out each cutting one after the other.

Copy conscientiously in the order in which they left the bag.

The poem will resemble you.

And there you are— an infinitely original author of charming sensibility, even though unappreciated by the vulgar herd. (Tzara, "Dada Manifesto on Feeble & Bitter Love, ")

In his 1924 manifesto of Surrealism, Andre Breton defined surrealism, ‘once and for all’ as:

SURREALISM, noun, masc., Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.

ENCYCL. Philos. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association heretofore neglected, in the omnipotence of the dream, and in the disinterested play of thought. It leads to the permanent destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to its substitution for them in
the solution of the principal problems of life. (Breton, “First Manifesto of Surrealism – 1924”)

The first definition points at surrealism being ‘pure psychic automatism’ which is free from all logical, rational, moral or aesthetic control, and hence the techniques used by the surrealists include the devices to liberate this ‘pure psychic automatism’ so that it can express the ‘true function of thought’. The chief techniques of surrealism included ‘automatic writing’ or spontaneous writing without censoring the thought and use of dreamlike irrational imagery.

As a conscious art movement, surrealism started with its founder Andre Breton joining the Dadaists and starting a journal Littérature along with Louis Aragon and Philippe Soupault. From the 1920s on, the movement spread around the globe, eventually affecting the visual arts, literature, film, and music of many countries and languages, as well as political thought and practice, philosophy and social theory. Probably surrealism is one of the most influential avant-garde movements in literature. The artists who were part of this movements are, in addition to Breton, Aragon and Soupault, Paul Éluard, Benjamin Péret, René Crevel, Robert Desnos, Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Hans Arp, Antonin Artaud, Marcel Duchamp, Jacques Prévert and Yves Tanguy

In his online essay, ‘The Theory and Technique of Surrealist Poetry’, Alan Gullette notes, ‘the concept of surreality is that of a reality "higher" than that to which we are accustomed: the reality of "waking consciousness." This surreality is proposed as a unity of the world of waking reality and that of dream; of objectivity and subjectivity; of world and imagination or mind; etc.’ Gullette draws attention to some other surrealist techniques, ‘The best-known technique after automatic writing was the modified children's game known as "the exquisite corpse." This involved several people consecutively writing entire lines or parts of a sentence without being able to see what others have written. The name comes from
the first result of this method (in 1925): "Le cadavre exquis boira le vin nouveau" -- "the exquisite corpse drinks the new wine." Another method was the drawing of words from a hat after they had been cut out of a newspaper article of the desired length. The words were copied in that sequence.’ Some other techniques include, according to Gullette, texts produced as dream transcriptions and those that resulted from "spiritualist séances" conducted by Breton (which sometimes involved hypnotism) and even from sleep-writing. Robert Desnos was the most gifted in all of these experiments, demonstrating the greatest facility, and was also able to speak "automatically." There were sleep-dialogues that sometimes became violent. Desnos, Breton, and probably many of the others experimented with opium and other drugs, which is only logical considering their essentially psychedelic (i.e., "mind-revealing") pursuit and the pervading spirit of experimentation.’

The status and significance of the avant-garde is one of the crucial issues in understanding the phenomenon of modernism. Some of the most important manifestations of ‘avant-garde’ was a multitude of self-conscious art movements since mid-nineteenth century and often suffixed with ‘isms’ like Symbolism, Impressionism, Aestheticism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Dada, Futurism, Cubism and so on. The impact of these avant-garde movements on subsequent development in literature and art is immense. Consequently many theoretical accounts of avant-gardes have appeared from time to time. The most influential among them are Greenberg’s, Renato Poggioli’s and Peter Burger’s theorization of the avant-garde like Surrealism, Dadaism, Futurism and Imagism.

Renato Poggioli’s *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* surveys the historical, social, psychological and philosophical aspects of avant-garde. Poggioli points out that avant-garde artists across all ‘isms’ can be seen as sharing certain ideals or values which are manifested in the non-conformist lifestyles they adopted, and the avant-garde culture can be viewed as a variety or subcategory of Bohemianism.
Greenberg, in his seminal article ‘Avant-Garde and Kitch’, notes that the avant-garde was a product of a historical outlook which perceived the contemporary bourgeois social order not as an eternal state but a product of historical change. It also coincided with the rise of scientific revolutionary thought in Europe. These things, Greenberg points out, gave the avant-garde the courage to ‘emigrate from the bourgeois to bohemia’ which was also an emigration from ‘also an emigration from the markets of capitalism, upon which artists and writers had been thrown by the falling away of aristocratic patronage’. Greenberg goes on to point out that most important feature of the avant-garde was, ‘the imitation of imitating’ and artistic processes becoming the subject matter of art. This gave it abstraction and self-referentiality which is a crucial aspect of modernist art.

Another influential theorist of the avant-garde is Peter Burger. He makes a distinction between ‘aestheticism or aesthetic modernism’ and the ‘avant-garde’, where the former category designates art in the bourgeois society which claims to be autonomous, while the second category of the avant-garde, ‘proposed the sublation of art – sublation in the Hegelian sense of the term: art was not simply to be destroyed, but transferred to the praxis of life where it would be preserved, albeit in a changed form.’ Burger’s distinction is useful for differentiating between ‘high modernism’ of Yeats, Eliot, Rilke, Joyce, Proust, and Mann, deeply committed to the integrity of the artifact, and the "historical avant-garde" like Dadaism, Surrealism and Futurism, constituted by these socially active movements that questioned the coherence of art and its withdrawal from social life. (Burger, Foreword: xxxvii)

The political and ideological underpinnings of the modernist literature generated a sharp debate among its critics, especially Marxists critics. It has been known that the politics of the high modernist writers like TS Eliot, Ezra Pound, WB Yeats and TE Hulme were deeply conservative. T.S. Eliot in his famous Preface to Lancelot Andrews (1928) noted that
he was, ‘a classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion’. Ezra Pound’s preference for Fascism and Yeats’ love for aristocratic values is also widely known.

However, the Marxist critics are divided over the ideological implications and politics of modernism. The famous ‘realism’ debate over Expressionism between noted Marxist critics like Adorno, Lukacs, Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Bloch in 1930’s in German Marxism is particularly important. ‘Expressionism was artistic style in which the artist seeks to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse within a person. The artist accomplishes this aim through distortion, exaggeration, primitivism, and fantasy and through the vivid, jarring, violent, or dynamic application of formal elements. More specifically, Expressionism as a distinct style or movement refers to a number of German artists, as well as Austrian, French, and Russian ones, who became active in the years before World War I and remained so throughout much of the interwar period’. (Expressionism, www.britannica.com)

The sharpest criticism of the modernist writers like Kafka, Eliot and Joyce came from Marxist critics like Georg Lukacs who upheld realism as a literary value. In his ‘Ideology of Modernism’, he believes that the modernist ideology is ‘derived from ontological dogma of solitariness of man’, which is associated with ‘ahistorical’ and ‘static’ view of human reality. The dogma results in disintegration of ‘objective reality’ and replaces ‘psychopathology’ as the goal of modernist writer is characteristic of such a dogma. Consequent exaltation of subjectivity, according to Lukacs, results in ‘man’s subjectivity itself’ becomes further impoverished. He insisted on the notion of art as reflecting social reality faithfully. Countering this view, the Marxist dramatist Bertolt Brecht opined that the function of art was not to ‘reflect’ social reality, but to change it and it could be done only through shock tactics of the avant-garde and modernist aesthetics. Brecht pointed out that by copying or imitating the realistic methods of Balzac or Tolstoy, one would cease to become a realist because
reality is dynamic and hence the means of representing it should also be dynamic and new.

The Marxist scholars of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theorists like Theodore Adorno and Walter Benjamin defend the modernist and experimental arts on similar lines as Brecht. (Childs, 33).

However, the politics of modernism often reveals itself as exclusivist construction of the canon. Andreas Huyssen critiques the distinction between ‘high art’ and ‘mass culture’ which is so essential to understanding modernism. She argues that ‘modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture.’ (Huyssen, Introduction vii) She also notes in her reading of Flaubert’s Madame Bovary how modernism/mass culture dichotomy is gendered as ‘masculine/feminine’.

The feminist critique of modernism and its canon focus on what Bonnie Kime Scott in her introduction terms as ‘the unconsciously gendered masculine’ in its selection of authors, styles and concerns (2). Hence they focus on the women writers who are excluded from the Modernist canon till 1990s like May Sinclair, Mina Loy, Rose Macaulay, Jean Rhys and Sylvia Townsend Warner. ‘The feminists also underline the preoccupation with female stereotypes in their works. Some feminists also suggest a separate female aesthetics within Modernism’. (Childs, 112). Deborah Parsons points out, “The traditional canon of Modernist authors, texts and critical principles now becomes a highly contested terrain, for not only was the feminist project of recovering forgotten women writers strengthened by the ability to recognize political value in more formally experimental works, but the works of male writers previously regarded as the bastions of a monolithic ‘high’ Modernism demanded reinterpretation.” (175) The later chapters in the thesis will also look at how this ‘unconsciously gendered masculine’ aspect of modernism is revealed in the works of Chitre and Kolatkar.
The postcolonial studies focus on the complex relationship between modernism, racism and imperialism (Booth and Rigby). According to this approach the turn towards the ‘primitive’ and ‘elemental’ other of the western civilization in modernism is fraught with complex issues of racism and imperialism. This approach also questions the rhetoric of ‘degeneration’ in high modernist ideology from the point of view of the context of colonialism and decolonialization. This approach also focuses on the ambivalence processes of othering and alterity in the seminal texts like Conrad’s Heart of Darkness and Forster’s A Passage to India.

Thus there is an attempt to re-read modernism and we notice that a great deal of current interest in modernism is due to proliferation of another more bewildering term ‘postmodernism’. The prefix ‘post’ to modernism indicates that the literary phase associated with modernism is over. However, things are not as simple as that. When Jean Francois Lyotard in his ‘Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism’ states, ‘A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern’, (79) he is accentuating the import of the avant-garde tendency of certain postmodern art, which is radically experimental and irreverent towards the established rules of art. This irreverence towards traditional and established norms makes the modernist work possible in the first place. The debates around the meaning of the term ‘postmodernism’, however, converge upon a crucial point: that modernism, and the writers termed as modernist like Eliot, Joyce, Beckett, Kafka and Mann were integrated into the Western literary canon and thus became established see Jameson (‘Postmodernism and Consumer Society’1961) and Williams (‘Modernism and the Metropolis’, 170). This process of how modernism, which was explicitly anti-establishment and anti bourgeois in orientation, became established and canonical has to be understood in its social and historical context.

Besides, what is termed Modernism has achieved, in Raymond Williams’ words,
‘comfortable integration into the new international capitalism’. ("When Was Modernism?", 35). He also remarks that Modernism is now canonized and its innovation has become ‘the new but fixed forms of our present moment.’ The well-known art critic Harold Rosenberg, back in 1959 mentioned that ‘The famous "modern break with tradition" has lasted long enough to have produced its own tradition’ and it was possible to speak paradoxically of the ‘tradition of the new.’ (11-12)

1.2 MODERNISM: THE INDIAN CONTEXT

It will be useful to locate modernisms in Indian languages within what Rosenberg terms as the ‘tradition of the new’. Though the contours and specifics of modernism in India will obviously be very different from the one in the West, one can still find interesting parallels and convergences. It is obvious that modernism in India was in many ways analogous and in very significant ways distinctive from the western modernism. Hence, in order to grasp modernisms in Indian languages, one needs to have a comparative framework of analysis. Analogies and differences in various modernisms, including Indian modernisms have to be thought beyond the notion of ‘influence’ as the idea of influence often creates hierarchies between the ‘influencer’ and ‘the influenced’ on the one hand and often relegating the ‘influenced’ culture to the status of being derivative and hence inferior.

In his lucid analysis of Indian modernism in visual art, Partha Mitter terms this view that Indian and non-western modernism as a derivative phenomenon as ‘Picasso Manqué Syndrome’ (7). Mitter points out the art historian W.G. Archer’s evaluation of Gaganendranath Tagore’s cubist paintings as bad imitations and cultural misunderstanding of Picasso. Mitter goes on to expose the double standards in this view when Picasso’s own affinity and debt to African and tribal art was seen as in no way compromising Picasso’s integrity in contrast to the colonial artist Gaganendranath.

For literary studies, a valuable comparative and historical framework formulated by
Czech scholar Dionyz Durisin for analyzing literary analogies, parallels, interactions and divergences among literatures can be fruitfully utilized for analysis of modernisms in Indian context as it does away with the problematic notion of influence on the one hand, and on the other hand, it equips the researcher to study literary processes in multilingual society. A section in Amiya Dev and Sisir Kumar Das’s *Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice* (1989) is titled ‘Interliterariness’ underlying the significance of Durisin’s approach. Abhai Maurya’s book *Confluence: Historico-Comparative and Other Literary Studies* (1988) also discuss Durisin’s important ideas. Durisin’s process-based theorization highlights the historical interconnectedness and interactional relationships between numerous literary, cultural and social processes. The notion can be understood as being dialectically related to the notion of ‘intra-literary’ processes. Intraliterary processes are those literary processes which are specific to a single literary tradition or language. On the other hand, interliterary processes are those literary processes which are common to one or more literary traditions or languages. He distinguishes interliterary relationships into two interconnected and overlapping fields: those resemblances caused by genetic (contactual) relationships and literary resemblances (analogies) brought about by typological affinities. The genetic (contactual) relationship in his theory does not imply the search for ‘origins’ and ‘influences’, but describes ‘the coherence of the work of literature with preceding tradition…i.e. the relationships which one way or another participated relationships into external contactual and internal contactual relationships. The external contactual relations would include things like “various reports and mention of the literature of other countries, actual contacts between writers and persons of letters, literary critical and literary historical studies of phenomena of foreign literatures and so forth’, while the ‘internal contactual relationships’ are ‘immediate’ and find their reflection and application in the actual structure of the literary phenomenon. One can discern a greater degree of involvement of foreign values in literary phenomenon
like the works or literary movements.

Susan Stanford Friedman challenges the widely prevalent but Eurocentric view of modernism as “a loose affiliation of aesthetic movements that unfolded in the first half of the twentieth century” adopted even by associations like the Modernist Studies Association. This view cuts off the temporal borders of modernism roughly between the 1890s–1940s. She remarks, “This periodization cuts off the agencies of writers, artists, philosophers, and other cultural producers in the emergent postcolonial world just as their new modernities are being formed. India’s independence from Britain and the wrenching murder and displacement of millions in Partition that gave birth to two postcolonial nation-states happen in 1947–1948.” Friedman focuses on the spatial politics of modernism and its relation to colonialism. She says, “The centrality of colonialism and postcolonialism for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries requires a new geography of modernity and modernism.” This allows her to challenge the idea that the postcolonial modernists were in some ways derivative. She says, “Whether acknowledged or not, prevailing concepts of modernist internationalism stage Western artists as the innovators and the cultures of the rest as tribal and traditional, as the raw material for creative appropriation and transmutation into modern art.” (Friedman, “Periodizing Modernism”)

Friedman comes up with an alternative view about modernism, one which is more fruitful in discussion about Indian modernism. She views modernism “as the expressive dimension of modernity, one that encompasses a range of styles among creative forms that share family resemblances based on an engagement with the historical conditions of modernity in a particular location. Multiple modernisms emergent in the context of modernities located across a global landscape has a profound effect on historical periodization. Instead of looking for the single period of modernism, with its (always debatable) beginning and end points, we need to locate the plural periods of modernisms,
some of which overlap with each other and others of which have a different time period altogether.” This perspective of “A full spatialization of modernism”, according to Friedman, “changes the map, the canon, and the periodization of modernism dramatically.” The important point that Friedman is making is “Every modernity has its distinctive modernism.” (“Planetarity”471-499)

In *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* edited by Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, the editors note, “The term modernism breaks open into something we call geomodernisms, which signals a locational approach to modernisms’ engagement with cultural and political discourses of global modernity. The revelation of such an approach is double. It unveils both unsuspected “modernist” experiments in “marginal” texts and unsuspected correlations between those texts and others that appear either more conventional or more postmodern.” (3) Doyle, Winkiel and Friedman’s theorization of modernism, its periodization and its geography allows us to grasp the phenomenon of modernism in a more nuanced way. The chronological mismatch and difference in periodization of modernisms in Indian literatures can be understood as arising out of more locational and spatialized reading of International modernism.

1.2. 1 “THE BROKEN GESTALT”: MODERNISM IN INDIAN POETRY

Noting that ‘The devastating transformation of sensibility that is associated with modern revolt in the fine arts has been a worldwide phenomenon’, Dilip Chitre (An Anthology of Marathi Poetry (1945-65), 1-5) compares the shift from the Romantic and Victorian to the Modernism in Marathi with that of English and remarks that ‘What took nearly a century and half to happen in England, happened within a hurried half century in Marathi literature. During the Second World War, the attitude matured and ripened. It became bold enough to shatter established by the immediately preceding generations. It began to approach the seven centuries old tradition and see in it a gestalt of its own choice.’
Something similar happened in most of the Indian languages.

The problem of terminology and taxonomy of modernism in Indian literary historiography, however, is very complex. While ‘modernity’ as a social and historical phenomenon in India has received substantial theoretical attention from various scholars like Sudipto Kaviraj, GN Devy, Sisir Kumar Das and Partha Chatterjee among many others, the term ‘modernism’ as a literary movement/s has not received attention it deserves. The GN Devy and Fred Dallmayr anthology _Between Tradition and Modernity: India’s Search for Identity A Twentieth Century Anthology_ (1998) is an excellent collection on the question of the complex relation of modernity and tradition, colonialism and postcolonialism in the Indian context. While there is noteworthy theorization about the Indian context of modernism in visual art in the writings of Geeta Kapur (2000) and Partha Mitter (2007), there is hardly any discussion regarding modernism as a literary movement of the mid-twentieth century, the kind of phenomenon Chitre is talking about. However, using Durisin’s notion of interliterariness and Doyle, Winkiel and Friedman’s modernism as a spatialized, localized phenomenon which is not limited to a period or geographical location, we can discuss some significant characteristics of Indian modernisms. Then we can see if these characteristics can be discerned in the writings of Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar.

As Supriya Chaudhuri notes, “The distinctions between modernity, modernization, and modernism are particularly complicated in the case of India, but remain crucial to a historical understanding of the ‘modern’ in all its senses” (942). Aparna Dharwadker points out that the commonest terms for “modern” and “modernity” in the Indian languages are _adhunika_ and _adhunikata_, respectively, and they appear with the greatest frequency in two leading literary languages of the modern period, Hindi and Bengali. Both terms designate a chronology— circa 1850 to the present—as well as a complex of literary, cultural, and political qualities. In the cultural-political sphere, the terms define a period (“the modern
age”); a phase in the history of society and the nation (“modern India”); and particular ways of thinking (“modern” attitudes to, say, society, the family, sexuality, and gender). In the literary sphere, they indicate a body of writing (“modern” Bengali or Punjabi or Gujarati literature); a phase in the development of a language (“modern” Assamese); specific authors ranging widely in time and place (Bankimchandra Chatterjee [1838–94], Rabindranath Tagore [1861–1941], Buddhadeva Bose [1908–74], Gopal Krishna Adiga [1918–1992], and Girish Karnad [1938–], to name a few); genres such as fiction, poetry, drama, and criticism; modes such as comedy and satire; forms such as love poetry; particular techniques of versification and fictionalization; and even the qualities of fictional characters in novels or plays. In many critical studies, the concept of *adhunikata* bodh is employed as a measure of the “sense” or “understanding” of modernity in the work of a particular author or group of authors. “Modern” is also variously synonymous with “new” (*naya* or *navya*) “contemporary” (samakaleen), “progressive” (pragatisheel), and even “post-independence” (svatantryottara); its established antonym is “tradition” (parampara). However, the equivalent term for “modernism”—*adhunikatavad*—is entirely absent in Indian language taxonomy and theory. The theoretical term closest to it is *uttara-adhunikatavad* (postmodernism) and the dozen or so works dealing with this movement in the Indian languages are completely dwarfed by the currency of adhuni and adhunikata (142).

Aparna Dharwadkar points out significant difference in terminology and taxonomy of modernism in Indian literary history. She says, “The absence of a distinction between “modernity” and “modernism” in Indian taxonomy presents a notable contrast to the West, which continues to regard modernism as a specific aesthetic-political expression of modernity, however permeable its boundaries.” Therefore, she concludes “Conceptually Indian modernity is defined overwhelmingly by/as that initial moment of rupture from indigenous tradition brought about by colonialism, one that contains all subsequent
disjunctions as extensions of the original breach” (143).

Sisir Kumar Das in his erudite *A History of Indian Literature 1911-1956: Struggle for Freedom: Triumph and Tragedy* points out the difference between the European modernity and Indian modernity. He then cites a useful distinction made by Calinescu between ‘the first modernity’ or bourgeois modernity emerging out of the doctrine of progress, and concerns of time and reason, and the ‘other modernity’ articulated by Baudelaire which is an expression of antibourgeois attitude ranging from rebellion, anarchy and apocalypticism (398). We can use the term ‘modernism’ to indicate Calinescu’s ‘other modernity’. The distinction between modernity and modernism would correspond to the distinction between Kannada “Navodaya (The Renaissance) poetry” and “Navyathe” (Shivaprakash, 151). Shivaprakash remarks that most of the poetry in Kannada before “Navyathe” of the fifties was essentially ‘transitive’- which means it prospered in the presence of an audience. The poetry of “Navyathe” showed great deal of influence of western modernist poetry and it became more and more intellectual. Shivaprakash points out, “it was no more an act of communication but a form” (153). Shivaprakash’s critique of modernism is directed towards semantic obscurity of the modernist idiom and also towards the individualism and a lack of social commitment on the part of the modernist poets. This criticism is reminiscent of Lukas’ Marxist criticism of modernism who approved realism and representationalism as literary values.

Chronology of modernism in Indian context is also a contested and debated issue. Vinay Dharwadkar notes that the ‘nation-wide movement that started in the 1930s- and continued to affect writers and readers until the end of the 1970s –was the Indian counterpart of Anglo-American modernism, in which poets in practically every language broke away from traditional (often highly Sanskritized) metres, stanza patters, styles, materials, and themes to invent ‘free verse’ poetry’. (189) Dharwadkar points out that they concentrated on themes such as ‘the disintegration of traditional communities and familiar cultural
institutions, the alienation of the individual in urban society, the dissociation of thought and feeling, the disasters of modernization, the ironies of daily existence, and the anguish of unresolved doubts and anxieties.’ This new sensibility found its earliest expression in the Bengali poetry of Jibanananda Das (1899-1954) in the thirties and the Marathi poetry of Bal Sitaram Mardhekar (1909-1956) in the forties. Other important poets of this early modernist phase are Buddhadev Bose (1908-1974) in Bengali, Gopalkrishna Adiga (1918-1992) in Kannada, Ayyapa Panikar in Malayalam, Niranjan Bhagat (1926-) and Suresh Joshi (1926-1986) in Gujarati, SH Vatsyayan ‘Agyeya’ (1911-1987) and Gajanan M Muktibodh (1917-1969) in Hindi, Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) in English and so on. The modernist shift of the 50s is also visible in the sensibility of Indian English poetry as discussed above.

Before the emergence of the radical experimental modernist writings, most of the Indian languages went through a phase, which was termed ‘Progressive’ and it was under great influence of socialist and realistic mode of Russian and French literatures. The first meeting of Indian Progressive Writer’s Association was held in 1936 in Lucknow. The influence of this phase is felt in the writings of Munshi Premchand, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Ismat Chughtai among many others. Excesses under Stalinist rule and the impact of Gandhian ideology resulted in waning of this movement. Relationship between this progressive and experimental modernist phase is problematic and complex.

As Supriya Chaudhuri points out the Bengali literary modernism was experienced as a reaction to Tagore and was marked by the foundation of a literary journal, Kallol in 1923 and in Hindi it is inaugurated in 1943 with the publication of Tar Saptak, an anthology of seven poets edited by SH Vatsyayan’ Ajnaya (955-957). Amiya Dev has noted the diachronic mismatch and lack of chronological mismatch between Bengali and Hindi avant-garde movements. He points out that the movement of prayogvad (experimentalism) in Hindi was largely a reaction to the movement pragativad (progressive socialist). This pragati-prayog
situation does not emerge in other languages in the same way. Dev notes that though lot of *pragati* and *prayog* were recorded in Bengali, there was no historical structure where *prayog* is a reaction to *pragati*. In fact, Dev says that in Bengali *prayog* was prior to *pragati* and was in no way inimical to the later (325). However, there are serious problems in historiography of modernism as it seems to emerge in different ways in different Indian literatures.

Bholabhai Patel notes how Baudelaire and Tagore were major influences on the emergence of the modern Gujarati poetry. He also notes how translations of Baudelaire, Eliot and Rilke and the poems on the Western poets and the Greek myths were common in both the languages. Contrasting Bengali modernism with Gujarati, Bholabhai Patel says that the third and the fourth decades of Gujarati literature show a great influence of Gandhi and to far lesser extent Marxism (253). He notes that the major Gujarati poets of this era like Sundaram and Umashankar Joshi were more affected by Gandhianism than Marxism.

Patel also comments on the powerful influence of Western modernism and urban consciousness on both Gujarati modernist poetry and Bengali modernist poetry. He also points out the significance of translation of the Western modernist poetry into the respective languages by major modernist Bengali poets like Buddhadev Bose and Suresh Joshi in Gujarati and speculates on the possibility of Suresh Joshi’s knowledge and influence of Buddhadev Bose’s translation of Baudelaire on his own Gujarati translations of Baudelaire (259).

Patel discusses the deep impact of Baudelaire and Rilke on the Gujarati modernist poetry of the fifties and more clearly of the sixties. He notes that Niranjan Bhagat’s *Praval Dvipa* (1956) “the first high peak” of modernist Gujarati poetry in the years after independence, significantly evokes Baudelaire’s *Tableaux Parisiens*, though Bhagat’s ‘mahanagar’ or metropolis is not Paris but Bombay.

Patel comments that modernism emerged in Bengali as a revolt against Rabindranath
launched by his junior contemporaries like Buddhadev Bose, Achintyakumar Sengupta, Bishnu Dey, Jibanananda Das and Sudhindranath Duta. According to Patel, these poets suffered from an ‘anxiety of influence’ and the poets of this new generation tried to free themselves from the all-pervading influence of Rabindranath.

Meenakshi Mukherjee pointedly articulates the central debates regarding modernism in India, “Was it something derivative that appeared here only in response to what was happening in the West, with an inevitable time lag? Modernity emerged in Europe as part of an evolving historical process, triggered off by certain social, political and technological changes, and consolidated by a paradigm shift in the realm of knowledge and philosophy. Modernism is a literary/ aesthetic mode while modernity pertains to the mindset and lifestyle of an individual or society. Can literary modernism manifest itself in our writing without its social and material corollary—modernity— making a dent in our public or private behaviour?”

Mukherjee has given following the arguments to counter this charge against modernism in the sixties. India went through its own transformative upheavals in early and mid twentieth century—to make certain shifts in temper inevitable; and these changes were bound to be reflected in the modes of representation. Break-down of the joint family, the deprivations caused by the Second World War, the man-made famine of the early nineteen forties which resulted in mass migration from the rural to the urban locations, followed by the large scale displacement and trauma caused by the violent dismemberment of the country—these experiences jolted a large part of the society, at least in the northern part of the subcontinent, from its previous sense of rootedness and social orthodoxy. There is no doubt that our writers—no matter which language they wrote in—were indeed influenced by European modernism; but the sense of alienation that pervaded our texts of the ’60s was not a simple act of grafting Kafka or Camus to Marathi or Bangla. There were indigenous
circumstances that led to a sense of fragmentation, pushing the writers in directions they had not travelled before. (Mukherjee, “Mapping the Elusive Terrain: Literature”)

However, if we deploy Friedman and Durisin’s theorization the whole defence of modernism would be unnecessary as Indian modernism would emerge not as a derivative phenomenon but a spatial extension of modernisms in other parts of the world and at the same time an ‘interliterary phenomenon’ where elements of multiple literary traditions and avant-garde movements blend to give rise to its own distinctive poetics and politics. It would also explain the chronological mismatch between various modernist movements in Indian languages.

The modernists revolted against the dominant paradigm of poetry, which the editors of *Vibhava*, an anthology of modern Indian writing term as ‘Tagore Syndrome’ (UR Ananthmurty et. al. 1-2). These editors remark that ‘In terms of both style and ideology, one can notice a surprising similarity among the father-figures of different Indian literatures. Cultural nationalism, romantic love, nature, mysticism, metaphysical leanings and an ideal of nation building formed the common ethos of the Tagore Syndrome and the concoction they produced had become a little too sweet and stale. The dominant form in poetry was the lyric and the fiction writer’s creed was realism.’

The social context of the modernist movement in India was a rapid industrialization and urbanization of the society accompanied by spread of literacy and growing disillusionment with the Nehruvian socialist vision of the nation. Along with many factors responsible for the development of modernism is the development in print capitalism. EV Ramakrishnan notes that along with factors such as the western influence, the process of standardization of Indian languages, the redefinition of relations between various literary genres and the secularization of the concept of literature, ‘have to be considered in relation to the emergence of print capitalism in Indian languages’ and that ‘the steady spread of print
capitalism has contributed towards shaping of the critical self-awareness which is one of the main attributes of the modernist sensibility’. He also draws attention to the fact that by the thirties the concept of literature as something written, printed and published has taken roots in the middle class society’ (25).

Chitre draws our attention to the paperback revolution in the publishing industry following the end of the Second World War and the feverish activity in translation and the impact of these things on modernism in Indian languages. He notes that before the war, books were costly and difficult to acquire and they came chiefly from the British publishers. Due to these processes, literature from all over the world became available in the form of inexpensive paperbacks. This unleashed a tremendous variety of cross-influences and the influences ranged from classical Greek and Chinese to contemporary French, German, Spanish, Russian and Italian. (*An Anthology of Marathi Poetry (1945-65)*, 1-2)

Another noteworthy and related factor to the development of modernism in Indian languages was the rise of ‘little magazines’. The content and the form of these magazines was antagonistic towards the cultural establishment which was seen as comprising of middle-class, upper caste and patriarchal. They were irregularly brought out and they ran on little financial support. They, however, gave space to dissenting, radical and experimental modes of writing which would hardly be accommodated in the ‘prestigious’ canonical periodicals. The little magazine movements in Indian languages have played a great role in the spread of modernist sensibilities. To give an example, there were literally hundreds of literary ‘little magazines’ in Marathi in the period between the sixties and the seventies.

Another important theorization about Indian modernism comes from EV Ramakrishnan. EV Ramakrishnan also makes a crucial distinction between the High Modernist and the ‘avant-garde’ aspects of modernism in Indian poetry because he feels that the use of the term modernism to describe all types of experimental writing is bound to
misrepresent the literary scene. He points out that it is necessary to distinguish between conservative and the radical strains within the modernist camp and accordingly he terms the former strain as ‘High Modernist’ and the later by the term ‘avant-garde’ (4-5). He notes that our use of the term ‘modernism’, “is haunted by bad faith in the Indian context it is because of the large segment of Indian reality cannot be accommodated within its aesthetic matrix. The other India, which is untouched by print journalism and lives beyond the written word, is nevertheless strong presence, which an Indian writer has to come to terms with. The terms ‘High Modernism’ and ‘the avant-garde’ as used in this study describe how various writers within the modernist group respond to the presence of such a subaltern domain of counter-culture constituted by underprivileged classes. The avant-garde tradition in the poetry of Indian languages constitutes an attempt to nativise Western modernism through the accommodation of greater segments of Indian reality within these forms”. (4-5)

K. Satchidanandan in his review of Ramakrishanan’s book points out the difficulties and problems in Ramakrishanan’s use of Burger’s categories of ‘high modernists’ and ‘avant-gardes’ in the Indian context. He points out “A poet like Muktibodh for example may be classified as "high-modernist" or "avant-garde" depending upon the way we read him..... While one can certainly speak of avant-garde texts and avant-garde movements, it is difficult to consider the entire oeuvre of a poet like Dilip Chitre, Labhshankar Thakker, Arun Kolatkar, Srikant Verma or even this reviewer "avant-gardist" because all of them have authored texts with typical "high modernist" features.” (Satchidanandan, “Towards a Theory of Indian Modernism”)

However, if we look at the terms like ‘modernism’, ‘postmodernism’ in Indian context from the lenses of postcolonial theory, we realize that the significance of terms is more problematic than it appears. As we know, the post colonial theory focuses on the cultural and literary issues of previously or currently colonized countries, or literature from
colonizing countries which deals with colonization or colonized peoples. Most prominent themes in the postcolonial theoretical writings are the questions of nationhood, identity, and cultural hybridity.

The postcolonial perspective would see the rise of modernity in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a product of colonizing discourses and hence the postcolonial period would be the postmodern period in the context of Indian society. The period often designated as ‘modernist’ in some Indian literatures would, then fall under the postcolonial period and hence would overlap with the postmodern. Thus the postcolonial perspective complicates the relationship between the categories ‘modernity’, ‘modernism’, ‘postmodernity’ and ‘postmodernism’ in the Indian context. One may even argue whether these categories are relevant at all in the Indian context as they are specifically from the western cultural history. Some Indian critics might even see the late modernist phase, the one designated by EV Ramakrishnan as the ‘avant-garde’ as being postmodern in the Indian context. However, these avant-garde movements like the Dalit or the feminist movement rely heavily on the values of modernity and so they can be seen as continuation of what Habermas has termed the ‘incomplete project of modernity’.

Rajeev Patke uses the term ‘postcolonial poetry’ to “sustain a stereoscopic perspective on the dialectical play between assimilation and resistance, or dependency and the will-to-autonomy, which constitutes the fundamental relation between poetry and postcoloniality”. He further notes three types of synergy in this poetry: between assimilation and resistance to colonial culture, between being shaped and giving shape to the colonial language, between the will to community and the will to modernity in an era of asynchronous decolonialization.”

(Postcolonial Poetry in English 4)

Critics like Simon Gikandi (2006) point out, “The great irony of the history of postcolonial literatures was the emulation of high modernists, such as Eliot and Yeats, as
formal models....... I am tempted to say solely—in the language and structure of modernism that a postcolonial experience came to be articulated and imagined in literary form. The archive of early postcolonial writing in Africa, the Caribbean, and India is dominated and defined by writers whose political or cultural projects were enabled by modernism even when the ideologies of the latter, as was the case with Eliot, were at odds with the project of decolonization.”(Gikandi, “Preface: Modernism in the World”)

While Indian poetry in English by the very fact it is written in English can be read fruitfully in the light of postcolonial theory, Indian poetry in other languages too share some of the features of postcolonial cultural predicament like the alienation of the westernized bourgeois elite and cultural hybridization. However, the modernist Indian poetry in other languages does not have to prove its national identity every now and then like the Indian poetry in English. This does not mean it is accepted uncritically in terms of national identity. The modernist Indian poetry in non English languages is also charged with being foreign and derivative very frequently.

This postcolonial predicament is also responsible for modernist obsession with the Bhakti poetry. Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar both translated Marathi Bhakti poetry. The desire to reconnect with the tradition of Bhakti is manifestation of the postcolonial desire for authentic Indian identity. Ketkar (2010) notes how the idea of ‘nation’ and ‘authentic identity’ was different for the writers and translators of the colonial period and the writers and translators of the postcolonial period. He says,

‘The bilingual poet-translators deploy translation as a strategy to de-colonize their souls by translating what is considered as ‘truly Indian'. However, what is meant by ‘truly Indian’ changes with history. In case of the older generations of translators of Indian literature into English like Sri Aurobindo or P.Lal, Indianness meant pan-Indian Sanskritic heritage and in case of modernists like Dilip Chitre or AK Ramanujan, Indianness means pre-
colonial heritage in modern Indian languages. Translation becomes one of the inevitable and creative contrivances of giving oneself the sense of belonging and a nationality’. (Ketkar (Trans) Migrating Words: Refractions on Indian Translation Studies 43)

In this context, one can interpret Dilip Chitre’s statement,

‘Why I felt compelled to translate his (Tukaram’s) poetry: as a bilingual poet, I had little choice, if any. There were two parts of me, like two linguistic and cultural hemispheres, and, as per theory, they were not destined to cohere. (Says Tuka-1: Selected poems of Tukaram 307)’ and ‘I have been working in a haunted workshop rattled and shaken by the spirits of other literatures unknown to my ancestors….I have to build a bridge within myself between India or Europe or else I become a fragmented person (Says Tuka-1: Selected poems of Tukaram 311-312).’

The Bhakti literature, in contrast to Sanskritic-Brahminical literature, embodies a far more radical and democratic vision it has been a great attraction to the intellectuals with modernist leanings. The idea of nation implied in Bhakti poetry is hence preferred to the ideal of orientalist construct of Sanskrit India by the post colonial writers. Hence the Bhakti tradition becomes decisive to what Ketkar has termed as the quest for ‘indigenous modernity’ (“The Challenge Called Dilip Chitre” 13) in writings of postcolonial writers and thinkers. However, this preoccupation with the Bhakti was part of the project to what Chitre has called “remaking of a tradition”. (An Anthology of Marathi Poetry (1945-65, 4-5)

Chitre’s comments on B.S. Mardhekar one of the foremost modernist poets in Marathi that “The poet Mardhekar was the most remarkable product of the cross-pollination between the deeper, larger native tradition and contemporary world culture” is applicable to all the major poets of this period. He notes, “the return to the deeper and larger tradition, combined with the immediate heritage of Western poetry, and the spirit of restless individual
experiment, resulted in a remaking of the tradition itself.” (An Anthology of Marathi Poetry (1945-65, 2)

Hence, modernism in the Indian context can be understood as remaking rather than rejection or forgetting of tradition and the thesis is in inquiry into these processes of remaking and reforging of the tradition by two major Indian poets of post Independence India.

K. Satchidanandan says,

“Literary modernism in its Indian form had meant an articulation of the angst and alienation, the divided self, of the Indian caught between the gilded image of his pre-colonial past and his squalid present that roamed the crowded thoroughfares of the post-industrial metropolis. At the ontological level, it meant a search for the lost identity of the individual: a quest that often bordered on the metaphysical….Their responses are not without social dimensions, but their central concern seems to have been the destiny of the individual in modern mass society, rather than that of communities caught in the maelstrom of exploitative modernization.” (Satchidanandan, “Imagined Communities”)

The term postmodernism in Indian literary context signifies an ambiguous and equivocal range of associations and many of which are incompatible and contradictory. K. Satchidanandan analyzes the historical shift from modernism to postmodernism by making some generalizations like revolting against the solipsist tendencies of early modernism, longing to communicate with communities, focus on collective identities, questioning the ideologies of progress and so on. (Satchidanandan, “Imagined Communities”)

Deploying theorization about ‘interliterariness’ of Dionyz Durisin for analysis of Indian literatures, Ketkar points out that modernism in India can be understood as an interliterary phenomenon. He notes that the western avant-garde modernist literature combined with the avant-garde literature in other Indian languages overlapped to produce the
Indian version of the international modernist movement. However, the literary resemblances were not merely due to ‘contactual’ relationships but also due to ‘analogical and typological parallels in many social processes like urbanization, industrialization and the global catastrophic events like the world war II. The distinctive history of the subcontinent also created a ground for the reception of the international modernist movement.” (“Warps and Wefts of Literary Traditions 65) As Bholabhai Patel notes, “Independence uncovered us totally, without reservation. Independence and Partition, and with that urbanization and industrialization, shook the creative sensibility of the poet to the roots; and it became urgent for him to explore new poetic techniques to express his new and sharpened mental states…..he was in tune with Baudelaire’s urban consciousness. (“The Emergence of Modernity in Gujarati and Bengali Poetry” 257). One can discern similar narratives about the rise of the modernist literatures in other Indian languages like Marathi where the modernist poets like BS Mardhekar, Dilip Chitre and Arun Kolatkar wrote in the similar contexts. The interliterary relationships with the western poetic and intellectual movements like Imagism, surrealism, Dadaism, existentialism, psychoanalysis, Marxism and phenomenology is commonplace in most of the Indian literatures after Independence. Ketkar remarks that calling these relationships as ‘influences’ hardly helps us to analyze the specifics and the concrete manifestations of the hybrid and heterogeneous poetics and politics of the period. (“Warps and Wefts of Literary Traditions” 65). The analysis of the external contactual relationships like the visits of the Indian writers and intellectuals to the west (like Mardhekar’s visit to England, or Dilip Chitre’s visit to Iowa Creative Writing Program) and the foreign writer’s visit to India -like Allen Ginsberg’s visit to India and his contact with many Indian writers like Arun Kolatkar during the sixties or the correspondence between writers can help us to understand the phenomenon of the modernism in a more practical way. Analysis of Suresh Joshi’s translation of western modernist poetry into Gujarati collected in
his later anthology *Parkiya* (1975) or Dilip Chitre’s series of translations of major western modernist poets titled ‘Marathi Kavitela Saat Ched’ (Seven hacks in Marathi Poetry) would reveal a profound impact of these translations on subsequent modernist poetry in Marathi and Gujarati. Such acts of translations can be viewed as both ‘external–contactual interliterary processes merely reporting or informing the readers about what is going on in the international scenario and at the same time can be seen as ‘internal- contactual interliterary’ processes yielding devices and tropes which were internalized by subsequent modernist writers.

The scrutiny of distinctive typological non-affinities and divergences at social and historical level can help us to comprehend the differences in production, consumption and circulation of modernist discourses in a variety of Indian languages. It can clarify the reasons behind Bholabhai Patel’s remark that modernism in Gujarati was a late arrival compared to Bengali. It can also help us to grasp the affinities and divergences between the little magazine movements in Indian languages like Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali. The social typological affinities and convergences in modernism owes a lot to the comparable interliterary and interlingual history of the languages. The overlapping histories of colonialism, nationalism, the rise of linguistic chauvinism leading to the linguistic formation of the states, the impact of partition, the so-called ‘Green Revolution’, caste-based social and electoral politics, the impact of Indo-China war etc can help us understand the convergences and divergences of modernism in various Indian languages in a more inclusive manner. Chitre’s observation about ‘paperback revolution’ that impacted the rise of modernism in India can be seen as an instance of ‘external contactual’ interliterary relationship which evolves into ‘internal contactual’ over a period of time when the foreign values are absorbed and are seen as legitimate part of a literary tradition. Chitre’s metaphor of “the cross-pollination” is precisely what Durisinian approach would seek to grasp in its exploration of Indian modernisms.
1.2.2 MODERNISM IN INDIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH

The announcement of arrival of modernism in Indian Writing in English in what is termed as ‘1959 Kavita Manifesto’ which formed the introduction to the first anthology of Modern Indo-Anglican Poetry edited by P.Lal and K. Raghavendrarao. The Manifesto expresses a concern that ‘the blurred and rubberty sentiments of a Sri Aurobindo will slowly clog our own poetry’. The Manifesto declared that the phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu and ‘we must more and more aim at a realistic poetry.’ The manifesto also insisted that poetry must be free from political propaganda and must deal in ‘concrete terms with concrete experience’. The manifesto emphasised the need for a private voice and poetry written in a vital language. The editors declared, ‘We consider all expressions like ‘the sunlight sweet’, ‘deep booming voice’ and ‘fragrant flowers upon the distant lea’ to be ridiculous.’ They also wanted the language of poetry not to become ‘a total travesty of the current patterns of speech’. (qtd. in Nandy, ed. Indian Poetry in English Today 13-14). The manifesto signalled a need for an alternative poetic practice which was anti-romantic and pro-realistic. It had a great impact on the development of later Indian poetry in English.

‘Modernity was available to the Indian English poet readymade’, notes Vilas Sarang (Indian English Poetry Since 1950, 4) and expresses his surprises that modernism came to some Indian languages much earlier. Though most of the early collections of poetry by Ezekiel appeared in the fifties, it is only in the mid sixties, says Sarang that mature, modern poetry emerged in Indian English, with Ezekiel’s The Unfinished Man (1960) and The Exact Name (1965), Kamala Das’s Summer in Calcutta (1965), Gieve Patel Poems (1966) and A.K Ramanujan’s The Striders (1966). Sarang notes that ‘the cautious, muted and modest tone of Ezekiel, Patel and Ramanujan in the sixties is superseded in the seventies by a more confident, ambitious approach’ (Indian English Poetry Since 1950, 5) of Adil Jussawalla’s
Missing Person (1976) Geive Patel’s How Do You Withstand, Body (1976) and Arun Kolatkar’s Jejuri (1976). The year also saw publication of AK Mehrotra’s Nine Enclosures, R Parthasarathy’s Rough Passage, Jayanta Mahapatra’s A Rain of Rites, K.N. Daruwalla’s Crossing of Rivers, Ezekiel’s Hymns in Darkness, Shiv K Kumar’s Subterfuges and Mahapatra’s A Father’s House. Sarang terms the year 1976 as the annus mirabilis of Indian Poetry in English.

There is a basic shift in the orientation of poetic language in modernist poetry. On the one hand, modernism introduced a new type of poetics to Indian writers mainly due to the influence of Euro-American modernism. On the other hand, this poetics allowed the Indian poets to respond in a concrete way to the bleak and depressive social scenario of the post independence India. It was difficult for a sensitive poet to be idealistic and sentimental in a nation divided by communalism, linguistic chauvinism, and rising corruption. Modernism in India gained momentum in the two decades after independence in most of the Indian languages. The modernist break is visible in the formal quality of poetry. It is also visible in the content of Indian poetry in terms of depiction of explicit sexuality, urban angst, existential awareness, confessional element, autobiographical element, self-analysis, self-disgust, and quest for identity. Unlike mysticism, romanticism, nature description, patriotism and lyrical element; modern poetry is marked by the cultural and ideological contexts of disillusionment, urbanization, alienation, identity crisis. This also entails a conflict between tradition and modernity. The distinctive features of the language of modernist poetry like the use of contemporary colloquial style and slang, deliberate obscurity, explicit sexual imagery and symbolism, expletive and scatological cuss words shocking the sensibility of bourgeois and conservative readers, use of the avant-garde techniques of ‘found poetry’, surrealist devices of juxtaposing seemingly illogical and irrational images and symbols, free association of ideas and images instead of coherent discourse, ironical tones and so on can be discerned in
the poetry of Chitre and Kolatkar.

Arvind Krishna Mehrotra’s ‘bharatmata: a prayer (dedicated to Indira Gandhi and Malay Ray Chaudhary) ‘in 1966 is a typical modernist expression of the period:

india my beloved country, ah my motherland
you are, in the world's slum
the lavatory the septic tank
where in paper gutters
fall
the marks
rublesdollarspoundsyenloras francs
yet our stomachs remain sirens
tooting pathetic messages
1 am so used to your cities with a
chain reaction of suburbs
the ganga
is overflowing
with hydroelectric projects
and pretty houses of prostitution
so
shake off the dream of
'the wonder that was India'
like the sun shakes
out of each day's night.
leave the glories and the glorious past
in the milk bar
let the waiter remove it
with his tip (Mehrotra, BHARATMATA – A PRAYER 1-6)

Modern Indian poetry in English is usually read as ‘postcolonial poetry’. As Rajeev Patke notes,

‘postcolonial poetry shows an awareness of what it means to write from a place and in a language shaped by colonial history, at a time when it is not yet free from the force of that shaping. The most interesting Anglophone poetry from the regions settled or colonized by the British grapples with this awareness with an acute sense of difficulties encountered, and the resolutions accomplished, in the pursuit of poetic freedom…the term ‘postcolonial poetry’…sustains a perspective on the dialectical play between assimilation and resistance, or dependency or will-to-autonomy, which constitutes the fundamental relation between poetry and postcoloniality.’ (Postcolonial Poetry in English 4)

The role of language differs in pre-independence and post-independence period. The first generation of postcolonial Indian English poets were caught up in anxiety and self doubts about English language as a means of poetic expression. It was the time when Indian writing in English was despised as “Mathew Arnold in a sari” or “Shakuntala in skirt”. There was an ongoing debate whether Indians can write in English. P.Lal edited Modern Indian Poetry in English: An Anthology and Credo in which he represented this anxiety in the form of questions and answers by many intellectuals of the time. A.K.Ramanujan answer was, “I think the real question is whether they can. And if they can, they will” (qtd. in Mehrotra, Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English 16). Many Indian English poets also expressed the same anxiety in their poems. Parthasarathy believed “… Language is a tree,
loses colour / under another sky” (2). Daruwalla shows his preference for the English language and also personifies English as mistress and writes, “No one believes me when I say/ my mistress is half-caste. Perched/ on the genealogical tree somewhere/ is a Muslim midwife and a goan cook. / But she is more mixed than that. / Down the genetic lane, babus / and professors of English/ have made their one night contribution…” (23) While Kamala Das asserts her choice of English language saying, “The language I speak becomes mine, its distortion, its queerness/ All mine…it is honest, / It is human as I am” (59) Ezekiel also wrote a series of nine poems satirizing Indian English.

We need to relate Indian English poetry to the phenomenon of bilingualism. Many Indian English poets have written poems in Indian languages, besides English. Arun Kolatkar and Dilip Chitre are major bilingual poets who wrote in English as well as Marathi, their mother tongue. Kamala Das, A.K.Ramanujan, Mamta Kalia, Gauri Deshpande, and many other poets are mostly bilingual. These poets write in English and their mother tongue and also translate from either of these languages. Due to this bilingualism, English language largely became Indianized in syntax, word order, idioms, punctuations, tone and stress pattern. Thus, English language no longer remains the language of colonizers but became the language of modern India. Moreover, English translations also became the medium to connect different cultures by making readers available the literature of various regional languages. Why a particular writer chooses to write in mother tongue or in English is a question that has sociological and political implications. But English language gave a certain kind of distancing from self, a greater freedom to Indian English poets. We may remember that a writer like Samuel Becket chose to write in French for artistic reasons.

Pre-independence poets introduced Indian themes where Indianness implied an orientalist notion of ‘glorious India’. Their poems were far from reality and were mystical and mythological On the other hand their poetry was a substandard imitation or reworking
and rewriting of well-known British poets. However, the modernist Indian poets considered the high modernists like T.S.Eliot and Yeats as their poetic models. The major accomplishment of modernism was in the fields of craftsmanship. There is greater interiority and moral introspection in their poems. Ezekiel is the first post independence poet to represent the major aspects of modernity. Publication of his first collection *A Time to Change* in 1952 marked the beginning of modernism in the proper sense. The collection sets the tone and temper of the period. His poems show rational, intellectual attitude, and are packed with sharp irony, self-analysis, self-disgust, alienation, and growth, and they also explore human sexuality. Ezekiel put poetry at the center of moral, private, and public issues. 

The poem “Confession” displays these emotions of Ezekiel thus:

When I pretend to be happy
I let the intellect
Boisterously propel me on,
Play with women Chinese chequers,
Trade on the names of prophets,
Listen to the wireless
Consume my dreams, and turn away
Unsatisfied, to be alone. (63)

Along with Ezekiel, the poets, who appeared on the scene of Indian English poetry are, A.K.Ramanujan, Dom Moraes, Adil Jussawalla, Gieve Patel, A.K.Mehrotra, Jayanta Mahapatra and Keki Daruwalla. These poets reflect various aspects of modernism.

In this period, Kamala Das emerged as a major Indian English woman poet. By 1948 Kamala Das had started publishing her poems in P.E.N though her first collection *Summer in Calcutta* was published much later in 1965. She made an impact with her first collection
because her poetry depicts her struggle to relocate Indian women. She mapped out the interior landscape of Indian Women in the bold idiom. Her poems show clear shift of theme, treatment and language from that of Naidu. Das’s poems are on love, sex, religion, place, family, and socio-political conditions. Close reading of the poems of both, Naidu and Das shows that even when they take up the same theme, their treatments differ. Naidu is romantic and idealistic whereas in Das’s poems there is a pressure of personal experiences. Naidu celebrates spirituality while Das celebrates the body and its sensuality. Naidu’s “The Indian Dancer” and Kamala Das’s “The Dance of the Eunuch” show this difference clearly. Naidu in “The Indian Dancer” describes the vivid, rhythmic movements of the dancers and creates a visual picture thus:

Now silent, now singing and swaying and swinging

like blossoms that bend to the breezes or showers,

Now wantonly winding, they flash, now they falter,

and lingering, languish in radiant choir; (Paranjape 65-66)

Nevertheless, the poem lacks the inner drama played in the minds of the dancers. Das’s “The Dance of the Eunuchs” traces the anguish of the marginalized. The poem conveys a sense of the morbid:

It was hot, so hot, before the eunuchs came
To dance, wide skirts going round and round, cymbals
Richly clashing, and anklets jingling, jingling,
Jingling ..................................................

.......................................................they sang of
Lovers dying and of children left unborn…
Some beat their drums; others beat their sorry breasts
And wailed, and writhed in vacant ecstasy. They
Were thin in limbs and dry; like half-burnt logs from
Funeral pyres, a drought and rottenness
Were in each of them.

And rain, a meager rain that smelt of dust in
Attics and the urine of lizard’s and mice… (9)

Naidu portrays positive, idealistic picture of the dancers, while, Das talks of malaise that haunts the eunuchs. The poem by Das takes up issues like gender, pain and inability to communicate, denial of humanity, and the violence of patriarchy. Naidu resolves everything through mystical reconciliation but Das does not resolve anything. She remains ambivalent to notions of reconciliation and transcendence. When Das started writing, feminist movement in India was gaining momentum. Naidu wrote during the nationalistic phase of the freedom struggle. She represents national identity while Das speaks on behalf of the oppressed Indian woman. Das introduces a confessional tone and a bold idiom in Indian English poetry. Among the Indian English women poets, Das is perhaps the most controversial and influential. After Das many women poets like Gauri Deshpande, Mamta Kalia, Melanie Silgardo, Charmayne de Souza, and Eunice De Souza began writing and publishing in English. They evidence in their separate ways originality but they were largely influenced by Kamala Das.

During the mid 1980s one discerns a shift in sensibility in Indian English poetry. The dramatic shifts on the international scale, like the emergence of a globalized market economy, the vigorous growth of information technology, the rise of communalism and the collapse of the Soviet Union had tremendous impact on the societies across the world. What is termed as ‘post modernism’ in cultural sphere is to be understood in this context. A new group of poets emerged in Indian English during the 90s among whom Agha Shahid Ali,
Imtiaz Dharker and Sujata Bhatt are the most remarkable. Their poetry can aptly be called postmodern as it represents various aspects of postmodernism like multiculturalism, globalization, growing influence of literary theories in literary academies, multiple identity, multilingualism, diasporas, intertextuality, celebration of differences, and hybridization. The term ‘Post modern’ is problematic and contested in the context of western culture and in the context of Indian culture it may appear far-fetched. The poetry of this age does not show any inhibitions regarding English language and identity. In fact, the whole politics of identity has changed in this period. This has more to do with the emergence of new theories connected with post colonialism, post modernism, post structuralism and post feminism. Instead of identity crisis, there are assertions of pluralities. Ranjit Hoskote, while talking about 1980s generation of poets in his anthology *Reasons For Belonging* writes:

> “These poets are not apologetic about the fact that they write in English; their poetry is refreshingly free of the excess ideological baggage of Indianness that encumbered the earlier generation of post-colonial Indian poets in English.”

**CONCLUSION:**

It is obvious that ‘modernism’ is a complex and problematic term signifying various and even disparate things. The distinction between ‘modernity’ and ‘modernism’ is a useful one, where the first term is a society category and the later one is seen as cultural phenomenon. This is because very often the ‘modernist’ values defy, critique, or reject the values of ‘modernity’. It was only in the 1960s that the term became widely used as a description of a literary phase that was both identifiable and in some sense over and ‘avant-garde’ was the term used to describe the phenomenon before the sixties.

The status and significance of the avant-garde is one of the crucial issues in understanding the phenomenon of modernism. Some of the most important manifestations of
avant-garde’ was a multitude of self-conscious art movements since mid-nineteenth century and often suffixed with ‘isms’ like Symbolism, Impressionism, Aestheticism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Dada, Futurism, Cubism and so on. The avant-garde artists across all ‘isms’ can be seen as sharing certain ideals or values which are manifested in the non-conformist lifestyles they adopted, and the avant-garde culture can be viewed as a variety or subcategory of Bohemianism.

A useful distinction is made by Peter Burger which distinguishes between ‘aestheticism or aesthetic modernism’ and the ‘avant-garde’, where the former category designates art in the bourgeois society which claims to be autonomous, while the second category of the avant-garde, ‘proposed the sublation of art’. Burger’s distinction is useful for differentiating between ‘high modernism’ of Yeats, Eliot, Rilke, Joyce, Proust, and Mann, deeply committed to the integrity of the artifact, and the "historical avant-garde" like Dadaism, Surrealism and Futurism, constituted by these socially active movements that questioned the coherence of art and its withdrawal from social life. Chronologically, the distinction can indicate the difference between what Kermode has called ‘paleo-modernism’ and ‘neo-modernism’ (qtd in Childs, 2)

‘Modernism’ and the avant-garde phenomenon are closely associated with the urban landscape. This association between metropolis, which is both capitalist and imperialist, and the modernist movement is decisive for analysis of Modernism as an international movement as both capitalism and imperialism have their impact on a transnational scale. Thus the cosmopolitan urban space is a major context in shaping of modernisms all over the world. Partha Mitter in his analysis of Indian modernism in the domain of visual arts notes,

“In this pioneering phase of Indian modernism, the interactions between the global and the local were played out in the urban space of colonial culture, hosted by the intelligentsia who acted as a surrogate for the nation. Western
expansion gave rise to a series of ‘hybrid’ cosmopolises around the globe: Calcutta, Bombay, Shanghai, Singapore, São Paulo, Mexico City, Hanoi, Cairo and Beirut, to name the best known. The two cosmopolitan cities in India, Bombay and Calcutta, which acted as the locus of colonial encounters, were beneficiaries as well as interlocutors of colonial culture.” (11)

The political and ideological underpinnings of the modernist literature generated a sharp debate among its critics. The Marxist critics are divided over the ideological implications and politics of modernism. Luckas notes that disintegration of ‘objective reality’ and replaces ‘psychopathology’ as the goal of modernist writer and consequent exaltation of subjectivity results in ‘man’s subjectivity itself” becomes further impoverished. He insisted on the notion of art as reflecting social reality faithfully.

However, the politics of modernism often reveals itself as exclusivist construction of the canon. Many theorists, especially the postmodern ones, criticize modernism for their insistence on the division between ‘high art’ and ‘low art’. The feminist critics point out the exclusive and patriarchal nature of the modernist canon. The postmodernist also point out that Modernism which once began as an antiestablishment stance is comfortably integrated into the canon of the establishment.

In the Indian context, the modernist moment can be characterized by most of these features: the rejection of the romantic and Victorian views of art, the avant-garde attitudes and experimentation, the little magazine movements, the influence not only of various ‘isms’ but also philosophers like Freud, Marx, Nietzsche the metropolitan and elite context, bohemian life style, rejection of middle class or bourgeois values, exaltation of subjectivity and development of a unique and subjective style. While the modernist impulse in Greenberg’s phrase to turn around and critique the foundation of western civilization, the Indian modernist writers critique the foundations of Indian civilization as based on the unjust
It can be observed that Chitre and Kolatkar belong to Indian modernism which is a distinctive type of modernism. This distinctiveness can be discovered in what Dursin terms as the ‘interliterariness’ of a special kind. On the one hand their works belong to the international modernist movements, and shares some of its basic features like the metropolitan background, impact of Euro-American avant-gardes, little magazine movements, print capitalism, the themes of alienation, sexual agony, myths, existential angst, rebellion against the middle-class values, cultural decadence and the desire to invent a tradition and so on. On the other hand, it also exhibits its affinities with other modernist poets on the Indian subcontinent like the postcolonial questions of identity, hybridization, cultural assimilation and resistance, Anglo-Bhasha bilingualism, intense preoccupation with the Bhakti literature, impact of paperback revolution and critical engagement with the questions of caste, religion and gender repression in India.

Comparing Arun Kolatkar and Dilip Chitre, Bruce King remarks,

‘Chitre’s poetry belongs to the modernist movement of the first half of this century in such formal characteristics as its open-ended musical forms, its reliance on recurring symbols or motifs for formal coherence, its lack of interest in the material world and its location in the estranged artist’s subjectivity. For all its play and surreal elements it is consciously high art in its rejection of the contemporary and technology. Its roots go back to Blake and the Romantics.

By contrast Kolatkar’s later work is post-modernism, although a different
version of post-modernism from Mehrotra’s. Kolatkar appears to be aiming at an anti-art in which the artist’s memories and personality are of no importance and in which the art work has no depth. Its art is in a purposeful transparency or apparent superficiality; in contrast to the formal and elaborated texture of high art….There is no sense of meaningful relationships. Reality appears fragmented, bits and pieces to be accepted on their own or played with for amusement. Rather than waiting for Godot, it is better to enjoy the sight of chickens dancing. Kolatkar’s seriousness is his conscious lack of depth, his own quiet fun-house nihilism in which a mongrel bitch is a goddess. The styles and attitude reflect religious assumptions. Chitre’s romanticism is that of an agnostic with spiritual cravings, while Kolatkar, after an early period of intense personal feelings, now seems to treat them in an off-hand, sceptical manner, as no longer of a pressing concern.’ (181-182)

This dissertation explores questions, evaluates, and elaborates this comparison in a greater detail and in the light of recent collections of these very important ‘bilingual Indian experimentalists’. It primarily draws upon Friedman’s theorization of modernism as a spatial and geographical phenomenon rather than a period bound phenomenon in order to do away with the intrinsic Eurocentric bias built into the term. It also uses Durisin’s comparative notion of interliterariness to grasp the analogical and differential aspects of Indian modernisms. The subsequent chapters look at the poetry of Arun Kolatkar and Dilip Chitre in the context of above discussion. The chapter II ‘Modernism in the Poetry of Dilip Chitre’ discusses the elements of modernism in the poetry of Dilip Chitre and chapter III ‘Modernism in the Poetry of Arun Kolatkar’ deals with Arun Kolatkar’s brand of modernism and postmodernism. The concluding chapter compares the poetry of the two poets and examines how these poets can be considered as representatives of Indian modernism.
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