Indian English: Is it "bad" or "baboo" or is it Indianized so that it is able to deal with the unique subject matter of India?

Marilyn Jane Sargent

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Indian English: Is It "Bad" or "Baboo" or Is It Indianized So That It Is Able To Deal With the Unique Subject Matter of India?

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of California State University, San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in English Composition

by Marilyn Jane Sargent
May 1990
Indian English: Is It "Bad" or "Baboo" or Is It Indianized So That It Is Able To Deal With the Unique Subject Matter of India?

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ABSTRACT

This is an analysis of the differences in style, word choice, and figurative language of Indian English as used by Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan and E. M. Forster. It examines the reasons for the differences in producing messages that bridge the gap between the two cultures.
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CHAPTER ONE

AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

The English and their language were introduced to the people in India during the first decade of the seventeenth century through trading contacts with the "Company of Merchants of London." These contacts increased as different areas were opened to trading, and finally spread throughout the Indian subcontinent. Along with trade came military conquests over various local ruling authorities and ultimately the defeat of the Mogul of Delhi. In 1784 the Crown took control of the government of India.

Earlier, in 1765, the East India Company forbade the use of their ships by missionaries, and there was a great outcry by missionary circles in England. Charles Grant, one of most vocal members of these circles summarized the reasons for trouble in India with the following statement:

the true curse of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders (Kachru 20).

The communication was to be in English, of course. In 1813, the House of Commons in its thirteenth Resolution resolved,

that it is the duty of this country to promote the interests and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India, and that measures ought to be introduced as may tend to the
introduction among them of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral improvement... (Kachru 20).

From 1600 to 1765 their proselytizing and educational activities had been very restricted and unplanned (Kachru 20). This then renewed the missionaries' power.

It was not until 1835 that English became the principal medium of instruction for western literature and science studies. At this time Thomas Babington Macaulay, appointed to the governing body for India, had sided with the Anglicists against the Orientalists, led by the Honourable H. T. Princep, were against the use of English as a compulsory language. The Orientalists were afraid that Arabic and Persian would become "dead and damned" (Kachru 22) if all education had to be in English. In his famous Minute on Education, adopted on February 2, Macaulay said,

We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West... In India English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East... (Verghese 2).

Macaulay, a person with very strong views, aimed at forming, "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in
intellect" (Kachru 22). Referring to Sanskrit and Arabic (the languages favored by the Orientalists) Macaulay said,

I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value... I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one amongst them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia (Kachru 22).

In 1930 the scholar, J.R. Firth was to say, "the superficiality characteristic of Indian education is an inheritance from the superficial Lord Macaulay" (Kachru 6). With the adoption of Macaulay’s Minute, missionaries and teachers from the west were licensed by the English government and sent to India. Persian had been the language of the courts since the fifteenth century.

Waldemar Hansen in The Peacock Throne says the Babur’s son Humayun, who was Akbar’s father and Hamida Begum (Akbar’s mother) fled to Persia. While they were in Persia there was an interim Afghan ruler in India for eighteen years. The Persians then helped Humayun to take his kingdom back.

In 1556 Akbar at the age of thirteen acceded to Babur’s domains... members of the royal family already condescended to speak Hindustani in preference to Babur’s Turkish tongue, though snobbish Persian had become the official court medium of exchange (Hansen 25).
In 1837 this too began to change, finally ending in 1860 when the last holdout, in Persian, the Indian Penal Code, was adopted in English and enacted into law.

When English became the language of the courts, it also gained general usage throughout the Indian populace. By 1950, however, it was estimated that only about five million people in India had sufficient knowledge of English to be able to communicate solely by its use. Since the population of India at that time exceeded three hundred and fifty million, and there were at least three other languages in use by one-half of the people, ten major languages and seven hundred other languages and dialects in use by the rest, English was becoming the common ground for even Indians to communicate with each other, especially in academic circles.

The Indian National Academy of Letters in its inaugural meeting held all of its proceedings in English. There is, however, some criticism of the Indian use of English, often from other Indians, writing in English. Raji Narasimha says, "in the very choice of English as a medium of communication and self-expression, a colonialist determinant is involved. And because of this socio-political bias a work which ought never to arouse more than passing interest, gains significance" (182). D. Anjaneyulu points out, however, that not all the criticism is from Indians. It is his opinion that at least one English critic feels that
Indo-Anglian literature is written by, "the exotic brood of Indo-Anglians who hibernated in the little magazines til they died in a book" (58). This same critic went on to say, "that versification in English by Indians should be made a culpable offense and brought within the ambit of the Indian Penal Code!" (59)

Others cloak their criticism of Indian-English (the term "Indian-English" will be used instead of the cumbersome "Indian Writing in English" from here on) in stylistic concerns. M.G. Krishnamurthi says, "the more 'Indian' an Indian writer in English is, the more hard-headed we ought to be in assessing his work...we cannot let nostalgia and sentimentality affect our critical judgment" (31). Such critics are intent on judging Indian authors only on the extent to which they can write the English language as an Englishman would write it. The concept of Indian English is generally disdained because the notion is that the characteristics that make up Indian English are, "a fondness for 'tall' writing, a delight in 'six-foot' words...grand expressions, magniloquence of style...colloquialisms, and the use of fine imagery derived from classical sources" (Verghese, Problems 107).

In another view, C. Paul Verghese quotes an unnamed critic who says of the Indian novelist in English, "since he writes for a western audience he will inevitably fail to
present a true image of India inasmuch as in his own interest he will try to create an image that is most saleable" (Problems 99). This may, of course, be true in some cases.

In spite of criticism however, there are Indians who strongly defend their right to write in English. Bhabani Bhattacharya says,

...the Indian writer must be free to use any language he likes unharassed by criticism, either tacitly implied or plainly stated, and by any kind of compulsion, direct or indirect, which may come out of the strengthening mood of linguistic chauvinism..." (Verghese Problems 100).

Raja Rao says that the, "method of expression has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or American...the tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression even as the tempo of American or Irish has gone into the making of theirs" (Verghese, Problems 103).

Verghese agrees when he says that the ideal Indian novelist,

should employ his skill in contriving a dialogue that is at once natural and lively, supple and functional. He may even catch the speech rhythms and the turns of phrases used by all kinds of people in the village" (Problems 101).

He says that some Indian words must continue to be used, since they denote objects and actions for which there is no good English equivalent, and that the translation of
Indian proverbs tends to be effective (Problems 102). This then opens another line of thought. If, in spite of protest, Indians are going to write in English, just how should they do it?

K.S. Ramamurthy says that,

> if English is to be the medium of creative expression in India it has to assimilate into itself not only the words but also the rhythms of Indian vernaculars, of the Vedas and the Upanishads, of their spoken idiom... even as it has assimilated the Latin and Hebrew... any snobbish attempt to arrest this trend will certainly be detrimental to the interests of creative expression" (44).

Agreeing with this Professor V.K. Gokak says that Indian English represents,

> the evolution of a distinct standard—a standard the body of which is correct English usage, but whose soul is Indian in colour, thought, and imagery, and, now and then, even in the evolution of an Indian idiom which is expressive of the unique quality of the Indian mind" (Verghese 108).

Nativization, or adapting English to the Indian idiom, involves experimenting with the expressive resources of the language on various levels: vocabulary, idiomaticization, syntax, and rhetorical patterning. It also involves adaptations of Western literary forms. P.E. Dustoor, a teacher and scholar of English claimed that there would always be a more or less indigenous flavour to Indian English. The imagery, word choices, and nuances of meaning must be expected to be different from those of Englishmen and Americans.
Our mental climate will always foster plants that do not flourish in England or America; and such plants, just because they are somewhat exotic, add to the charm of a garden. All lovers of English will, therefore, encourage them to grow in the world-wide garden of English. It is only the weeds, which spring up whenever ignorance, carelessness or pretentiousness infects the air, that need to be pulled up by the roots (Kachru 4).

Besides the differences in language between Indian English and British or American English, there is also the traditional difference in written form. The novel is itself an essentially foreign genre to India and the basic aim of many Indian novelists is to write in the pattern of the ancient Puranas, which are full of stories within an illustrative story. This is an aspect of writing which both Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan address, and which I shall come back to shortly.

Thus far, we have seen the love-hate relationship of the English language with India. On the one hand, the British demanded English be used; on the other hand, they belittled and ridiculed those Indians who did use it. The Indians themselves fought over the use of English. It was a common ground that Indians of many languages and dialects could use to communicate with each other, yet, as was Persian before it, English was an alien tongue forced on India by its conquerors. Therefore, many Indians were loath to use it.
Then came the problem that if Indians were to accept and use English, in what way should they use it? Were they to become imitation Englishmen, or could and should they adapt the language and its written forms to their own purposes? To decide this issue, we must take a detailed look at Indian-English.
CHAPTER TWO
A COMPARISON OF STYLES OF RAO, NARAYAN, AND FORSTER

To move from theory to practice it is necessary to look carefully at two different Indian writers in English and to compare and contrast their writings, not only to each other, but also to an English writer on Indian subject matter. It will then be possible to see exactly what it is that makes them differ, and whether, in fact, one is "correct" and the other "baboo" (a term used to denote a native clerk who writes English, but which is often used disparagingly to refer to any native, having more or less education in English). To do this, I would like to use the writings of Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and E.M. Forester.

I have chosen these three writers because Rao and Narayan for different reasons best seem to reflect the differences in Indian writing in English.

Rao is using the English language with Indian style. V.Y. Kantak says,

Raja Rao's Kanthapura is a confident affirmation of the integrity of English as the Indian fiction writer's medium...It's like setting a test for our claim to use English for expressing Indian sensibility...(23).

Niranjan adds that "the contribution of Raja Rao...is that of a pioneer (49), and that Rao "is as much under the impact of the ancient sages as under that of the modern French and English writers...(66). And Niranjan concludes by saying
that Rao is in opposition to R.K. Narayan who, 'had adopted the traditional method of novel writing, in which, as E.M. Forster points out in a rather regretful tone, 'Yes-oh dear yes--the novel tells a story' (49).

Narayan, who won an honorary doctorate from the University of Leeds for bringing "an Indian genius into English art" (van den Driesen 51) and who, William Walsh says is one of the most respected novelists now writing in the British Commonwealth. His devoted readers are spread across the world from New York to Moscow ("Unobtrusive Novelish" 59) is clearly a bridge between East and West.

Forster is as British as Rao is Indian, but Forster also has a great knowledge of India. Forster was educated at Tonbridge School and King’s college, Cambridge. He published little till 1924, when A Passage to India appeared. This was a fruit of firsthand observation of Indian life, and with it Forster entered into a fuller recognition of his powers as a writer. Forster lived in India on two different occasions. In The Hill of Devi, Forster says,

This book has grown up round two visits which I paid to the Indian state of Dewas Senior. The first visit was in 1912-13 the second in 1921...it so happens that my knowledge of Dewas is extensive: I was more or less in touch with its inner workings over a period of thirty years (7).

And this he was, since in 1921 he was private secretary to the ruler of Dewas Senior, His Highness The Maharajah Tukoji
Rao III. Yet, Kalinnikova says of the British authors Kipling, Forster, and Masters who were mainly attracted to the exotics of the East

These British authors possessing a great mastery over creative writing, did bring in the 'Sight and Smell of India' but they were more concerned with the Englishmen who lived in India or the Anglo-Indians than the natives of India. The whole of India, including the living peoples, for them was not more than the background on which the various events were depicted (7).

Therefore, we will see all the sides of the issue in question.

Raja Rao says that,

...English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up...We cannot write like the English. We should not...We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly...

About tradition he says,

The Mahabharata has 214,778 verses, and the Ramayana 48,000. The Puranas are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us—we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our storytelling. I have tried to follow it myself in this story (Kanthapura vii).

The following is the first paragraph of Kanthapura:

Our village—I don’t think you have ever heard about it—Kanthapura is its name, and it is in the province of Kara. High on the Ghats is it, high up the steep mountains that face the cool Arabian seas, up the Malabar coast is it, up Managlore and Putter and many a centre of cardamom and coffee, rice and sugar cane. Roads, narrow, dusty, rut-covered
roads, wind through the forest of teak and of jack, of sandal and of sal, and hanging over bellowing gorges and leaping over elephant-haunted valleys, they turn now to the left and now to the right and bring you through the Alambe and Chanpa and Mena and Kola passes into the great granaries of trade. There, on the blue waters, they say, our carted cardamoms and coffee get into the ships the Red-men bring, and so they say, they go across the seven oceans into the countries where our rulers live.

The first short sentence tells us what Kanthapura is, and in what general vicinity it lies. The sentence begins with a noun phrase, moves to an absolute construction (more a verbal than written expression) which serves the purpose of personalizing the author and making him into a storyteller and turning the reader into part of his audience. Neither Forester or Narayan use this technique. Next follows an appositive phrase, the pronoun "it" for the third time, and the verb of the main sentence. Because the subject of the sentence, "Our village" and the verb are such a distance from each other, the last "it" is needed for clarity.

The second sentence telling us where the village is, begins with an adverb phrase, followed by the verb and then the subject, making this construction seem like a question, but it is not. It is an emphatic and forceful statement, and it varies the word order, making the sentence interesting, even if difficult at first reading. Another adverb phrase follows, again emphasizing the word high, now used twice.
Next the word "up" becomes a focus, as it is used three times in quick succession with the verb and subject also repeated, making a run-on sentence, but also making a strong statement. Word repetition is very often used to stress the importance of what the Indian writer or speaker wishes to say. And, even if the last construction seems wordy, we have now the combination of "high," "high," "up," "up," "up," leaving no doubt as to the elevation of Kanthapura. We do not see it sitting on a small hill, but rather sitting atop a great Himalaya, one which faces the Arabian seas, therefore is on the west side of India. Rao has used five adverb phrases in this sentence alone to describe the location of the village.

A problem exists in realizing that "up" also refers to where the, "many a centre" of cardamom, coffee, rice, and sugarcane are. The sentence does not flow smoothly, but rather is awkward, and at first reading possibly even senseless, until the reader stops and unravels it, in order to dig out the meaning. We now have concrete images, which are more favored by Indian writers, as they evoke the sensory reactions of smell and taste. (This is a reaction I have had many times with many different Indian writers, and not all of the smells and tastes are necessarily good ones. One also gets the full potency of heat, dust, cow dung, and
overheated and underbathed workers and swarms of humanity in general.)

Rao's third sentence tells about reaching the village. There are roads. The word is repeated quickly, just as "high" and "up" were previously. These are not just any roads, but roads so unique that they become animated. They wind and they turn, and hang and leap, as though they were a great monkey, before they carry the traveler to his destination. The sentence is overrun with parallel constructions. Extra words rather than punctuation and tightness are favored, because as Rao has said, punctuation is not a thing that Indians must deal with in their own languages, and the tendency is to ramble on and on about any given thing. Four parallel adjective phrases elaborate on the forests. The word "and" is used nine times, just as an oral storyteller might do if he were reciting and just kept finding more things to add on the spur of the moment. This technique is also, as we shall see, not one used by Narayan of Forester, whose works are based on written, rather than oral, form. For these reasons, along with others, we shall see that Rao is the more "Indian" of the two Indian writers considered.

This third sentence has become so long and wordy that the subject, the roads, must be referred to halfway through with the pronoun "they," causing another run-on sentence.
The roads themselves have been all but forgotten in the clarifications of them and of the forests.

In the last sentence of the paragraph, as in the first, absolute constructions abound. Who are the "they" of "they say"? These "theys" then become mixed with the "they" of the coffee and cardamoms. Who or what, we wonder for a moment, is going across the seven oceans? The coffee and cardamom are as animated as the red-men, and perhaps all have climbed aboard the ships together to cross the oceans. The phrase "seven oceans" shows the exaggeration popular with the Indian storyteller. It would be most unlikely to travel seven oceans to reach England (the home, we assume, of the (red-men), but the effect is again the issue. As in high, high, up, up, up, the mountains, so does seven oceans give the reader a sense of the vast distance. Whereas an Anglo writer would be more inclined to speak of altitudes, or distances in miles, these things would be meaningless to village people with no experience outside their area, and who would have no conception of huge distances in miles or feet.

There are also frequent autobiographical asides, injections of direct address to the reader, and rhetorical questions concerning the right or wrong of individual actions. (Sridhar 300).
Speaking of the oral tradition, V.Y. Kantak says, "Rao seems to work primarily by the aural imagination, seeking to give the English the native (rural) Kannada speech tunes" (15). Rao seeks the pace, rhythm, quality of diction, phrasing, and the peculiar intonations that show in the tendency to repetition (Kantak 15). This pattern shows in whole sentences. For example, "But, Rama-Rama really, if we have to hang the sacred thread over the shoulders of every pariah...it's impossible, impossible" (Rao 27). Rama-Rama is not an address, but rather the invoking of God's name to emphasize the depths to which man has fallen.

Reiteration can also take the form of repeating things for intensification as in the ubiquitous "of course, of course" for solicitation, and in appeal "do not drink, do not drink, in the name of the Mahatma" (Kantak 16). Rao's repetition also shows itself in the pressures of anticipation and suspense, as in, "now we are safe, we are safe" (Kantak 16) and "Sister, who is dying? Sister, who is dying?" (Kantak 16).

Another interesting for is that of reiteration laced with alternation,

He slipped between this personality and that. He slips here and he slips there...the fan went once this side and once that...we rushed this side to the canal and that side to the coconut garden.

When Moorthy is arrested he is led away, "with a policeman on this side and a policeman on that side..." Or again, "a
child wakes up here and begins to cry and a cough is heard there...the beat of feet is heard here and the hushed voices of men and women are heard there..." These quotes from Kanthapura indicate the quick tempo of Indian life. Rao strives to make the English echo the Indian. He defines his reason for writing: "literature is a Sadhana, a spiritual exercise. I seek no reader response...then why do I publish? Because I want others to enjoy what I enjoy" (Narayana 192). This then frees Rao to write as he wishes. His obligation is clearly to his religious beliefs and to himself. He is not under pressure to write what a publisher thinks an audience wants to read.

Rao generally writes short novels, and these are enjoyed by a smaller audience than Narayan who writes short stories and novels for a much larger and more diverse audience. Narayan’s form and style is Western while his content remains Eastern. His audience is Western and his shorter works are published in such American magazines as Playboy and The New Yorker as well as in books. His first works were short stories, published in Indian magazines in English (even in India, English offered the greatest actual reading public an Indian writer could enjoy), but his novels are his best known works, although still outnumbered by his short stories. These were hailed from the beginning by such
writers as Graham Greene, Elizabeth Bowen, and E.M. Forster (Woodcock 88).

C. Paul Verghese says that Narayan's style is direct and straightforward, and is characterized by an economy of expression and vocabulary (Problems 10). This economy of vocabulary is shown in the use of 5000 words according to Trivedi (165) which are adequate to deal with the range of subject matter and Indian sensibilities (Verghese, Problems 10). Narayan avoids unique or obscure phrasing, and a too constant use of compound sentences. He uses few Indian words. "The goddess Saraswathi, mentioned in passing, is carefully described in a footnote so that western readers will understand his work" (Weir 311). "Narayan's syntax comes closer to the normal conversation of an educated Indian (Verghese "Indian English" 10). It seems Narayan wants us to believe that

either the people in the small south Indian village of Malgudi speak grammatically, albeit not in English, and Narayan is simply conveying their speech patterns to an English-speaking readership; or else he is concerned with portraying the foibles of his characters through means other than grammar or accent. The former prospect, of universal correct speech seems less likely...(Weir 311).

Narayan learned his English entirely in South Indian schools and colleges; he did not venture abroad until he reached his fifties. The world he writes of consists of the small town of Malgudi in Mysore. The physical geography
(unlike Kanthapura’s) is, "never dealt with as a set piece but allowed to reveal itself beneath and between the events" (Walsh 62). The following is from "A Horse and Two Goats,"

Of the seven hundred thousand villages dotting the map of India in which the majority of India’s five hundred million live, flourish, and die, Kritam was probably the tiniest, indicated on the district survey map by a microscopic dot, the map being meant more for the revenue official out to collect tax than for the guidance of the motorist, who in any case could not hope to reach it since it sprawled far from the highway at the end of a rough track furrowed up by the iron-hooped wheels of bullock carts. But its size did not prevent its giving itself the gradiose name Kritam, which meant in Tamil ‘coronet’ or ‘crown’ on the brow of this subcontinent (Under 14).

The first sentence consists of a long dependent clause containing three prepositional phrases, a present participal phrase and a relative construction. Following this are the subject and verb, "Kritam was," and the superlative, "tiniest," which the dependent clause modifies. The sentence moves from the largest number to smaller numbers and finally the sequence ends with the word, "microscopic."

The second half of the sentence contains a past participal phrase, a present participal phrase, eight prepositional phrases, two adverbial phrases, and an adjective clause. There are repetitions of the types of constructions used, but no repetition in content, and no intent toward using the constructions to do more than to give information to the reader. The complexity of form is a written and not an oral device. The teller of the story
does not intrude on the reader, or become a part of the story, as does the teller of Kanthapura. Therefore, Narayan's reader is distanced, looking at a past action, rather than made an active participant in the story.

The second sentence shows the tendency toward animation of inanimate objects which we saw in Kanthapura. The village gives itself the name Kritam, so that it is the crown on the brow of an also animated India. Even though there is this similarity of animation, it is content rather than form that shows the Indianness in "A Horse and Two Goats," "a rough track furrowed by the iron-hooped wheels of bullock carts" has an oriental flavor, and there are subtle blends of East and West in such small things as street names such as, "Lawley Extension" and "Vinayak Mudali Street."

Narayan does not attempt to import the exotic paces and rhythms of the Indian languages to his English. He avoids the use of any foreign slang or idiomatic expressions which would sound incongruous coming from the mouths of his Indian characters, and the "'Indianness' of Narayan's characters are not constantly obtruded upon the reader." (Vanden Driesen 62). The foreign reader is therefore soothed. He is not offended or made to feel uncomfortable while reading about a world different than his own. Narayan wants to amuse the reader, rather than challenge his mind with social differences and problems.
Narayan’s style is syntactically correct, even if the sentences tend to be long and convoluted, and so his style, much more than Rao’s, is easily compared to that of E.M. Forster in *A Passage to India*:

Except for the Marabar Caves—and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. There are no bathing-steps on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front, and bazaars shut out the wide and shifting panorama of the stream. (3)

Forster’s sentences are short but have varied constructions. The first sentence has two prepositional phrases, one of which has a compound preposition; it also has an absolute construction—a rhetorical device favored by Rao.

The second sentence begins with two past participial phrases; it also has three prepositional, one adverb, and one adjective phrase. The pronouns, set off as they are by clauses and phrases, refer back to the city of the first sentence, therefore creating a complex form with relatively few words.

The third sentence has two expletives and an absolute. While there are repetitions in form, as there were in Narayan’s lines, they are, as were his, non-repetitive in content. Forster’s constructions, like Narayan’s are not oral in form. They are carefully thought out, highly
complex formations. It is interesting to note that both Indian writers are inclined to write long convoluted sentences, whether the forms be simple or complex, and that the native English user prefers a short, but complex form. Further contrasts are to be observed in word choice.

S.N. Sridhar says that the most obvious problem facing Indian-English authors is "that of nomenclature: finding words for culturally bound everyday objects" (295). Most authors, he says, "simply resort to borrowing...with explanatory glosses either embedded in the text itself or appearing in an appendix" (295).

This is, indeed, the course Rao most often chooses, putting the Indian word in italics:

Moorthy...was going through our backyard one day and seeing a half-sunk linga said, 'Why not unearth it and wash it and consecrate it?...They began to put up a little mud wall and a tile roof to protect the god. He was so big and fine and brilliant. (7)

Reading the above without notes, one would suppose that the "linga" was a statue of a god, yet in fact it is a phallus,—the symbol of the god, Shiva.

Sridhar believes that this technique impedes the flow of the narrative, and that the more effective device involves "contextualizing" the new item so it is embedded in a passage and the meaning becomes self-explanatory (295). Sridhar call the process "cushioning." This process may make for the smoother reading of a passage, however, it can
also leave definitions rather unclear. What seems obvious to the writer may be missed entirely by the reader. Narayan uses this cushioning technique regularly. For example, in "A Horse and Two Goats":

Muni was still hovering on visions of avatars and said again, 'I never missed our pundit’s discourses at the temple...he told us that Vishnu is the highest god. Whenever evil men trouble us, he comes down to save us. He has come many times. The first time he incarnated as a great fish... (Under 26).

While this paragraph may be crystal clear to some, there will undoubtedly be others who will not immediately understand that an avatar is an incarnation of a god in the flesh, be that flesh fish, boar, lion, or human. At other times, Narayan leaves the problem of word meaning to the reader,

The old asthmatic at the end of our street sat up on the pyol (italics are Narayan’s) of his house and gurgled through his choking throat... (Man-Eater 6)

or,

At the foot of the tree was a slab of stone on which I washed by dhoti and towel, (Man-Eater 7)

and finally,

Sastri had to go a little earlier than usual since he had to perform a puja at home (Man-Eater 12)

no attempt is made to explain either pyol, which has been italicized, or dhoti, and puja which are not.

Forster also, like Narayan, may insert an occasional Indian word and let readers find the meaning for themselves. As in, "Come and see my wife a little then, said Hamidullah,
and they spent twenty minutes behind the purdah" (13). At other times Forster may offer a touch of "cushioning,"

'Godbole's pujah did it,' cried the Englishman. The Brahman lowered his eyes, ashamed of religion. For it was so: he had miscalculated the length of a prayer (131).

When Forster does "cushion," he, more than Narayan, makes sure the foreign reader understands. Since Forster is English himself, he approaches the problem from a non-Indian point of view, and so is able to anticipate the confusion another non-Indian may have with the alien content of his story.

Many other variations also exist in word choice in Indian-English. Raja Rao uses a modifier plus head structure in identificationals (Kachru, Indianization 40). This is not done by either Forster or Narayan. Throughout Kanthapura, however, people are called such things as: "cardamon-field Ramachandra, corner-house Moorthy, four-beamed house Chandrasekharayya, gap-tooth Siddayya, astrologer Seetharamiah, temple Rangappa, and Pariah Lingayya." In these titles, we see not only locations of residence, but also physical characteristics, and even class status.

While class status is perhaps only historically interesting to an Anglo reader now, it was a serious consideration for an Indian reader when Kanthapura was written. This was in 1938, nine years before partition. At
that time, class structure, or the "caste system" was very rigid. A Brahmin (highest caste) and a pariah or "untouchable" (lowest caste) did not, and would not, come in contact with each other. The "untouchable" was an unclean element of the world, and his close presence, or touch, would defile a Brahmin and force him to bathe and pray in order to re-purify himself, according to the old traditions. Gandhi became instrumental in weakening, if not abolishing, the caste system and at least partially freeing the "untouchables."

At times, it is only possible to have an indirect form of address, owing to the rules of Hindu etiquette: "Then Moorthy feels so desperate that he says to Rachanna's wife, 'And you, Rachanna's wife? and Rachanna's wife says, 'If my husband says 'spin' I shall spin, learned one" (73).

Even Forster observes this tradition when he writes, "'the shorter lady, she is my wife, she is Mrs Bhattacharya'...when Mrs Bhattacharya's husband spoke she turned away from him, but she did not mind seeing the other men" (42).

Dubois says, that "It is a mark of respect when women turn their backs on men whom they hold in high esteem. At any rate, they must turn away their faces or cover them with their saris" (33). Narayan too, in his earlier stories, follows these Hindu traditions.
In "The Missing Mail" the woman says of her husband, "Yes, Kamakshi’s father has written that they have met the girl, and from their talk Kamakshi’s father infers they are quite willing..." (12).

Dubois again says, concerning women speaking of their husbands, "she does not venture to call him by his name; and should she forget herself in this way...she would be thought a very low class of person" (339). Kachru too says,

in traditional circles in India a wife is not addressed by name but in a very indirect way as "mother of..." The same is true when an orthodox wife refers to her husband; instead of using his name she might only use a pronoun he or an honorific pronoun ("Indianization" 105).

Again, in The English Teacher, even though Susila is right there, the contractor says, "I wish the lady had told us, I’d have asked her not to go there." Later he addresses Krishna (the husband) again and says, "Won’t you come in for a moment? The lady can have a little coffee. She looks tired."

This again is covered in Dubois: "To inquire after a man’s wife too, is an unpardonable breach of good manners; and when one is visiting a friend one must be careful never to speak to the ladies of the house" (313). There is also the problem that, "Politeness also forbids you to address a person of higher rank by his name" (Dubois 339). We can assume that the contractor, since he is a man with a trade, is of a lower caste than Krishna, who is a Brahmin, and so
therefore the contractor has both of these rules with which to deal.

In these examples we see first hand some of the variations possible when English is used by writers of differing intents and cultural backgrounds.

These variations, then, affect readers differently, Indian-English literature is not generally a widely read genre. It can be difficult to follow—even aggravating for one unaccustomed to it. Rao generally takes the long way in the telling—although he does not tend towards the flowery overly polite diction used in Indian academic and social settings.

Narayan is the more popularly read of the two Indians, and this is, perhaps, because his prose is closer to the style of Forster, it is more easily followed and understood by the non-Indian reader. However, there are not only differences in style, but, as we shall see, there can be problems with the words themselves as used by these writers.
CHAPTER THREE

WORDS: SOME CHOICES AND PROBLEMS IN INDIAN-ENGLISH

Grammars and dictionaries are necessary for the standardizing of languages, and English has had these tools since the eighteenth century. However, while the earliest lexicographers lifted many words from collections of dialect words, it was already apparent by 1755, the time of Dr. Johnson’s dictionary, that one had to be selective in defining what constituted the English standard language (Gorlach 1). Dr. Johnson used

only the correct and respectable words documented (and thereby made legitimate) in the best sixteenth and seventeenth century authors—with a moderate admixture of more recent words. He accordingly excluded provincialisms—unless found in Spenser...and, as a matter of course, usages from the colonies (Gorlach 1).

His dictionary is, therefore, bound by social and geographical, as well as in stylistic terms.

With growing colonialism, and finally American independence, there was a slow development in England towards making emergent standards acceptable. This was necessary, as it was becoming obvious that the colonies were rich in goods that Britain desired, and that trade and communication were to British advantage. John Pickering issued a glossary of provincialisms in 1816, and in 1828 Noah Webster published the American Dictionary (which Gorlach says could be regarded as another Declaration of Independence (2).
In 1885 Whitworth’s *Anglo-Indian Dictionary* was published and Kachru says that, "these word lists were meant to serve as manuals for explaining un-English "lexical exotica," or specific nativized lexical meanings of English lexical terms" (Kachru, *Indianization* 166). As of this time, however, an Indian English dictionary does not exist (Gorlach 4). There are handbooks, but there is obviously a problem in deciding which of the many categories of language should be included, as each author has his or her own bias, and a dictionary which encompassed all the categories would be large, indeed.

The *Little Oxford Dictionary* has a supplement of 1900 Indian words, which Gorlach says are "almost all nouns, mostly from Sanskrit, Hindi, and Urdu" (9). There is the further problem of spelling of the loan words.

We have already seen Narayan and Forster use the word puja or pujah. Since the English alphabet differs from any Indian alphabet, how are words to be standardized?

This confusion in spelling is further shown by the fact that Narayan spells the same word differently in different stories. In the majority of his works, Narayan spells the word for the elevated, roofed veranda in front of a house "pyol." Yet, in "The Missing Mail" this same veranda is "pial."
This is easily understandable in that the original Indian word is written altogether differently, and the word has not been formally accepted into English dictionaries, therefore the spelling is left to the discretion of the writer or publisher. This then becomes a general problem with regard to words transcribed from other languages and alphabets. For example, the same problem exists with Arabic words brought into English usage.

A fast glance through two translations of Egyptian-Arabic literature, and two articles on Egypt itself, yielded four different spellings for the long cotton garment word by many Egyptians, and which is constantly seen throughout that country. In The Mountain of Green Tea, by Yahya Taher Abdullah the spelling is "galabia" (14). Fathy Ghanem’s Man Who Lost His Shadow, has "gallabya" (9). The Egypt Story by Maroon and Newby favors "galabieh" (140 and in the article "River of Kings," Barnard uses "gallabeya" (47).

These changes are also evident in words coming from Hebrew, Greek, and Russian. The Encyclopedia Britannica has the Hebrew word for the relation of the infinite to the finite as: Kabbalah, Cabala, and Qabbalah. From the Greek, we have translations of the name of the hero and strong man as Herakles as well as Heracles. Lastly, from the Russian, the writer Chekhov is found as Tschekhov and Tchekhov and Chaikovsky is similarly Tschaikovsky. With all of these
changes in spelling evident, it seems safe to say that differing writing systems clearly present difficulties with loan words, and that there is no tidy solution for the problem.

In addition, there is the problem of which Indian words should be allowed, and which should be replaced by an English word close in meaning. Why should both Narayan and Forster not use the word "prayer" instead of puja/pujah? "Prayer" is the word Forster chooses for the explanation of pujah to his audience. Perhaps the reason for his choice is more because the word creates an eastern atmosphere than because it is irreplaceable. In two of Narayan’s more recent works, however, he does use a glossary, and in these he lists the word "puja." In *Waiting For the Mahatma*, (1955) he defines "puja" as "worship." In *The Vendor of Sweets*, (1967), he defines "puja" as "worship" and "offering." With these definitions, we see that "puja" really may have additional meanings to an Indian. The word now becomes more ritualistic, more intense, than the word "prayer". It seems to be more on the order of a church service or mass, but not necessarily for a large group. If this is the case, then the word is embedded in the culture itself, and is therefore genuinely useful. English regularly absorbs words from other languages (e.g. tobacco,
algebra, etc.), so the usage of these loan words is not uncommon.

Besides loan words, Indian-English is filled with hybrid words. These are words that are made of Indian and English words combined into a single formation. These are bona fide Indian words, as are loanwords, and should not be considered "pidgin." "Pidgin," according to Gorlach, is characterized by widespread individual variation, differing degrees of competence and, in general, low status, and consequently carelessness as to what written form should be like (18).

An alternate term, "Baboo English" is itself a hybrid.

Baboo, capitalized, is a title corresponding to Mr. or Esquire for an Hindi gentleman; however, when the word baboo (or babu) is not capitalized it is used to denote a native clerk who writes English. The non-capitalized form is often used disparagingly to any native, especially a Bengali, having more or less education in English (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Both Rao and Narayan use hybrids, however Narayan uses them rarely. Forster does not use them at all. The following examples from Narayan are from his earlier words (although "A Horse and Two Goats" was only anthologized lately), and in fact Narayan seems to have dropped hybrid formations as his works have become more popular in the worldwide commercial markets.

Narayan uses the hybrid: "Circus-wallah" in A Tiger for Malgudi (152). Wallah is a person connected with a specified occupation or task. Therefore, the man whose occupation is the circus in this case.
In "Old Bones" he uses: "dak bungalow" (171). Dak means postal service or mail delivery, but with bungalow it becomes travelers' rest house (Rao Indian Words 15). This is an especially interesting hybrid because the word bungalow is also an Indian word which the Oxford English Dictionary says was entered into English in the seventeenth century. Therefore, this hybrid is actually made up of two Indian words, one of which is now considered to be English.

Narayan also uses hybrid expressions, and these too are to be found primarily in his early works. In the theatre, Iswaran sits, "in a far-off corner in the four-anna class" (Iswaran" 84). In "The Missing Mail", "a five-thousand-rupee marriage was a big affair for Malgudi" (13). Both of these expressions are culture marks in that their referents are directly to the Indian culture.

In Kanthapura Rao uses hybrids more often than does Narayan. It is not unusual to see such formations as: police sahib (58), thothi house (5), police jemadar (12), lathi-ring (13), Kaliyuga floods (27), kumkum water (80), Khadi-shop (87), and gold-cased rudrakshi beads (88).

Let us now consider each of these hybrids individually. Police sahib is a normal hybrid, like all the rest, made up of one English word, one Indian word. Sahib is normally a respectful title for an English or European gentleman.
Therefore in this construction the word sahib is an honorific.

Thothi house: thothi is an inner courtyard, so this kind of house was built in the grand style, with an enclosed central court for private use (Rao Kanthapura 187).

Police jemadar: jemadar means a junior officer, and was according to Rao entered into the Oxford English Dictionary in the latter half of the eighteenth century (21). Rao further says that Robert Orme used the term in his History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745 to mean a captain of either horse or foot soldiers (73).

Lathi-ring: a lathi is a long heavy stick made of bamboo and bound with iron and which is used as a weapon (Hawkins 56 and Hihalani, Tongue, and Hosali 111).

Kaliyuga floods: Kaliyuga is actually two words: Kali and yug or yuga. Kali is the name of the dark-complexioned consort of Shiva the destroyer, and yug is a cyclic period in Hindu cosmology. There are four yugs, and the Kaliyug is the last. It is the present age which is also called the Iron Age and is the age of destruction since Kali, like Shiva is a destroyer (Hawkins 48, 105).

Kumkum water: kumkum is both the red powder used to mark Hindu’s foreheads, and the mark itself (Hawkins 54).
In this case the powder is put into water to make holy water.

Khadi-shop: khadi is handspun and handwoven cloth which is made of khaddar (Hawkins 50). This is the cloth which Gandhi asked all Indians to make and use, rather than use foreign cloth which would profit India's captors.

Gold-cased rudrakshi beads: rudraksha or rudrakshi is a Shaivite rosary (Hawkins 83). This means it is a rosary for prayer to Shiva the destroyer, the third deity of the Hindu trinity.

Along with loan words and hybrids, Indian-English writers also use neologisms or invented words. "Expressions such as these are recognized as wrong or clumsy by the more careful writers and speakers in India, but certain neologisms of Indian origin are frequently used even by the most careful" (Kachru 59).

Narayan in Waiting for the Mahatma: "'But this mud is clayey, sir, it is not easily removed,' said the shopman" (112). And Rao:

We slowly rose up on our clayey legs, and when the morning light threw itself on us we felt as though a corpse had smiled upon a burning pyre (156).

And,

And Sadhu Narayan speaks about the world and its wheels and the clayey corruption of men, but Moorthy always says, 'Truth, truth, and truth.'
The use of the word "clayey" by both Indian writers is an interesting coincidence. However, Narayan uses the word in the purely literal and scientific sense to denote the composition of the soil; whereas Rao uses the word figuratively to describe the weak condition of the women's legs and the weak, putty-like malleability of men's intangible souls. All of these constructions work as adjectives, but there are also other forms.

Narayan often makes use of the gerund and present participle when he invents words: "Why go about fowl-thieving?" (Under the Banyan 135)—and there seems to be no pun intended here. Or, "Jagan's ancestral home, which had been the last house outskirting the city" (Vendor 13), and "when they could show such intense feelings for a jail-going man, they might also display a little of it to a man retreating from life..." (Vendor 173), and finally, "she was reddening under her skin; her temper was slightly rising..." (Vendor 161).

Rao, on the other hand, invents more modifiers:

he chose a Pariah woman among the lonely ones, and she brought along her clay pots and her mats and her brooms, and he gave her a very warmful bed (Kanthapura 15).

And, "Old Ramakrishnayya was sitting on the veranda, his hand upon his nose, deep-breathful in meditation (Kanthapura 25)."
Forlach says that restrictions in word-formation are still incompletely understood and asks, "what makes one item completely acceptable and another, formed on the same pattern odd or objectionable?" (11) While it may be redundant to say a warmful bed (but it really seems he means more than just a warm bed), and if one can say thoughtful, why cannot one say breathful? Perhaps the answer to this is that it is not a usage that British or American English writers use or need. The concept of meditation and the breathing exercises that go on in it are in this case Indian and Eastern.

There are also among Indian-English neologisms compounds of proper British English words caused by a deletion of words from British English. Narayan in "Old Bones" uses "jingling his keybunch he hobbled away" (172), and in The English Teacher, "but the poor fellow settled as auditor in Hyderabad and was nose-led by his wife" (18).

Rao uses "but the police inspector says, 'Give them a shoe-shower,' and the policeman kick them in the back and on the head and in the stomach, while Rachanna's wife is crying," (Kanthapura 85). But some compounds are, unlike these, direct translations from Indian languages.

Among this type are compounds like "twice born," "holy thread," "dining-leaf," and "cow-dust hour." These are all necessary usages, because English does not have these
concepts verbalized in a short form. "Twice born" is applied to Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishys (the three highest castes) when persons of those castes are initiated into the vedas (holy scriptures). The holy thread is then worn over the left shoulder and under the right, crossing over the chest, by those who are twice born.

Dining leaves and cow-dust hour are more practical and secular. The cow-dust hour occurs at dusk when the cows come home and kick up clouds of dust as they come. A dining-leaf is a palm leaf dinner plate. In Kanthpura: "When the food is cooked, she lays a leaf in the main hall," (42). Dining leaves could also have other connotations for English speakers (i.e. leaves for dining table) and thus be misunderstood.

Further differences arise in answers. When Sriram says, "My granny will not die, she is not dead. God bless her," the doctor answers, "Yes, she is not dead" (Narayan Waiting 171). While this is not the way a native English user would respond, it seems more logical than the way we do respond, since when we say, "No, she is not dead" one cannot help but wonder if that really means that she is dead. As there are differences in answers, so there are also differences in the form of questions.

Often there are questions without inversions. Rao uses this technique regularly in Kanthapura, but Narayan does not
seem to use it at all. "The man says, 'And you'll allow me to speak?'" (88), "Moorthy...says 'Brother, you are with me?'...Sankar rises up and says, 'But I can hold meetings for you Moorthy?" (87) and, "he turned...and said, 'Brother, only when you are tired?" (33).

One notices that not only are the questions not inverted, but they also all start with "says" or "said" not "asked." Obviously this is not a problem for the reader since the statement ends with a question mark, but in speech it seems the listener would have to be very sensitive to changes in vocal inflection to notice the difference between an interrogative and an imperative construction.

There are also interrogative constructions in which the position of the subject and the auxiliary items do not change. Instead of saying, "what would you like to eat?" it is quite possible, and seemingly not incorrect, for an Indian to say "what you would like to eat?" or to ask "really, you are finished?" or "you have taken my book, isn't it?" when he translates from an Indian language. Even though in the written form there is still a question mark, these formations are awkward and jarring for most native English readers and disturb the flow of their reading pleasure, as they interpret these constructions as erroneous.
In this chapter we have seen some of the difficulties in word choice in Indian-English. Concepts and objects exist in India for which no English word can be found. In these cases then, one must use an Indian word, and it would seem logical to use the Indian word. This has, indeed, been the standard practice of English for centuries. We have seen that English uses words from Arabic. It also uses words from Latin, for example, major and minimum, and from Greek: psyche and ephemera, and from French: garage and courage. As words come into English from languages with different alphabets there are problems with spelling, since there is no standard available for them. There are also unusual hybrids and the necessity of using invented words for unfamiliar concepts, especially in Indian-English.

These Indian elements are not bad or baboo; if anything, they are necessary if the reader is to derive a feel for all of India, not just for British India.

Rao wants to express India as it really is, and so his English abounds in Indianisms. Narayan expresses the gentle, kind, traditional side of India, and his word choice is less inventive, less alien, and more like Forster’s, which shows much of the Anglo side of India and not so much of the Indian side. These tendencies toward type of word choice will also hold true in the use of figurative language, as we will see in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Any statement not intended to be taken literally can be called a figure of speech. Often when objects are compared, it is by using two rather different objects which have some quality in common, which will allow for a meaningful comparison. What constitutes a meaningful comparison may change from person to person, and may change even more from culture to culture. The analogy used will, however, most often reflect the background and the experience of the individual writer. Thus in the use of metaphor and simile, one would expect to find differences in the figurative language of Indian and non-Indian writers.

Raja Rao’s language is rich in the use of figuratives; Narayan and Forster, however, use them rarely.

In Rao’s work, animal and vegetable similes and metaphors outnumber all other kinds, but he does have several mineral references. In all of his constructions, however, his Indianness is visible.

In Kanthapura, Rao’s similes and metaphors vary considerably in length. They may be as short as a six word sentence or stretch to twenty-eight lines. People become animals, and animals become people; inanimate objects come alive as both. Let us first consider people changes:
"She’s an old sour-milk, she is!" (57) "and she rolled on the floor of her house while Rangamma stood by the door,
helpless as a calf (38). "Everybody saw that Narsamma was
growing thin a a bamboo and shriveled like banana bark (42).
"...we shall take our money and scuttle down the passes like
kitchen bandicoots (53). "He was a fat sturdy fellow, a
veritable tiger amongst us (6),...and yet he was as honest
as an elephant (9). While most of these images are
understood by non-Indian readers, they are still alien. And
some are so different as to need explanation. We know what
an elephant is, indeed most of us have seen elephants, but
how honest is an elephant? Just as we wonder, how shriveled
is banana bark? Bandicoots sound cute, but in fact, they
are very large rats that get into kitchen supplies and are
known to be carriers of plague. In the mind of a non-
Indian, calling oneself a bandicoot should be an unpleasant
thing, but in India, where all life is treasured (Hindus,
Jains and Buddhists all object to the unnecessary taking of
lives), it is not offensive. It is said that bandicoots
creeping in a gutter or scurrying along a wall are as common
a sight in India as squirrels scampering through parks is in
America (Rao, 186).

Next we will look at changes of things to animals.
"...and the streamlets hissed over their shoulders and
purred beneath their feet" (456), and

night curls through the shadowed streets, and
hissing over bellied boulders and hurrying through
dallying drains, night curls through the Brahmin
street and the Pariah street and the Potter’s street
and the Weaver’s street and flapping through the mango grove, hangs clawed for one moment to the giant pipal, and then shooting across the broken fields, dies quietly into the river—(81).

Here it seems the streamlets are cats or a combination of cats and snakes. Both hiss, but only cats purr. It may be that the snakes are hanging down at shoulder height and the cats are underneath, but the cats could also be above and below. Night culring and hissing may be a snake, but how can a snake flap? If night is then a cat, it too does not flap, but it could hang clawed to a tree, but so could a bird. Therefore, we seem to have one animal at the start of this metaphor and another at the end, causing a mixed metaphor which is usually considered improper, incorrect, or a sign of confusion. However, Kanthapura is not an academic work, and does not need to follow academic rules. The metaphor works well, artistically, to show the progression of night through the town.

Or, consider the following:

The rains have come, the fine, first footing rains that skip over the bronze mountains, tiptoe the crags, and leaping into the valleys, go splashing and wind-swung, a winnowed pour, and the coconuts and the betel nuts and the cardamom plants choke with it and hiss back. And there, there it comes over the Bebbur hill and the Kanthur hill and begins to paw upon the tiles, (109).

The rains in this case are definitely a cat, and the plants are possibly another cat choking and hissing back at the intruder, and finally,

...and the road hissed this way and that, and
tongued over a rill, and shot up the mountains to
the seven-hooded skies and all the serpent eyes of
the sky looked down bright and bitter upon us (131).

The road here seems to be a cobra, which eventually joins
the other cobras in the "seven-hooded skies." This metaphor
is truly Indian, not British. While their eyes are
"bitter," the Naga kings or snake kings are a positive image
to most Indians. In Buddhist mythology, it is said that
when the demons were trying to break the Buddha’s
concentration so that he would not become enlightened, they
sent a torrential rain, and so a giant cobra lifted the
Buddha in his coils and protected the Buddha’s head with his
opened hood thereby thwarting the demons designs. Hindu
mythology says that Vishnu, when he is dreaming the universe
into existence, sleeps on the back of the gian snake,
Ananta, who floats in the cosmic sea of milk.

Slightly different, this snake metaphor is also
positive:

he tells you about the dasara havu (dangerous snake)
that is so clever that he got into the sahib’s
drawer and lay there curled up, and how, the other
day, when the sahib goes to the bathroom, a lamp in
his hand, and opens the drawer to take out some
soap, what does he see but our maharaja, nice and
clean and shining with his eyes glittering in the
lamplight, and the sahib, he closes the drawer as
calmly as a prince; but by the time he is back with
his pistol, our maharaja has given him the slip.
And the sahib opens towel after towel to greet the
maharaja, but the maharaja has gone on his nuptial
ceremony and he will never be found (48). Even

though this is a "dangerous snake" there is admiration for
it, and it is given the honorific title "maharaja." The
story teller is obviously glad that the snake has outsmarted
the English "sahib."

Another kind, the flying snake, is also given a human
term:

But here there's another monster; he flies from tree
to tree, and when your turban is just a little
loose, and say your pate uncovered, this fine
gentleman merely hangs down and gives you a nice
blessing (48).

and the water snake is compared to women:

now as for water snakes, take my word, they are as
long as they are silly, like the tongues of our
village hussies (48).

Here the snake is long and harmless and is compared to a
gossipy woman's tongue, a negative image, since traditional
and proper Indian wives would not run all over wagging their
tongues idly.

Minerals also come into Rao's similes, and they too can
be compared to women: "and gold was wiles as a wanton woman
has wiles" (54), or they can be things of value:

And this Range Gowda has a golden tongue and a
leather tongue, and what is uttered by the golden
tongue is golden and sure, and what is uttered by
the leather one is for the thief and concubine (71).

Here again we see the difference between the "wanton
woman" and the "good woman" in traditional Indian society.
The good woman would not be covetous or scheming to get
extra things. She would take what was given and be content,
since India is still, even if less than before, male
dominated. This is shown further by the low esteem given to
women who are not proper wives. The concubine is no more than a mistress, and so the leather tongue is good enough for her, particularly insulting since leather, being animal skin, is despised by good Hindus, and many of them will not touch it.

In this instance and the next, however, gold is a thing of value, unlike the first example where it seemed to have desires and devious ways, "when Moorthappa comes, let the rice be fine as filigree and the mangoes yellow as gold," (113) and finally, "our Moorthy is like gold--the more you heat it the purer it comes from the crucible" (93).

The last piece of figurative language which will be included here is his longest and most involved construction. Describing the onset of a storm, Rao combines simile and metaphor and different types of images, and its running on and on is as typically Indian as are the many images:

Rachanna and Chandranna and Madanna and Siddayya lean back against the trunks of the jacks, and the freckled, hard bark sweats out a whiff of moisture that brings out more perspiration and then the body grows dry and balmed, but when the eyes seek the livid skies across the leaves, there is something dark and heavy rising from the other side of the hill, something heavy and hard and black, and the trees begin suddenly to tremble and hiss, and as Rachanna and Chandranna and Madanna and Siddayya strike their axes against the wood, there is a gurgle and grunt from behind the bamboo cluster--and the gurgle and grunt from behind the bamboo cluster--and the gurgle and grunt soar up and swallow the whole sky. The darkness grows thick as sugar in a cauldron, while the bamboos creak and sway and whine, and the crows begin to wheel round and flutter, and everywhere dogs bark and calves moo,
and then the wind comes so swift and dashing that it takes the autumn leaves with it, and they rise into the juggling air, while the trees bleat and blubber. Then drops fall, big as the thumb, and as the thunder goes clashing like a temple cymbal through the heavens, the earth itself seems to heave up and cheep in the monsoon rains. It churns and splashes, beats against the treetops, reckless and willful, and suddenly floating forwards, it bucks back and spits forward and pours down upon the green, weak coffee leaves, thumping them down to the earth, and then playfully lounging up, the coffee leaves rising with it, and whorling and winnowing, spurting and rattling, it jerks and snorts this side and that; and as Rachanna and Madanna and Chandranna and Siddayya stand beside the jacks, the drops trickle down the peeling bark, then touch the head; then the back and the waist, and once when the trees have all groaned down as though whipped to a bow, there is such a swish of spray that it soaks their dhotis and their turbans, and they stand squeezing them out (50).

The first image is of the jack tree, which is freckled and sweating like a child. As the men stand under the tree, they see something heavy and hard and black, and it makes even the trees hiss and tremble. Now the trees become cats, watching another huge cat approach. Behind the bamboo, however, there is something huge, and with a gurgle and a grunt it soars up to swallow the sky. This causes darkness, darkness as thick as syrup. The bamboos creak and sway and whine like frightened old people. Meanwhile, the wind is coming so hard that it is tearing the leaves off the trees and making them cry, but they do it bleating and blubbery as children would. Finally, the rain arrives with drops as big as a thumb, and with it is the thunder, which clashes like a temple cymbal. With this noise, the earth heaves up
and cheeps like a bird as the rain continues beating down the trees deliberately and willfully. Then, like a bull, it goes forward and bucks back as it tramples the coffee leaves with playfulness. It whirs, fans, spurs and rattles, jerking and snorting as it does so. The rain has now become so hard that the trees are bowed over and the men underneath are soaked and forced to wring out their clothes. Rather than being called a mixed metaphor (which we have seen has a negative connotation) this construction is perhaps a progression of images, because it effectively indicates the various aspects of the storm and its effects.

With this figurative wealth in mind, we will now move on to consider R. K. Narayan. It will be immediately obvious that Narayan’s constructions are short. They are also few, having had to come from several different sources, and they are not solely Indian in content.

"The whole school crowded round him and hung on his lips" (Swami 6) does not give the reader a single hint as to the location of the school or what nationality "he," whose lips are being hung on, may be. If one had not seen the name Swami previously, the incident could be in Boston as well as in Malgudi, India, since this is a common metaphor in English.

"It was April. The summer sun shone like a ruthless arc lamp—and all the water in the well evaporated and the
road dust became bleached and weightless and flew about like flour spraying off the grinding wheels" (Waiting 18). This double simile could as well be from the American midwest, since there are wells and flour mills almost everywhere, and the scientific tone of "arc lamp" does not bring an underdeveloped, third world country hurriedly to mind.

The Vendor of Sweets yields several pieces of figurative speech. "They rankled in his mind as if he had a splinter under his skull...his fingers quickly sorted out the denominations, the fives, tens, and quarters, with the flourish of a virtuoso running his fingers over a keyboard" (9). "Beyond the fringe his hair fell in a couple of speckled waves on his nape" (5), "the wind blowing through their leaves created a continuous murmur as of sea waves" (105), "the cotton got thinner and longer as if it were the soft dough from which Silverman sometimes drew fine vermicelli strands" (119), and "he felt hurt at the recollection as if a needle had probed a wound" (171). None of the above quotes is limited to Indian use; two of them are medical, and even the cotton being spun is locationless. Pianos never figure into traditional Indian music, and the name, Silverman, is most decidedly unIndian. It seems Narayan goes out of his way to make all of his images European. This may be because his works are primarily written for a non-Indian audience and are more popular
outside of India. Because of this large readership (and the fact that Narayan is translated into other languages from the English seems to show this,) it is necessary that his images be general and not as culture bound if he is to reach that larger commercial market.

A Tiger for Malgudi had this simile: "His head shot up like a cobra’s and he just pecked at the goat, but it was like a—-it was snap-action, neat, precise like a surgeon" (77). Here again we see the medical; it is, however, coupled with a cobra. This is the first Indian image we have seen, and, indeed, it was the only Indian image I could find. It therefore becomes obvious that Narayan does not rely on culturally bound images to impart Indianness to his writings. His stories are, nonetheless, as Indian as are Rao’s. South India is what he knows, and what he writes about. Not one of his stories is set in any other location.

Forster uses more figurative language than Narayan, and less than Rao, but his images too, in A Passage to India, will be predominantly European. Of India as a total thing he says,

India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last com'er to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take her seat! She whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Guatemala and Belgium perhaps! (322)

In this unusual metaphor, Forster shows a negative political view. India is a fat woman arriving late and waddling in to
take her place at a dull female gathering. She was once something to look up to; she had power and presence, and now she will most likely be reduced to a position of insignificance, which seems to be the position both Guatemala and Belgium hold in the drab sisterhood, as far as Forster is concerned.

Speaking of the Chandrapore area, Forster uses an anatomical image:

> Only in the south, where a group of fists and fingers are thrust up through the soil, is the endless expanse interrupted. These fists and fingers are the Marabar Hills...(9).

He continues this metaphor again much farther into the story,

> Fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil—here at last is their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than windless water, more voluptuous than love (125).

At this point, the fists and fingers turn out to have skin that is incredibly smooth and even more sensual and luxurious than the goddess of love herself has. Still into anatomical images, he says, "Here an untidy plain stretched to the knees of Marabar" (138). In these images of the female India, we have universal non-nationalistic images. This trend continues when we move from human to animal images. We find animals not found solely in India:

> the main road through the bazaars was blocked and the English were gaining the civil station by byways; they were caught like caterpillars...(232)...the procession...like a snake
in a drain, it advanced down the narrow bazaar
towards the basin of the Maidan, (234)

and finally a long passage:

What had spoken to her in that scoured-out cavity of
the granite? What dwelt in the first of the caves?
Something very old and very small. Before time, it
was before space also. Something snub-nosed
incapable of generosity—the undying worm itself.
Since hearing its voice, she had not entertained one
large thought, she was actually envious of Adela.
All this fuss over a frightened girl! Nothing had
happened, "and if it had," she found herself
thinking with the cynicism of a withered priestess,
"if it had, there are worse evils than love." The
unspeakable attempt presented itself to her as love:
in a cave, in a church—Boum, it amounts to the
same. Visions are supposed to entail profundity,
but---Wait till you get one, dear reader! The abyss
also may be petty the serpent of eternity made of
maggots (208).

In this passage we see Forster again move to universal
images, coupled with another mythical image. This time the
myth is of the worm, Ouroboros, which bites his own tail and
thus becomes a circle, the symbol for the never ending or
eternity. As such, it just exists. It does not act on
existence. Mrs. Moore has for a moment seen the infinite,
and now it is as if she is an old priestess, cynical and
perhaps jaded, thinking perhaps, that the serpent, or
eternity, has died and that only the feeding maggots remain.

The largest category of Forster's tropes concern
fabric, but fabric which, like the animals, is not
necessarily Indian:

In England the mood had seemed dead and alien; here
she was caught in the shawl of night together with
earth and all the other stars (29). He never
realized that the educated Indians visited one
another constantly, and were weaving, however painfully, a new social fabric (54). Moonlit pinnacles rushed up at her like the fringes of a sea; (209).

and lastly,

As she left Chandrapore the moon, full again, shone over the Ganges and touched the shrinking channels into threads of silver (209).

In these images we have seen the thread, the weaving, a completed shawl, and its fringe. Yet these passages have been taken from throughout the book. They like the mythical images, seem to show us how Forster thinks. He is constantly pulling images from his diverse experience and knowledge.

There are also several figures that concern food, or utensils for food, or food preparation.

...she was rushing through Central India, through landscapes that were baked and bleached...(209),

and:

The country was stricken and blurred. Its houses, trees and fields were all modeled out of the same brown paste, and the sea at Bombay slid about like broth against the quays (205).

and, "great trees with leaves like plates rose among the brushwood" (321). This simile is especially expressive since many Indians use large leaves as dinner plates. It therefore becomes a figure that is relevant to both Indian and non-Indian readers.

The last figures we will examine are interesting, but do not fall into any special category.
He ceased to be either outcaste or poet, and became the medical student, very gay, and full of details of operations which he poured into the shrinking ears of his friends (53).

Shrinking ears seem non-discriminative to which nationality of person they may be on, and,

'We jog on as decently as we can, you a little in front--a laudable little party. But my wife is not with us...won't you talk to Ralph? He is a wise boy really. And (same metaphor) he rides a little behind her, though with her' (318).

This metaphor too is universal. Even if it seems strange to think of a horse jogging rather than trotting, the figure is still effective, and we realize that the wife, Stella, and her brother, Ralph, are in search of different things philosophically than are the others.

We have seen that none of Forster's tropes are limited to Indian use; they could work just as successfully if Forster were writing about another country. In this, he, as Narayan, finds other ways to make us aware of Indian exoticism, making it clear that it is not necessary to use Indian-English to write an India based novel. This does not mean, however, that Indian-English is bad; the question really seems to be one of individual preference in the search for artistic expression to relate to the audience, coupled with cultural heritage.

Rao uses rural and nature images to a large degree and images from Hindu mythology. These are in contrast to Narayan's figures, which are more urban, scientific, and
general. Forster uses many types of figures, but none of them are solely Indian. When he deals with cosmic imagery, it is archetypal drawing from the communal pot rather than from one tradition.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The English language is not new to the people of India. It came to them in the early seventeenth century and eventually became the language of the Indian court system approximately two hundred years later.

The question is then, with English so long in use, why do non-Indian readers not have more exposure to works written by Indian-English authors? There is the factor that some past critics have looked at the Indian culture as substandard, and therefore Indian writing has not been accorded the same critical attention as works by western authors. It has also been shown that some critics think that Indian-English is just too flowery, that it is full of grand expressions, and that Indian-English authors delight in achieving a magniloquence of style, that is just too difficult and too much bother for the non-Indian reader.

This same criticism could, of course, be made concerning Renaissance literature in general and especially concerning Shakespeare in particular. Yet, Shakespeare is still widely read, and most feel there is more than enough gain for the reader to warrant the reading struggle. This should be true for readers of foreign and other commonwealth (not just Indian) literature also. Since, however, Indian-English literature is the subject of this paper, it seems necessary to limit these concluding remarks to it, and not
to the enormous field of foreign literature written in English on the whole.

It has been shown that word choice and style of Indian-English literature can be, but also need not be, a factor to limit readership. R.K. Narayan’s prose is for the major part as easily read as is Forster’s, and there are other Indian-English authors who write as he does. A great part of the problem then would seem to be not style or word choice, but that much Indian-English literature requires the reader to have some foreknowledge of India’s culture: its religions and mythologies, social customs, geographical data, and even a brush with the long, long history, which dates from at least 3000 to 4000 years B.C., and which new evidence proves may be as old as 7000 to 8000 years B.C. Many would then ask why they should bother. One excellent reason could be that between India and China is contained one-half of the world’s population. Soon it will be more. This fact should not be ignored.

As a final note on style, Americans have become accustomed to reading a condensed, modern, no frills, journalistic style. The old non-condensed style is shunned. In fact, fewer and fewer Americans read to any large degree. Any bookshop owner will put the figure at about ten percent of the population at large.
Readers of other literatures broaden their own outlook. In beginning to understand the soul of another people, they see them not as aliens but as fellow humans and, eventually, grasp the essential. Forster, as British as he is, still manages to write about India, and he serves as an easy introduction. Narayan is clearly a bridge between Anglo and Indian, and in fact, renders Indian subject matter into almost text book English. His English poses very few problems for the non-Indian reader. Rao does at times create problems, but perhaps these problems are useful in showing us not only the workings of the Indian mind, but also the vast flexibility and diversity possible in the English language.

It is hoped that this work has been able to point out the uniqueness of Indian-English and its subject matter and to challenge non-Indian readers of English to investigate this literature, in spite of, or even because of those differences.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

For the purpose of acquainting those interested in the subject of Indian-English with some of the titles I consulted but did not use in my thesis, I have included a fragmentary reading list for those unfamiliar with Indian authors who might enjoy developing a relationship with them.

I will start with a reading list and then move on to analytical works. As was stated in the main body of this work, Indian authors often deal with content unfamiliar to non-Indian readers. Much of this has to do with religion, since it is an aspect of daily life. Therefore some prereading on religion or mythology may be desirable. I found several works by R.K. Narayan to be beneficial. *Gods, Demons and Others* (New York: Viking, 1964) is well written and reads more like a selection of short stories than a text. *The Mahabharata* (New York: Viking, 1978) is a shortened prose rendering of the longest poem in the world. Another excellent and beautiful source of Indian mythology: *The Adventures of Rama* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1983) is by Milo Cleveland Beach. It has illustrations from a sixteenth-century Mughal manuscript. This book was written for Beach’s children, but it is by no means only a children’s book. There are many other retellings of *The Ramayana* available. R.K. Narayan’s (New York: Viking, 1972) is well written and easily understood. *Tales of Ancient India* translated by J.A.B. Van Buitenen (Chicago: U
Chicago, 1959) and *The Panchatantra* translated by Arthur W. Ryder (Chicago: U Chicago, 1925) are also excellent background reading.

From general background, we move to fiction. Ruth P. Jhabvala, an American married to an Indian, has several excellent stories: *The Householder* (New York: Norton, 1960) is a light and witty look at the dynamics of married life. *Heat and Dust* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) shows a more harsh side of India, but is still easily readable and clearly written. *A Tagore Reader* (New York: Macmillan, 1961) by Rabindranath Tagore is an excellent source for poetry and short stories. This work was first written in Bengali and then translated into English by the author. For poetry, *The Bird of Time* (London: W. Heinemann, 1912) and *The Golden Threshold* (London: W. Heinemann, 1905) by Sarojini Naidu give an intimate look at an Indian woman’s feelings about family relationships. At this point, any of R.K. Narayan’s novels (a rather large list is contained in the bibliography of this work) are recommended. As a middle ground, *An Anthology of Modern Bengali Short Stories* selected and translated by Menakshi Chatterjee (Calcutta: Prayer Books, 1977) and *Modern Telugu Short Stories* (Bombay: Jaico, 1968) by Patanjali and Muralidhar are interesting anthologies. They have a wide variety of stories: traditional, modern, rural, and urban. For a deeper, but


As regards articles concerning Indian women writers, Narsingh Srivastava contends that Indian women have not managed to develop a close relationship with English as a "living language" in "Some Indian Writers in English" Indian Literature 18.4 (1975): 63-72. Kirpal Singh narrows his comments to Kamala Das in "Kamala Das and the Problem with Composition." Journal of Indian Writing in English 7.1 (1979): 1-10. Singh condemns Das' use of too frank utterances about sex, love, and marriage; so too does Syed Ameeruddinin "Thought Process and Imagery in Monika Varma's Poetry." Commonwealth Quarterly 3.9 (1978): 129-136, in which he compares Varma to Das. Anne Brewster defends Das' work in "The Freedom to Decompose: The Poetry of Kamala Das." Journal of Indian Writing in English 8.1-2 (1980): 98-107. Anita Desai comes off a very poor second to Mr. G.V. Desani in "Desai versus Desani: Norms of Appreciation," by Raji Narasimha in Indian Literature 16 (1973): 180-184. A.N. Dwivedi takes a close look at Sorojini Naidu's mechanics (but more so at her content of which he does not approve) in "Sarojini the Poet." Indian Literature 13.3 (1979): 115-127; and then in "Between Two Worlds: The Poetry of Margaret Chatterjee." Indian Literature 25.5 (1982): 72-85, he declares that Chatterjee should not be ranked as an Indian born poet, since she has lived abroad a great deal. P. Lal looks at Women poets and
criticism of them by both men and women in "Contemporary Indian Women Poets in English" Review of National Literatures 10 (1979): 161-172.

Religious differences seem to arise in Chirantan Kulshrestha’s review "Khushwant Singh’s Fiction: A Critique." Indian Writing Today 4.1 (1970): 19-26, which purports to concern usage and style, but in which we see criticism of a Sikh by a non-Sikh. Raji Narasimha’s criticism of Salman Rushdie in "Indo-English: Breaking Fresh Ground." Indian Literature 25.6 (1982): 14-24, is more a criticism of a Moslem by a Hindu than it is a criticism of the language and mechanics in Midnight’s Children, which is what it declares itself to be.


In closing, I hope that this bibliographical essay may prove of use, that one of its groupings may appeal. I hope also that some of the fine journals which have yielded these selections may be investigated and find a new, larger readership.
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