

Sachin Ketkar

on

G.C. Bhate and the Tradition of Travel Writing In Marathi

Govind Chimnaji Bhate (1870 to 1946) was a well-known Marathi educationist, economist, biographer, art critic, social reformer and translator, apart from being a prolific travel writer. Though he wrote as many as nine travelogues consisting mostly of his earlier serialized publications in periodicals like the monthly 'Manoranjan' in the first decade of the twentieth century, Marathi critics and literary historians have either dismissed his works as being 'merely informative' and lacking in literary merit, or have overlooked his contribution. The paper attempts to historically situate Bhate as a travel writer occupying a transitional phase in the history of Marathi travel writing, when the modern travel literature that began in the late nineteenth century was developing into a more formalist genre in the 1940s, parallel to the period when the literary essay (lalitnibandha) and the modernist short story (navakatha) were emerging and influencing travel writing. As a student and teacher at the Deccan College and the Fergusson College in Pune, Bhate was deeply influenced by the reactionary ideologies of social reform and nationalism of his upper-caste elite peers and mentors like Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, hence his travel writings reveal anxieties, and contradictions of the project of colonial modernity. The paper discusses his *Mazhye Door Doorche Pravas* (1919) which includes his serialized 'Mazha Uttar Hindusthanacha Pravas', 'Mazha Atakepar Pravas' and 'Hindusthanache Nandanvan-Kashmir', as well as his *Mazhi Vilayatchi Yatra* (1934), and *Amchi Europe Yatra* (1934).

Sachin C. Ketkar is a bilingual writer, translator, editor, blogger and researcher based in Baroda, Gujarat. His most recent book,

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Changlya Kavitevarchi Statutory Warning: Samkaleen Marathi Kavita, Jagatikikaranani Bhashantar (Sept 2016), is a collection of Marathi articles on contemporary Marathi poetry, globalization and translation. His books in English include *Skin, Spam and Other Fake Encounters: Selected Marathi Poems in translation*, (2011), *(Trans) Migrating Words: Refractions on Indian Translation Studies* (2010) and *A Dirge for the Dead Dog and Other Incantations* (2003). His collections of Marathi poetry are *Jarasaandhachya Blogvarche Kahiansh* (2010) and *Bhintishivaicya Khidkitun Dokavtana*, (2004). He has extensively translated present-day Marathi poetry, most of which is collected in the anthology *Live Update: An Anthology of Recent Marathi Poetry, 2005* edited by him. He won 'Indian Literature Poetry Translation Prize', given by Indian Literature Journal, Sahitya Akademi for translation of modern Gujarati poetry in 2000. He works as Professor in English, Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara.

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