



Arun Kolatkar and Narrating the Bilingual Position

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This study examines the influx of the English language into the Indian literary sphere and its impact upon bilingual writers. In a country blooming with not just bilingual authors but bilingual denizens, a bilingual writer's attempt to reach or portray a specific bilingual sensibility can all too easily be lost in the numerous languages spoken throughout the country. This study discusses the importance of the specific "literary cultures" of bilingual Indian authors, specifically the literary culture of Marathi of Maharashtra. In an effort to present these findings, the study examines Arun Kolatkar's poem, "Jejuri," in order to analyze the use and place of English in modern Marathi literature and the world. In analyzing "Jejuri" and its author, the study concludes Kolatkar is able to encompass the confusing, twisted, and often-conflicting sensibility of the bilingual Indian citizen by utilizing a distinctive narrative technique that transcends geographical and time constraints. In doing so, Kolatkar is able to overcome the limitations of being a bilingual writer in modern Indian and reach an audience of greater scope.

The Indian-English Barbershop and Who's Listening Where

With numerous languages and literary cultures, the Indian literary catalogue is vast. The introduction of a language not native to India, English, has only complicated the Indian library. As English is not native, the use of it as a medium for the Indian lifestyle and sensibility has been a topic of debate among Indian academics and writers. To some, such as Salman Rushdie, English is as much a part of his Indian life and upbringing as his mother tongue, Bengali; to others, such as Bhalchandre Nemade, English is an invading language and while Nemade recognizes the political and economical benefits of the language, its presence should be absent from "pure" Indian literature.

Regardless of the backlash or support for their choice of language, many Indian writers have chosen to write in both languages, making them bilingual artists. The bilingual writer has many problems with appeasing both sides of his literary heritage. On the one hand, writing in English is somewhat discourteous to a mother tongue; on the other, writing in strictly a mother tongue is not always representational of a bilingual (or trilingual) Indian author's perception of the world. But it is not just the author's perception the critic must take into account when criticizing a work. It is the society's bilin-

gual citizens who will define the place of a work in the culture. As the language an author chooses automatically includes and excludes readers, the choice of language allows for the author to write about different themes, as each audience would be more receptive to certain types of theme. However, since English is used throughout the country, unlike the geographically, specific regional languages, the use of English may fall into the trap of being too expansive, and thus fails to accurately portray the intended sensibility. Thus, grounding an English work in a specific setting or place becomes of key importance, especially when dealing with or attempting to reach a particular audience. By grounding the English work in a specific geographic space, the author is able to pinpoint a region's identity and perception and is therefore more likely to connect to his readers and produce "good" literature.

The use of geographic space in a literary work, then, makes the intended audience that much more important, if not imperative, to criticizing a bilingual writer's works. As Nemade asserts, "any good literature is aimed at its own people, its own literary culture."¹ Thus, the questions must be asked: who are the bilingual writer's "own people," who lives with and within the culture of the bilingual writer, or maybe most importantly who *understands* the bilingual writer? The reader of a bilingual author's piece must be able to straddle and ride two horses, so to speak. The reader of a bilingual writer's piece must be proficient enough in both languages to recognize the intricacies or oddities of the work and sew together the inconsistencies of one language into the other. Therefore, if we are to adopt Nemade's theory on the audience of "good literature," then we can only assume the bilingual writer's audience is strict and exclusive because the "literary culture" of such works is narrower.

But the limited audience of the bilingual author's readership may save the author from many of the downfalls of writing in English, specifically that of "minimilization" cautioned by Meenakshi Mukherjee. Using R.K. Narayan as an example, Mukherjee suggests English writing is inauthentic and impersonal because of a "minimalistic" tendency it must appropriate in order to reach those who are unaware of the "intricacies and contradictions of the [local] culture."² In other words, the purely English author writes to reach the reader outside or, in plainer terms, the non-Indian English reader. At the very least, the English author is writing about a culture that is removed from the many native cultures of India, and will face difficulties in correct representation, or must refrain from addressing culturally sensitive problems and themes. Thus, the English writer, because of a widespread audience, has anxiety towards where the community of readers is located and therefore, must open up his themes and discussion to "essential" India. The result of these broad-stroked works of art is generic representations of the quotidian rhythm of the Indian's life.² But by limiting the audience through choice of linguistic medium and highlighting a particular audience through geographical location and, by association, regional cultures, the bilingual writer is able to overcome many of the limitations of Indian English writing.

The bilingual regional writer, who is at once entrenched in and removed from his linguistic upbringing, has anxieties of audience, of course, but

not at the level of the pure English writer. In the one language, his language choice reaches far and wide. In the other, he has a precise constituency of readers, with a strong literary tradition and culture in his arsenal. The options of language present a benefit. The bilingual writer has one tool in his toolbox that no other writer has: that of incorporating English into the regional culture that he inhabits. By understanding his social and conversational context, the bilingual writer can live two linguistic lives, effectively breeding a hybridized language and promoting a sensibility unique to others who share his bilingual proficiency. By doing so, the bilingual writer can escape the downfalls of reductionist writing. The thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and sensibilities of the work do not need to speak for or to a broad generalization of Indian-English reader. They can be contained, thus providing for a more accurate or authentic telling (or re-telling) of the everyday Indian's life.

The most telling part of the utilization of this tool is the setting of the work, especially when the bilingual writer writes in English. American scholar John Perry emphasizes this hybridized variety of Indian English.³ He attributes the linguistic diversity as being specific to particular "geographic areas." Indian English, according to Perry, is not the same in the South as it is in the North. There are different forms of English jargon and cant that are utilized throughout the nation. While we cannot assume that there is no crossover or sharing of uniquely English expression, the possibility of all idioms to be shared throughout the entire nation is unlikely. Thus, by fixing an English work in a particular setting, the author presents a valid and realistic rendering of a particular type of Indian's life: the bicultural, bilingual, bisensible Indian. In short, it is the geographic boundaries that represent the Indian writer's awareness. Since the Indian states were divided along linguistic lines, the cultures that arose from the linguistic region impact the writer's sensibility, as well.⁴ For example, the bilingual writer who grew up with Bengali as his native language has different perceptions of the world around him than the Marathi writer because of the variance of culture and language.

Most of all, limiting the audience to a specific group leaves the author free to present idiosyncratic understandings of the places and lives around him while being inclusive of a certain constituency. Poems are, after all, a work of a particular creator, designed and displayed in a certain context with certain emotional awareness and sensibility. The poem becomes a reflection of the vision of a particular, and, therefore, its voice only accurately represents a particular society or subculture.

The author's audience, then, becomes an important (if not the main) factor in critically analyzing a bilingual writer's work. The main questions posed should not be whether or not the bilingual author correctly embodies the life and style of a vast range of peoples, but rather whether or not the bilingual author directs his efforts to a specific bilingual audience, nestled in a distinct geographic area and literary culture. Universal themes and international appeal take a backseat to the author as he seeks first to write to and find a voice for his distinct, but influential, constituency. His topics and perspectives are more

pinpointed and direct then the purely English writer who attempts to embrace all the different audiences he may seek.

Narrating the Bilingual's Position: Arun Kolatkar's Narrative Experiment in "Jejuri"

Having established that it is the geographical setting of the work, inherently intertwined with the regional language, that largely determines the audience, the resulting paring down of the audience allows for an idiosyncratic reading of a place that is indicative of a personal viewpoint but can be a voice for a larger population of readers.

Perhaps no other poem in the pantheon of Indian-English Literature pares down audience and "place" as well as Arun Kolatkar's "Jejuri." "Jejuri" is a segmented poem chronicling the narrator's visit to the Maharashtra temple town of Jejuri and is devoted to Khandoba, a form of Shiva worshipped mainly in Maharashtra. The poem starts at the beginning of the day with the bus ride to the temple town and ends at dusk with the narrator leaving the town by train. At first look, the initial narrator presents himself as a skeptic, almost unwilling to allow himself to be wrapped in the blind religiosity of the other pilgrims. As the poem moves through the town, the narrator comments on various aspects of the town, from the mangy bitch outside Khandoba's temple to an old woman begging for money to short conversations held with the other visitors and townspeople. The poem is at once a "place" poem and a "journey" poem as the narration is confined to the visit to and the departure from the town of Jejuri but provides a narrative journey of the narrator's dawning understanding of the importance of fusing modernity and traditionalism. Jejuri and Khandoba are fitting targets for Kolatkar's unique bilingual perspective; together they provide a luscious canvas of cultural and place history upon which Kolatkar is able to draw and envision the bilingual writer's place in Maharashtra. In an effort to be simultaneously inclusive and specific, Kolatkar uses various narration techniques in order to provide the poems with a distinct break from the traditional outlook, not necessarily in order to denigrate or discredit the tradition but rather to allow for different, more modern, perceptions to be represented. Kolatkar's various narrations in "Jejuri" essentially become the voice of the split, modern bilingual, bisensible Indian: the one who grew up within a specific social and religious tradition and context, and therefore has the ability to sympathize, but simultaneously is uniquely disconnected from his or her social context, an outsider on the inside.

One of the largest criticisms levied on "Jejuri" is just this idiosyncratic reading, most of which come from nativistic sympathizers and advocates. From being a simple "tour" without any real attempt to interact with and understand the rites, rituals, and happenings of the temple town to misrepresenting the millions of "unknown Indians" who pilgrim to and patronize the local god, Khandoba, Kolatkar and "Jejuri" have received a barrage of attacks regarding its authenticity and truth in explaining the sensibilities of the modern Marathi-speaking Indian. To many critics, "Jejuri" does not accurately repre-

sent the true Indian's understanding and viewpoint of the regional temple town; Kolatkar's "Jejuri" is too disparaging and sacrilegious to be indicative of the *true* Indian sentiment.

Yet Kolatkar's "Jejuri" is far from being an outsider's tour of Jejuri or an English imposition upon Marathi literary history, if only because of the author's acute knowledge of the Marathi literature history. Kolatkar, a Maharashtra-born poet, is most famous for his English translation of the Marathi poet-saint, Tukaram. Kolatkar's translation of Tukaram, essentially the Shakespeare of Marathi poetry, is one of the most widely regarded translations of the poet that adds weight to Kolatkar's credibility when writing about the intersection of the Marathi-literary tradition and the English-literary tradition. Furthermore, Kolatkar's being entrenched in Marathi literature history serves to distance his observations made in "Jejuri" from the faulty critique that "Jejuri" is a unwarranted attack on the tradition of Marathi literature or that "Jejuri" is a mere "tour" of the town and, by extension, a traditional Marathi sensibility.

But perhaps the largest critique of Kolatkar's observations in "Jejuri" is the author's choice to use English over Marathi, the regional tongue, as the language of medium. This attack on the language choice leaves us with one very important question: what would "Jejuri" look like had it been written in Marathi? Ravindra Kimbahune argues the need for a deep investigation into "whether the perspective of the narrator is his own or whether it is the one imposed by the language."⁵ Indeed, there are rumors that Kolatkar did, in fact, originally write the poem in his home tongue, only to "lose" the manuscript, and recreate the work in English. However, considering the narrator's skeptical outlook and inability to "get inside the...head" of the religious pilgrims, priest, and others throughout the poem, a work of this kind in Marathi would seem to be even more inauthentic, at least to the writer's sensibilities.⁶ As a writer who grew up in the culturally significant town of Kholaphur and who lived most of his life within Maharashtra, Kolatkar is surely in tune with the religiosity of the area. Yet he chooses not to portray the sensibilities of the "thousands of devotees" who, daily, have a connection and rapport with the living gods of the town and the poem.⁷ Thus, the choice to use English as the medium accentuates the outsider position, while also amplifying the narrator as the voice of a specific audience.

Of course, an author's bilingualism poses a problem when examining the author's association with or accessibility to a language and/or literary tradition. Complete understanding of the language, of course, is vital to constructing concrete poems. An uninitiated writer could easily travel down the path of disfiguring or distorting a meaning. Words and images could be stitched together in a delusional manner, creating a word or Frankenstein-esque image that fails to breathe. As Nemade warns, "[Indian English writers] use a language which may not be understood properly and maybe Black slang is put into the mouth of a white girl or an Indian or a coolie."⁸ But Kolatkar's impressive command of English overcomes Nemade's general and basic warning; because he is well versed in English, there is no unintentional distortion in his poetry. His arsenal of words is lacking in neither language and therefore his

presentation of the world is not disfigured in either language. Moreover, Kolatkar is studied in Western traditions, saving him from another of Nemade's judgments against English writers, that of not accurately representing a "literary value system."⁹ Yet as we saw, Kolatkar is far from a poet who represents only a Western "literary value system." Having never left India by the time he wrote "Jejuri," Kolatkar learned English on his own terms completely surrounded by his native context. In other words, he is not trained in English outside of his own interpretation and his own "place" and is therefore more representative of true "Indian English." Most significantly, however, is the way Kolatkar uses English and how it fails to fit into the more literary and academic form in which it was taught and learned.¹⁰ Kolatkar's written English is colloquial, full of contractions and slang, emphasizing a practical understanding of English language and therefore allowing Kolatkar a truer, if split, sensibility.

Indeed, Kolatkar embraces the split of the bilingual author's sensibility and the English language problematic, if only reluctantly. He chose to write in both English and Marathi because that was, as he saw it, the way the Indian literary landscape was being cultivated. English language sentiments had crept into his homeland, and it would be of no use to discard them, as they had been planted. But while Kolatkar did not embrace the English language wholeheartedly, he saw no other choice. There seems to be a certain disappointment or concern about the incoming language. Kolatkar's (self-translated) Marathi poem, "Make Way Poet," written some ten years before his trip to Jejuri, seems to accurately sum up his sentiments regarding the intersection of languages in India:

make way poet, jaywalking
for evolution's automobile
or in its homicidal headlights
wither with a smile.¹¹

The audience in this poem is clear: those artists whose mother tongue is Marathi. The native poet of the first line is not following the constructed road, and "evolution's automobile," traveling faster and with reckless abandon, will overcome unless the poet moves out of the way. Grimly, Kolatkar concludes it is best to follow the path laid out by "evolution" than to lay "disheveled... [dead]... and dumbstruck." But Kolatkar also allows for a private reconciliation of beliefs, almost martyrdom, for "jaywalking" on this poetic road. The "jaywalking" poet would die—slowly, like the decomposition of a body—in full support of his choice to break the normal flow of language traffic.

Kolatkar and Rushdie both seem to think along the same lines. Rushdie argues, "the Indian writer simply does not have the option of rejecting English anyways. His children, her children will grow up speaking it, probably as a first language."¹² While "Make Way Poet" may set the template for Kolatkar's understanding of the English-Marathi problematic, it is with "Jejuri" that Kolatkar best fleshes out his understanding of the bilingual writer's or Indian's sensibility. The ambiguity of the narrator's perspective in "Jejuri" begins with

the first segment of the poem in “The Bus.” The initial narrator views himself in an oldman’s glasses:

“your own divided face in the pair of glasses
on an oldman’s nose
is all the countryside you get to see.”

The division, while real in the reflection of the glasses, is also metaphorical: the narrator, the “you,” is divided between his allegiances to the landscape of India and his own sensibility. It is the inevitable division of a writer writing about an Indian language landscape, on the one hand, and doing so in English, on the other. The narrator’s sensibility, the person’s sensibility, Kolatkar seems to be saying, initially blocks the “countryside” and splits the self. We shall see, however, that by the end of the poem, Kolatkar’s impression of English in the Marathi tradition seems to change; indeed the narrator’s own observations of Indian landscape around him become fused. That is, modernity, complete with English, is best fused with the traditionalism of Marathi.

While the use of English is an important factor of the poem, the experimental narration utilized by Kolatkar refutes arguments that the work is simply idiosyncratic by implying that the narrator is not the only Indian who has the same sensibilities; this refutation ultimately asserts English as a medium in which to portray accurately the sensibilities and understanding of the world for a number of Indians. While being reflective of a particular vision, “Jejuri” does not seem to be presented simply as an individual’s outlook on the temple town. In the poems, the narrator’s involved use of the second person narrator as opposed to the first person suggests that the poem is more objective than subjective. The use of “you” implies that the narrator, while extremely influential—almost predestinate—is detached and removed. Thus, the reader becomes the visitor’s protagonist, yet another reason why “Jejuri” is a great voice for a new generation of bilingual Indian readers and sensibilities. In essence, “you” is the bilingual Indian.

Moreover, the narration conforms neither to time nor place, even though both confine the work. The narration never leaves the physical setting of “Jejuri” and the whole poem happens within the span of a day, but the narrator jumps time and space to involve a number of points of view. From being on the bus with “you” in the first poem to being at Jejuri describing and contemplating the priest in the next, the narrator develops himself as an expansive and controlling narrator. He is the commanding voice for the visitor’s (again, the reader’s) trip through “Jejuri.” The Indian-English speaking audience, thus, has no choice but to accept his position as the protagonist and share Kolatkar’s worldview.

Finally, the narrator is also diverse and eclectic, separating himself from the scene and allowing others to speak, as he does in “Manohar” and “Makarand.” The other speakers/narrators in the poem are not just other present-day visitors, but past visitors as well. Chaitanya, the title of three different poems, was a former priest with non-traditional views.¹³ Moreover, the narrator utilizes the first person pronoun, “I,” in only two of the poems, suggesting once again that the views of the (original) narrator are more inclusive of a pop-

ulation while also highlighting these two poems as a call for further examination.

“A Song for a Vaghya” and “Yeshwant Rao” are the two segments that utilize “I” in their narration, suggesting that the outlook of the (other) narrator, who craftily removes himself from these poems, is not idiosyncratic and feels more inclusive by providing a different outlook and worldview than the one previously created. While the speaker in “Yeshwant Rao” is undefined, the *Vaghya*, a first-born male given up by his parents to serve and worship Khandoba, is the undeniable bard of his poem. Interestingly, the tone of each, while being more or less devotional, does not explicitly promote the gods of Jejuri or the lifestyle inside. “Yeshwant Rao’s” narrator endorses the “second class god” haphazardly muddled against the walls of Jejuri. Likewise, the *Vaghya* tells of a decrepit torn-between lifestyle of love-hate. Being wholly dependent on Khandoba for his livelihood, the *Vaghya*—which also means “tiger” in Marathi—holds the “lamb [or god] between his teeth.” The story of the *Vaghya* is better understood within the context of the allusion poem that precedes it. The poem “Ajamil and the Tigers” ends with the utopian lines: “as well fed tigers and fat sheep drink from the same pond / with a full stomach for a common bond.” The *Vaghya* poem thus destroys the utopian vision of the story with the dismal portrayal of the pull and tug of an undevoted *Vaghya*’s life: live a well-fed false life or live truly and starve. “Yeshwant Rao,” however, lends itself to a different conclusion entirely. The new narrator is truly devotional, almost to the point of insanity. He attacks the visitors in a hectic state, rambling about the differences between *his* god and the other ones. His god is one who *feels* with his devotees, rather than one who *does for* or *asks from*. Yeshwant Rao doesn’t ask for “gold...soul...[or] tell you how to live your life,” he merely empathizes and “understands you a little better,” because Yeshwant Rao, like the visitors, is an “outsider” to the town of Jejuri. The utility of these two poems is that both the worshipper of Yeshwant Rao and the *Vaghya* are searching for something more; the *Vaghya* currently leads a false life, and the worshipper traded in his praise for the traditional god, Khandoba, for, as he sees, a better one.

Kolatkár’s use of “I” in these two starkly different poems sets the groundwork for understanding the modern bilingual Indian-English writer’s problematic: the sensibility cannot be accurately described by one without the other. Kolatkár seems to be saying the tradition must exist in order for the modern bi-sensible Indian to thrive. The fervent worshipper of “Yeshwant Rao” is a believer of a new type of god; “Yeshwant Rao” is a god who won’t “promise you the earth/ or book your seat on the next rocket to heaven.” The deity, although not traditional, is still spiritual. Likewise, the presence of the *Vaghya* and his story present a character who, while fighting an internal struggle, professes belief of a tradition in order to survive. In short, the *Vaghya* and the follower of Yeshwant Rao simultaneously buttress and resist each other: the outsider pushing in—the god, Yeshwant Rao, is described as “muddled” again Khandoba—and the insider pushing out with the effect of a stalemate.

In his article, “The Concept of Nativism,” Vasant Palshikar explains a “nativistic” writer through a negative lens: by explaining what he is not. The “native” writer is not someone who is “uprooted.” Palshikar goes on to say, “defined in terms of rootedness we may say that the ‘nativity’ of a person is formed by place, people, and culture.”¹⁴ Thus, the sensibilities of the narrator—and, for that matter, of the audience—must and do reflect the position of the native. As for those readers and narrators who are “rootless,” as Arun Kolatkar’s narrator is initially, the second person pronoun indicates a personal and working relationship between the reader and the narrator. The narrator, acting as an observational and emotional guide throughout the town of Jejuri, speaks personally to the visitor/reader. In other words, the narrator understands the reader, just as much as the reader is supposed to understand the narrator in English. There is communicability between the two that is emphasized and accentuated by bringing English to the regional temple town. What Kolatkar brings is a new “nativity,” English, to the “place, people, and culture” of Jejuri. Moreover, this use of the second person pronoun and the intense relationship between reader and work it creates helps to curtail Nemade and S.K. Devai’s critique that Kolatkar did nothing but present a “tourist’s” view of Jejuri, that is, a view without an acute understanding of the town and its history. According to S.K. Desai, it is obvious that the narrator goes to Jejuri “not as a seeker... nor as a pilgrim... . He is a kind traveler... a tourist.”¹⁵ Yet, the narrators, and the audience for that matter, must be initiated into the culture in order for the poem to be understood. Kolatkar is too brief and succinct in his narrative for an inclusion of discussion of the history and tradition of Khandoba and the town. As Kolatkar uses a number of allusions to the history and stories of the town, as well as referring to the gods without any introduction or description, the reader must be initiated into the history of the place already; that is, the reader must fit within the specific demographic of Marathi-English speakers. Most telling is the brief treatments of the *Vaghya* and *Murli*. The poem, “A Song for a Vaghya,” does nothing to tell the reader that a *Vaghya* is a male singer-devotee who is committed to the temple from birth. It simply retells the present-day story of the *Vaghya*. Likewise, an uninitiated reader would have no knowledge of the *Murli*, a female devotee similar to the *Vaghya*. Nor would she understand the gracefulness with which Kolatkar compresses the “‘grand invocation’ of traditional Murli song” of the first two stanzas with the quotidian speech of the last two. Without knowing that the first two lines were allusions to a Murli song, the bright contrast between a romantic and enchanted past and the dreary, unenchanted present would be lost. In short, Kolatkar’s audience, it seems, are the Indians who share his background and his knowledge: those who can understand English and the Marathi-specific traditions of old. Perhaps most pertinent to this discussion is Kolatkar’s use of English in the traditional persona of the *Vaghya*. As a life-long appointed dependent of Khandoba, very few if any *Vaghyas* speak English. By allowing the *Vaghya* to speak English, Kolatkar places English at the center of the religious/traditional conversation: while the language may not belong, while it may be inauthentic, English is a reality.

While Kolatkar's use of the second person pronoun is something to be complimented as well as the narrative exercise of "I," Kimbahune argues the second person narration detracts from the poem by removing "any room for the reader's creative participation."¹⁶ However, this lack of participation, at least in the creative sphere, may be exactly what Kolatkar had in mind. The familiarity between the reader and the narrator allows the narrator to speak representatively for the reader, leaving the reader's creative participation in the dust. Kolatkar appoints himself representative of a worldview and the reader's choice lies in agreement or disagreement with the worldview presented by Kolatkar.

Accepting the worldview presented by the narrator(s), as Kolatkar imagines the reader would and does, allows the reader yet another choice. In the last section of the journey through "Jejuri," the narrator opens up the discussion and invites the reader to make a choice about his allegiances towards tradition or modernity. Having already established a common "outsider" or "rootless" perspective, the only choice now is whether to search to become grounded in the roots or to acclimate oneself to the changing modern world. By imposing religious actions on everything in the modern setting of "The Railway Station" and breaking the poem into sections, the last poem acts as a binary to the rest of the poem.¹⁷ Through the narrator's vision, "The Railway Station" has all the same qualities observed in the town of Jejuri, but inconspicuously muddled with the realities of modern India. The narrator's projection of religion onto the modern world creates a dismal and tattered quality. Indeed, it is at "The Railway Station" where Kolatkar best fuses the split sensibility of the bilingual, bisensible Indian. Utilizing the platform of the train, a true force of the encroachment of the modern in English literature, Kolatkar summarizes the ambiguity and uncertainty of the bilingual Indian. Within the station, the narrator views the indicator as a "wooden saint/ in need of paint" and allows a young tea merchant the saint-like power of an "exorcism." Kolatkar's "Railway Station," then, is a place literally outside of "Jejuri," but fully aware of the tradition that helps create it, and as such, a part of the tradition.

Most importantly for the English-Marathi problematic, though, is the silence the English narrator confronts at the station. The modern train indicator refuses to give the narrator a "clue" as to when the "next train's due," just as the "young novice at the tea stall/ has taken a vow of silence." The "Railway Station" is a fitting end for a poem about the struggles of a bilingual author and bilingual Indians. It is a space that has been annexed by both modernity and tradition. The railway station would not commercially exist without the temple town of Jejuri or the imposition of the British Raj. It is the pathway, Kolatkar seems to be saying, that India must undertake. Reminiscent of Kolatkar's reluctant acceptance of English in "Make Way, Poet," "The Railway Station" provides the prototypical bilingual Indian's landscape: neither traditional nor modern, neither English nor Marathi, it seamlessly plays with both options, placing neither at the forefront. Instead of the outset situation of "The Bus," where the narrator's sensibility blocked the "countryside" and the narrator was unable to "step inside the old man's head," "The Railway Station" presents a scene where "the old man," and what he represents, a traditional understanding

of India, has stepped inside the narrator's head. Rather than "divided," the narrator has been able to fuse the traditional and the modern. And that's exactly as Kolatkar would place the bilingual Indian's sensibility.

Notes

- 1.) Meena Menon, "Reviving the true Hindu Ethos: An Interview with Bhalchandra Nemade," *The Hindu*, July 3rd, 2012.
- 2.) Mukherjee Meenakshi, "The Anxiety of Indianness: Our Novel in English," *Economic and Political Weekly*, (1993): 2608.
- 3.) John O. Perry, "Indigenous Authorities for Indian English Poetry," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 26, (1991): 203.
- 4.) Joseph E Schwartzberg, "Factors in the Linguistic Reorganization of Indian States," in *Language in Politics in India* edited by Asha Sarnagi. Oxford University Press.
- 5.) Ravindra Kimbahune, "From Jejuri to Arun Kolatkar," from Arun Kolatkar's "Jejuri:" *Commentary and Critical Perspectives*, ed. Shubhangi Raykar (1995): 82.
- 6.) Arun Kolatkar, "Jejuri" 4.
- 7.) Shubhangi Raykar, "Jejuri: The Cross-Cultural Dimensions," from Arun Kolatkar's "Jejuri:" *Commentary and Critical Perspectives*, ed. Shubhangi Raykar (1995): 123.
- 8.) Meena Menon, "Reviving the true Hindu Ethos: An Interview with Bhalchandra Nemade," *The Hindu*, July 3rd, 2012.
- 9.) Bhalchandra Nemade, "Concept of Nativism," *New Quest* (1984): 135.
- 10.) R.K. Gupta, "English in a Postcolonial Situation: The Example of India." *Profession* (1995): 73-78.
- 11.) Dilip Chitre Ed. "An Anthology of Marathi Poetry (1945-65)." Bombay: Nirmala Sadanand Publishers, 1967: 126.
- 12.) Salman Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991," London: Penguin Books, 1991: 17.
- 13.) Raykar, "Comments and Criticisms," 14. The use of "Chaitanya" also emphasizes the reader's need to be initiated into the regional character and belief of the land. Without the knowledge of the person of Chaitanya, or the different denotations of the word, the three recurring poem titles become just another visitor to Jejuri and greatly distort the meaning.
- 14.) Vasant Palshikar, "The Concept of Nativism," *New Quest* (May-June 1984): 141.
- 15.) Desai, S.K., (1980), "Arun Kolatkar's Jejuri: A House of God", *The Literary Criticism*, XI, 1, pp. 48-49.
- 16.) Kimbahune, in "Jejuri: A Commentary and Critical Perspectives," 82.
- 17.) This binary is acutely developed in M.K. Naik, "Jejuri: A Thematic Study," from Arun Kolatkar's "Jejuri:" *Commentary and Critical Perspectives*, ed. Shubhangi Raykar (1995): 89-91

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