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World Englishes: Agony and Ecstasy

BRAJ B. KACHRU

Introduction

The title of this paper is restricted to “Englishes,”¹ but the phenomenon I propose to discuss applies to most languages of wider communication (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, Tamil, Hindi-Urdu, French, Chinese) and also to languages of not-so-wide communication (e.g., Dutch, Swedish, Korean, and Serbo-Croatian). All these languages are in varying degrees “pluricentric”;² they have multilinguistic identities, multiplicity of norms, both endocentric and exocentric, and distinct sociolinguistic histories. However, the pluricentricity of English is overwhelming, and unprecedented in linguistic history. It raises issues of diversification, codification, identity, creativity, cross-cultural intelligibility, and of power and ideology.³ The universalization of English and the power of this language have come at a price; for some, the implications are agonizing, while for others they are a matter for ecstasy.

In my discussion of these two reactions to the spread and functions of English, I would like to discuss ecstasy first and then come to the other part, the agony. But before I do this, my choice of the term ‘Englishes’ calls for an explanation: Why “world Englishes” and not “world English”?⁴ The answer to this question involves linguistic, attitudinal, ontological, and pragmatic explanations. The term ‘Englishes’ is indicative of distinct identities of the language and literature. “Englishes” symbolizes variation in form and function, use in linguistically and culturally distinct contexts, and a range of variety in literary creativity. And, above all, the term stresses the *WE-ness* among the users of English, as opposed to *us* vs. *them* (native and nonnative). I believe that the traditional concept of *us* vs. *them* used in describing

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language diffusion does not apply to English in the same way as it does to other languages of wider communication.

In his presidential address to the English Association in London in 1975, George Steiner was actually referring to the pluricentricity of English when he said that "the linguistic center of English has shifted."⁵ Steiner argued that "this shift of the linguistic center involves far more than statistics. It does look as if the principal energies of the English language, as if its genius for acquisition, for innovation, for metaphoric response, has also moved away from England."⁶ Steiner was not thinking of North America or Australia only, but of East, West, and South Africa, India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and of the U.S. possessions in the Pacific. And during the past two decades this "shift" has become more marked, more institutionalized, and is more recognized.

The major characteristics of this unprecedented change in linguistic behavior and the depth and range of the spread are better understood if the English language in diaspora is viewed in several phases.⁷ The first phase began closer to home, with initial expansion toward Wales in 1535. It was then that Wales was united with England. In 1603, the English and Scottish monarchies were united. It was not until 1707 that the state of Great Britain was established. The first phase was thus restricted to the British Islands.

The second phase of diaspora takes us to North America, to Australia, to Canada, and to New Zealand. This phase entailed movements of English-speaking populations from one part of the globe to another.

It is, however, the third phase, the Raj phase, that altered the earlier sociolinguistic profile of the English language and the processes of transplanting it: it brought English to South Asia; to Southeast Asia; to South, West, and East Africa, and to the Philippines. It is primarily this phase of the diaspora on which I shall concentrate.

This phase has four major cross-linguistic and cross-cultural characteristics. First, it implanted English within linguistic contexts where no English-using communities existed and no large-scale English-speaking populations were relocated. Second, English came in contact with genetically and culturally unrelated major languages: in Africa with the Bantu and Niger-Congo languages, in Asia with the Dravidian languages, and in Southeast Asia with the Altaic languages, to give just three major examples.

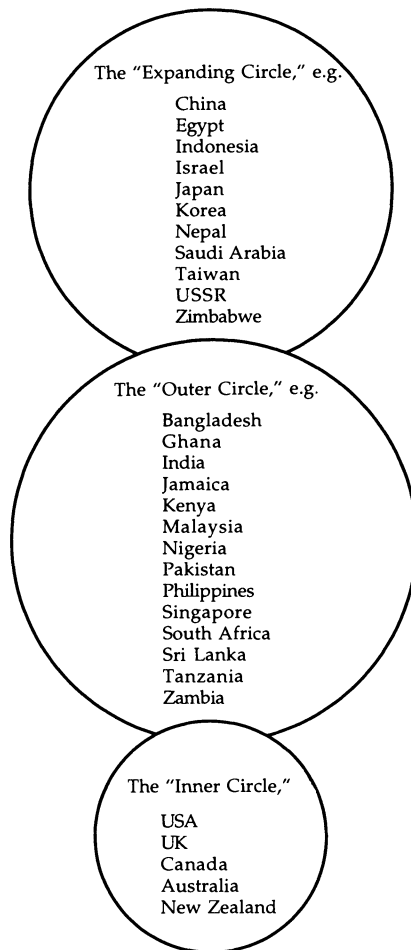
Third, there were diverse contexts, methods, and inputs in imparting English education, rather than one consistent pedagogical model, often with no serious input from the native speakers of the language.

Fourth, though the arms of the Raj maintained a distance from the native cultures, and from native people, the language of the Raj was going through a process of acculturation. It was being influenced by the non-Western cultures and their sociolinguistic contexts. The pluricentricity of English, thus, is not merely demographic, it entails cultural, linguistic, and

literary reincarnations of the English language. These sociolinguistic “reincarnations” may be viewed as processes of liberation, as it were, from the traditional canons associated with English.

The profile of this pluricentricity may be presented with reference to the Three Concentric Circles of English.

The lists of countries included in the above circles, particularly in the Outer and Expanding Circles, are merely illustrative and do not include all the possible candidates. The circles do not include, for example, countries such as South Africa, Ireland, and Jamaica, where the sociolinguistic situations are rather complex and no reliable figures of English-using populations are available, particularly for those who use English as their first



Three Concentric Circles

language (L1). These three circles have a message about the codification and diversification of English.⁸ There are now three types of English-using speech fellowships: *norm-providing*, *norm-developing*, and *norm-dependent*.⁹

In the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle, the ecstasy generated by the power of English has several dimensions: demographic, ideological, societal, and attitudinal. English is not only an access language *par excellence*, it is a reference point for paradigms of research and methodology. In research, areas such as second-language acquisition, first-language acquisition, stylistics, bilingual and monolingual lexicography, and theories of translation are closely related to English studies. In theory construction, generalizations about natural languages, their structural characteristics, and possible categories of language universals usually begin with analysis and examples from English.

And across languages and literatures, the impact of World Englishes is Janus-like, with two faces. One face is that of ENGLISHIZATION, the process of change that English has initiated in the other languages of the world.¹⁰ The second face is that of the NATIVIZATION and ACCULTURATION of the English language itself, the processes of change that localized varieties of English have undergone by acquiring new linguistic and cultural identities.¹¹ This explains the use of terms such as the *Africanization*¹² or *Indianization*¹³ of English, or the use of terms such as Singaporean English, Nigerian English, Philippine English, and Sri Lankan English.¹⁴

Whatever reactions one might have toward the diffusion and uses of English, one must, however, admit that we now have a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic universal language. And with it, what John Adams saw in his crystal ball in September 1780 has come true. Adams prophesied that "English will be the most respectable language in the world and the most universally read and spoken in the next century, if not before the close of this."¹⁵ (When Adams said "English" he actually meant "American English.") Adams's prophesy is evident in such claims as "The sun never sets on the English language" (though, after 1940, the sun did set on the Empire), or "English is the language for all seasons," or "English has no national or regional frontier."

This demographic distribution of English surpasses that of Latin in the medieval period, that of Sanskrit in what was traditional South Asia, and of Spanish, Arabic, and French. And now no competing languages are in the field—not French, and not artificial languages such as Esperanto. In other words, English continues to alter the linguistic behavior of people across the globe, and it is now the major instrument of initiating large-scale bilingualism around the world—being a bilingual now essentially means knowing English and using English as an *additional* language, as a language of wider communication, with one or more languages from one's region.

It is, however, difficult to determine how many people know English. The answer depends on whom you ask. A conservative figure gives us two

nonnative speakers for every native speaker.¹⁶ And the liberal figure gives us four nonnative speakers for every native speaker.¹⁷ In China, there are many more English-using Chinese than the total population of the United Kingdom, if we estimate just five percent of the Chinese using English. India, if we count only ten percent of its population as English-knowing, is the third largest English-knowing country after the United States and the United Kingdom. The Indian Constitution actually recognizes English as an “associate” official language.¹⁸ What is impressive indeed is that this profile of English has developed within this century, particularly after the 1930s.

In those regions which have felt no direct impact of English—the earlier Francophone countries, for instance—the indirect impact has been no less real and has been difficult to arrest. This impact comes through “invisible” channels that bypass the strategies devised by language planners. The influence of English penetrates indirectly from the models of creativity, the international media, processes used for translation, and now through electronic media and computer technology.

We see the hegemony of English across cultures in the domains of education, administration, literary creativity, and intranational and international interaction. But, more important, we see it in the attitudes toward English and its users. It is the only natural language that has considerably more nonnative users than native users. And it is the nonnative users who are now responsible for its spread and teaching, and uses. Interactions involving English in non-Western countries are mostly carried on by nonnative users with other nonnative users not, as one would suppose, by nonnative users with native users. The extent and impact of English on other cultures, languages, and literatures, then, is a unique phenomenon in the history of language diffusion. One therefore has to ask: Do we have appropriate theoretical and methodological tools to account for this phenomenon?

Paradigms of Research and Paradigm Lag

This global initiation of bilingualism in English, its range and depth, and the implications of its stratification, have *not* been followed by accommodating, modifying, and refining paradigms of research and methodology. In fact, research for understanding this remarkable phenomenon of our times and its implications has yet to be clearly worked out and presented.

Dell Hymes, a sociolinguist, reminds us that “we have methods highly elaborated for addressing the process of genetic relationships, but very little for addressing the process of diffusion, contact, etc.” He goes on to say that the methods for typological classification, which involves the least use of language, are more developed, while “the functional classification, which involves the most use of language, is the least developed.”¹⁹

The resistance to a paradigm shift is not purely intellectual; there are other strategies in action here that are ideologically based and very subtle.²⁰

However, traditionally, three main paradigms have been used to describe and analyze World Englishes.

1. *Descriptive*. This approach in the study of diffusion of English has been attitudinally neutral. One notices it in some lexicographical work which I have termed "Raj lexicography."²¹

2. *Prescriptive*. The prescriptivist's primary yardsticks were the "native speaker" and the manuals of English designed for the native varieties.²² Originally, this standard was applied to linguistic deviation at any level: grammar, lexis, discourse.

3. *Purist*. The purists' attitude involves more than *linguistic* purism. It also sees language as a medium for cultural, religious, and moral refinement and enlightenment. This attitude is well articulated in the Orientalist vs. Occidentalist debate concerning the language policy for what was "the Jewel in the Crown," South Asia. In the 1830s, proposing English for India's language planning, 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. . . . a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." Again, "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."²³ In President McKinley's view, the solution to the problems in the Philippines was "to educate the Filipinos and uplift and civilize and Christianize them and fit the people for the duties of citizenship."²⁴

The phenomenal spread of English cannot be understood within these three approaches: in all of these approaches English is seen essentially as a colonizer's linguistic instrument, without any local identity or name. Any non-English linguistic indicators—cultural, social, and religious—have been viewed as the markers of deficiency and not merely of difference. The manifestations of language contact were viewed as *interference*. That term acquired an immense attitudinal load: one has to be cautious about the implications of such undesirable labeling.²⁵

Institutionalization and the Sacred Cows

The institutionalization of English in the Outer Circle raises a variety of theoretical, methodological, and ideological questions that go beyond the concerns of simple pedagogy. Answering such questions within the new functions of English and their implications has meant slaughtering several types of sacred cows: theoretical, acquisitional, sociolinguistic, pedagogical, and ideological.

1. *Theoretical*. The theoretical concerns relate to four cardinal concepts in language study: "speech community," "the native speaker," "the ideal speaker-hearer," and the "mother tongue."²⁶

In linguistic literature, the definition of *speech community* varies from Leonard Bloomfield's vague definition ("a speech community is a group of people who interact by means of speech") to the rather complex definitions of Robert La Page and John Gumperz.²⁷ The underlying presupposition here, certainly in earlier conceptualizations of the spread of English, is that monolingualism is the normal communicative behavior in which the mother tongue has a crucial function. Yet, the sociolinguistic reality is that "much of the world's verbal communication takes place by means of languages which are not the users' 'mother tongue,' but by their second, third, or *n*th language, acquired one way or another and used when appropriate."²⁸

The consideration of monolingualism as normal linguistic behavior led to yet another trap, that of considering "native speaker" as a vital linguistic primitive. It was as a reaction to this reification of "native speaker" that in 1985 Paikeday wrote his provocative book *The Native Speaker Is Dead!* But not quite. In 1991 Allan Davies reincarnated the native speakers in *The Native Speaker and Applied Linguistics*, although, over a decade earlier, Charles Ferguson had warned us that "the whole mystique of native speaker and mother tongue should probably be quietly dropped from the linguists' set of professional myths about the language."²⁹

Sociolinguistically speaking, Chomsky's abstract idealization, "ideal speaker-hearer," has its own problems with reference to world Englishes.³⁰ What are the shared conventions of the users? How does one account for the variation that is characteristic of every level of language in each variety, namely, the variation ranging from acrolect to mesolect to basilect, or, in South Asia, educated English to Babu English, Butler English, and Bazar English?³¹

2. *Acquisitional*. The dominant explanatory concepts with reference to the users of English in the Outer Circle are interference, which results in "error," which, if institutionalized, becomes "fossilization." The user then produces an "interlanguage." The teachers' goal and learners' ideal is, of course, to attain native-like competence. The attitudinal connotations of "interference," again, show the extension of a monolingual paradigm to contexts of contact. This attitude continues, in spite of the recognition that "interference varieties" "are so widespread in a community and of such long standing that they may be thought stable and adequate enough to be institutionalized and hence to be regarded as varieties of English in their own right rather than stages on the way to a more native-like English."³²

3. *Sociolinguistic*. The sociolinguistic concerns relate to ideology and identity. David Crystal rightly says that "all discussion of standards ceases very quickly to be a linguistic discussion, and becomes instead an issue of social identity."³³ This is particularly true of English, since it has played an "integrative" role among the elite in the Third World: it has provided a perspective that is both "inward-looking" and "outward-looking," a role diametrically

opposed to the aims and political agenda of the colonizers. English turned into an effective resource for understanding the dialectics of anticolonialism, secularization, and panregional communication for nationalism.

4. *Pedagogical*. The paradigms of pedagogy (methods and materials) have yet to catch up with the new challenges that world Englishes provide. This lack is specifically noticed in the conceptualization of, for example, communicative competence, English for specific purposes (ESP), and the construction of tests of international competence in English.³⁴

5. *Ideological*. The metaphor “killer English” symbolizes the overwhelming ideological power of English, which is further expressed in terms such as *genocide*, *inequality*, *imperialism*, *Anglo-centricity*, *cultural nationalism*, and *neocolonialism*, all ideologically loaded terms. The symbolization of power depends on how one sees the medium and its message. The symbolic label depends on what kind of identity one establishes with the language.³⁵ The following labels are illustrative.

Labels used to symbolize the power of English³⁶

Positive	Negative
National identity	Anti-nationalism
Literary renaissance	Anti-native culture
Cultural mirror (for native cultures)	Materialism
Vehicle for Modernization	Vehicle for Westernization
Liberalism	Rootlessness
Universalism	Ethnocentricism
Secularism	Permissiveness
Technology	Divisiveness
Science	Alienation
Mobility	Colonialism
Access code	

The Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ is one of the most articulate writers in expressing the power and the resultant agony of English: “African countries, as colonies and even today as neo-colonies, came to be defined and to define themselves in terms of the languages of Europe: English-speaking, French-speaking or Portuguese-speaking African countries.”³⁷ For Ngũgĩ, English is a “cultural bomb,” and “The effect of a cultural time bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment. . . . It makes them want to identify with that which is farthest removed from themselves, for instance, with other people’s languages, rather than their own.”³⁸ He believes that “African thought is imprisoned in foreign

languages. African literature and African thought, even at their most radical, even at their most revolutionary, are alienated from the majority."³⁹

On the other hand, Chinua Achebe expresses an agony different from that of Ngũgĩ. In his view, "If you can take Nigeria as an example, the national literature, as I see it, is the literature written in English; and the ethnic literatures are in Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Effik, Edo, Ijaw, etc."⁴⁰ Ngũgĩ suggests *distance*, Achebe *complete identity*. However, Achebe asks: "Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing?" And his answer is: "Certainly yes." But he hastens to qualify the statement: "If on the other hand you ask: Can he [an African] ever learn to use it like a native speaker? I should say, 'I hope not. It is neither necessary, nor desirable for him to be able to do so.'" Achebe's attitude to English is essentially pragmatic. For him, English has to be "a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings."⁴¹

Does this, then, show that Achebe is completely free from linguistic agony concerning his identity with English? The answer is yes and no. Only a decade later Achebe expresses his agony concerning the paradigm trap: the application of European paradigms for discussion of African literature. "I should like to see the word *universal* banned altogether from the discussion of African literature until such a time as people cease to use it as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe."⁴²

Now, take another example. The Indian metaphysical novelist Raja Rao shows an entirely different kind of identity with the English language. He gives English a status equal to that of Sanskrit in the Indian context. "Truth, said a great Indian sage, is not the monopoly of the Sanscrit language. Truth can use any language, and the more universal, the better it is. . . . And as long as the English language is universal, it will always remain Indian."⁴³ Rao accepts English "not as a guest or friend, but as one of our own, of our caste, our creed, our sect and of our tradition."⁴⁴

I said Raja Rao gave English a status equal to that of Sanskrit; for a Brahmin, from the South of India, that entails complete identity with the language: English becomes an Indian language, Raja Rao's language. And Lawrence Durrell is effusive in his praise of Rao's creativity in English. He says, "Hurrah for you! You not only do India great honour, but you have honoured English literature by writing it in our language."⁴⁵ However, Durrell's "our" shows a different attitude to English, and Rao's identity with the language is suspect; he is shown his place: we go back to *we* vs. *them*. Durrell is consistent in using his monolingual paradigm for creativity in English. Perhaps Anita Desai would have puzzled him more, as she says that, until she heard critics discussing problems of Indian writing in English, she was "misguided, or naive, to think it is a distinct advantage to be able to delve into more than one language, more than one culture. In my

home, we tended to snatch whatever word or phrase seemed to be appropriate. . . . Pedants may shudder, and it was indeed a patchwork of languages, but was not all of Indian life a patchwork?"⁴⁶

Salman Rushdie's experience as a writer from the Commonwealth is insightful. At a Conference on English Studies in 1983, he was told that "for the purposes of our seminar, English studies are taken to include Commonwealth Literature." "At all other times, one was forced to conclude, these two worlds would be kept strictly apart, like squabbling children, or sexually incompatible pandas, or, perhaps, like unstable, fissile materials whose union might cause explosions."⁴⁷

An often repeated question is: Why do these writers (e.g., Achebe, Rao, Desai) write in English? Rao's answer is: "Historically, this is how I am placed. I'm not interested in being a European but in being me. But the whole of the Indian tradition, as I see it, is in my work. There is an honesty in choosing English, an honesty in terms of history."⁴⁸ And then, Rao talks of the authenticity: "The important thing is not what language one writes in, for language is really an accidental thing. What matters is the authenticity of experience, and this can generally be achieved in any language."⁴⁹

Multi-Identities and the Canon

The elevated status of English across cultures came at a price. Its multicultural identities resulted in deep sociolinguistic shifts. The following examples of these shifts come to mind.

Shift of Traditional Interlocutors

The *international* users of English come from unrelated language and cultural backgrounds (e.g., Dravidian, Bantu, Altaic), often with minimal or no shared conventions: a Japanese with a Taiwanese, a Nigerian with a Saudi Arabian, an Indian with a Scot. The *intranational* users have minimal interactions with the native speakers. The questions here are: What are the norms of intelligibility? What are the suppositions concerning the shared knowledge of conventions of interactions?⁵⁰

The Expansions of the Canon

The process of "opening up the canon"⁵¹ has taken place in English to an unparalleled extent, though it has yet to be seriously recognized. The processes of language change initiated by language contact are not restricted to grammar, lexis, style, and discourse. They go beyond these levels and cross over to literatures across cultures. In the writing of Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Raja Rao, Catherine Lim, Chitra Fernando, Shashi Tharoor, and Vikram Seth, to name a few, English is used as a medium to present canons unrelated to traditional associations of the language. In the Outer Circle, then,

there is a shift from the earlier European sociocultural and literary canons of the language and a conscious attempt to relate English to local traditions of culture and creativity.⁵²

In Nigeria, Kenya, Singapore, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines, bilinguals' creativity is considered part of the national literatures. These literatures are *national* first and *universal* second, as long as the term 'universal' is defined within Western parameters. The local English literatures are part of the local canons of creativity. Achebe emphasizes that his vision is "necessarily local and particular."⁵³ Anyone attempting to understand and interpret the work of Wole Soyinka and Amos Tutuola must realize that the world view of their ontology, mythology, and oral tradition is central and Judeo-Christian traditions are peripheral. In interpreting Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* or *The Chessmaster and His Moves*, a multilingual and Vedantist view is vital, and Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* is completely embedded in North Indian sociocultural traditions.

The text, then, has its own context within the new canons of creativity: a context of sociocultural canons and canons of creativity. The reader has to be aware of this linguistic and contextual crossover. The traditional paradigms have yet to provide insights for exploring the "meaning potential" in such texts.⁵⁴ At present, contextually and linguistically, our yardsticks for intelligibility and interpretability of creativity in Englishes are based on one specific canon and the processes of monolingual creativity. In contact literatures in English, the multicultural and multilingual processes of organizing the text reflect in Yorubization, Sanskritization, and so on. This raises an important question: My language, your culture—whose communicative competence?⁵⁵

Discoursal Organization

Discoursal organization in various interactional contexts—both literary and spoken—reflects the African and Asian canons of English. One reason for such textual reorganization is that English is recognized as part of national and local literary traditions. The concerns of Chinua Achebe or R. K. Narayan may be universal, but the medium of the expression of those concerns is nativized; the contextualization of the text and its formal manifestations are not shared with other varieties: in that sense, the text is regional.⁵⁶

What Price Ecstasy?

The ecstasy and its bounty—linguistic, nationalistic, integrative, and literary—came at a certain price.

Before I identify the reasons for the agony, I must note that all the reasons refer to spheres of power and control. Linguists have yet to provide a framework to structure the power of a language. The five linguistic models

generally used to discuss such power are: the Correlative Model, the Domain Model, the Conflict Model, the Functional Model, and the Verbal Repertoire Model.⁵⁷ These capture only part of the interplay of power, politics, and control.

There is as yet no rigorous theoretical and methodological framework in which to understand the all-pervasive power of English. While considering the question of power, one naturally is reminded of Michel Foucault's discussion on this topic. Foucault, of course, does not directly address the issue of language and power; however, he does confirm that "power and its strategies, at once general and detailed, and its mechanisms have never been studied."⁵⁸ In Foucault's view, power is "an organ of repression." The question is: How is this "organ" of repression used in language, and what are the manifestations of linguistic power in a speech community?

The following manifestations of linguistic power come to mind: crude linguistic power, indirect psychological pressure, and what may be termed pragmatic power; these three are not mutually exclusive.

One finds numerous examples of crude linguistic power, as in the imposition of Japanese on the Koreans, Singaporeans, and Malays during World War II. A subtle psychological pressure is evident in claims that a particular language has "spiritual" power, as, in the ritualistic context, the recitation of Sanskrit hymns, the power of *Japa*, the other-worldly rewards of the reading of the holy *Quran*. In these contexts, however, the inherent power of language is accepted without question.

Pragmatic power may be interpreted in terms of gaining control over a wide range of functionally crucial domains—political, religious, caste, class, and commercial. At present, English has abundant pragmatic power across cultures.

What Foucault suggests as "methodological precautions" entails asking the following types of questions: What is the "ultimate destination" of power at its "extremities"? What are the aims of the possessors of power? What is the network of power? Who are the agents of power? And what are the "ideological" productions of power? I do not intend to discuss all the questions raised by Foucault here. However, two aspects deserve particular attention. The first is, What are the channels used for linguistic control? It seems to me that linguistic control essentially means acquiring the power to *define*. As Trömel-Plötz warns us, "Only the powerful can define others and can make their definitions stick. By having their definitions accepted they appropriate more power."⁵⁹ The power to define shows in the use of channels of codification and the control of those channels.

The power to define also shows in the power to *authenticate* the uses and users of English in the Outer Circle. This power reflects in attitudes toward linguistic innovations—lexical, grammatical, discursal, and stylistic—and in the mixing and switching of languages. Current paradigms of power interpret any shift in paradigm as a manifestation of "liberation linguistics."

Randolph Quirk has suggested that “liberation linguistics” is an extension of “liberation theology.”⁶⁰ In Quirk’s view, then, the result of the ideological underpinning is that “the interest in varieties of English has got out of hand and has started binding both teachers and taught to the central linguistic structure from which varieties might be seen as varying.”⁶¹ Quirk emphatically rejects the distinction between the Outer Circle (ESL) and the Expanding Circle (EFL). He ignores this sociolinguistically valid distinction, as he says, “because I doubt its validity and frequently fail to understand its meaning.”⁶²

If we accept Quirk’s position, it entails the following assumptions and assigns writers from the Outer Circle to “a position on the periphery” by rejection of or indifference to the following:

1. dynamics of language contact and change;
2. sociolinguistic, cultural, and stylistic motivations for innovations;
3. existence of cline of variation within a variety;
4. endocentric or localized norms;
5. emerging canons of creativity and cultures in English;
6. language and identity
7. centrality to writers from the Outer Circle.⁶³

Here one is reminded of Salman Rushdie’s experience when he says: “I was talking to a literature don—a specialist, I ought to say, in *English* literature—a friendly and perceptive man. ‘As a Commonwealth writer,’ he suggested, ‘you probably find, don’t you, that there’s a kind of liberty, certain advantages, in occupying, as you do, a position on the periphery?’”⁶⁴

The rejection of paradigm shift, and misinterpretation of what Quirk calls “liberation linguistics,” is partly motivated by another unprecedented dimension of power, the economic power of English as an export commodity. The economic power of English can be sustained only if other strategies are kept under control: the paradigms of teaching, the authentication of creativity, and the guarding of the canon. We are told that “the Worldwide market for EFL training is worth a massive £6.25 billion a year.”⁶⁵

The search for stable consumer markets has resulted in a competition between the United States and the United Kingdom, and to a lesser degree with Australia. The competition is in promoting specific models of English, in marketing methodologies for the teaching of English, and in recruiting trainees for teacher training programs. The British ESL expert Christopher Brumfit seems to seek solidarity between the United States and the United Kingdom indirectly when he says: “There is already evidence that varied sources of English are being exploited by countries in their attitude to learning English. . . . The English-speaking world can be played politically by the non-English-speaking world.”⁶⁶

There are now several power blocks, and their enthusiasm may be reflected in attitudes noted by Phillipson: “As the director of a dynamic

worldwide chain of English language schools puts it: 'Once we used to send gunboats and diplomats abroad; now we are sending English teachers.'⁶⁷

Fallacies about the Forms and Functions of World Englishes

The issues discussed above have resulted in a variety of perceptions and fallacies about world Englishes. One can think of several reasons for such fallacies, for example, unverified hypotheses, partially valid hypotheses, or simple Anglocentricity. A number of these fallacies are also due to "leaking" research paradigms. But that is only part of the story.

The other part of the story is the motive of launching "paradigms for profit, primarily for economic gain."⁶⁸ Let me discuss some of these fallacies here.

Fallacy 1: Interlocutors, Us vs. Them

A major fallacy is that English is primarily learned to interact with native speakers of the language. Actually, English has greater intranational than international functions, for example, in Nigeria, India, Kenya, Singapore, and the Philippines. Additionally, English has become the main language for people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds: Japanese interacting with Pakistanis, Nigerians with Germans, and Singaporeans with Indians. These interactions take place in localized (nativized) discursive strategies of, for example, politeness, persuasion, and phatic communion modeled after the speech acts of a dominant local language transcreated into English.⁶⁹

A number of recent studies from written and spoken texts clearly demonstrate the use of such strategies.⁷⁰ This research area has immense potential that has yet to be explored, and such research should provide valuable insights for creativity and pragmatics, processes of transcreation, and language function.

Fallacy 2: Judeo-Christian Canon vs. Multicanons

The second fallacy is that English is learned primarily to understand and teach American and British cultural values and Judeo-Christian traditions. In reality, in the Outer Circle, English is essentially used to recreate and embody local cultural values. Why English? There are several reasons, the major one being the pragmatic success of English—its currency across linguistic, religious, and cultural boundaries—and attitudes toward the language.

Fallacy 3: Endocentric vs. Exocentric Models

The third fallacy is the claim that the goal of teaching is to adopt exocentric models (e.g., Received Pronunciation or General American). This view has no empirical validity and is pragmatically counterproductive.⁷¹

Fallacy 4: Interlanguage vs. Institutionalized Varieties

The fourth fallacy is that the users of English in the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle actually use what is termed an “interlanguage” in terms of their language acquisition, their ultimate acquisitional goal being “native-like” control of the language. An interlanguage is thus an approximative system that differs from the mother tongue and the target language, in this case native models of English. It has been argued that this generalization with reference to world Englishes is flawed on several counts.⁷²

Fallacy 5: Native Input vs. Local Initiative

The fifth fallacy is that native speakers of English provide serious input in the teaching, policy formation, and administration of the spread of English around the world. There was some—actually very little—validity to the belief in “native input” during the colonial period, but it has practically no validity during the postcolonial period. Actually the leadership in the policy formation, administration, and spread of bilingualism in English is in the hands of the local people. It is also true that motives for retaining and encouraging the spread of English are often challenged by various groups in their own countries. That certainly is the case in India, Malaysia, and Nigeria, to give just three examples.⁷³

Fallacy 6: Deficiency vs. Difference

The last fallacy is that the diversity and variation in English, and innovation and creativity in the Outer Circle, are indicators of the decay of English. This concern about the decay of English, as of other languages of wider communication, is not new, and linguistic Cassandras have been vocal since language teaching—perhaps the second-oldest profession—began.⁷⁴

Conclusion

What I have outlined here is just the top of the iceberg of a complex situation with a variety of academic dimensions. I believe that world Englishes provide a challenging opportunity to relate several areas of academic interest: language, literature, methodology, ideology, power, and identity. The contexts for inquiry involve diverse cultures and varied situations of contact and creativity. There is a cross-cultural arena with one linguistic constant, English. In recent years, data from world Englishes have provided a refreshing corpus for asking questions and challenging established paradigms in areas such as the following:

1. bilingual/multilingual language use;⁷⁵
2. contact and convergence;⁷⁶
3. crosscultural discourse;⁷⁷
4. models of language acquisition;⁷⁸

5. communicative competence;⁷⁹
6. language attitudes;⁸⁰
7. intelligibility;⁸¹
8. test construction;⁸²
9. process of nativization and acculturation;⁸³
10. language change;⁸⁴
11. typology of prestige languages;⁸⁵
12. lexicography.⁸⁶

As Henry Kahane observes, "English is the great laboratory of today's sociolinguist."⁸⁷ And he tells us that "we are aware of the role of English in our time, 'the other tongue' on a global scale."⁸⁸ The sobering message that Kahane gives us is that "the event is not new. Like everything else in our time, it is larger in size, but in principle the situation of English is no different from earlier case histories."⁸⁹ The profile is larger, the power is much greater, and implications—linguistic, ideological, political, and sociolinguistic—are immense indeed.

The success story of English, its alchemy, and the resultant ecstasy, have unleashed a variety of issues related to identity, elitism, and attitudes toward and perceptions of its users.

In his novel *A Suitable Boy*, the Indian writer Seth captures one attitude toward English in a conversation between a farmer and another Indian:

'Do you speak English?' he said after a while in the local dialect of Hindi. He had noticed Maan's luggage tag.
 'Yes,' said Maan.
 'Without English you can't do anything,' said the farmer sagely.
 Maan wondered what possible use English could be to the farmer.
 'What use is English?' said Maan,
 'People love English!' said the farmer with a strange sort of deep-voiced giggle. 'If you talk in English, you are a king. The more people you can mystify, the more people will respect you.' He turned back to his tobacco.⁹⁰

Then there is the other side of English, the *Otherness* of the language, the agony and schizophrenia it produces. That side again has a long tradition, a long story.⁹¹

And thereby hangs a linguistic tale of cross-cultural attitudes about the forms and functions of world Englishes. What is viewed as deficit by one group of English users indicates pragmatic success to other users. What causes linguistic agony to one group is the cause of ecstasy for the other.

NOTES

1. This paper highlights a variety of issues concerning the global spread of English, the development of world Englishes, and users' love-hate relationship with the language. I have focused on most of these issues in my teaching and

- research since the 1960s. This paper, therefore, draws heavily on my earlier publications and presentations. Indeed, I cannot deny that there is some self-plagiarism involved in this survey. I have provided extensive references to literature for further details and, where necessary, illustrations.
2. Heinz Kloss, *Die Entwicklung neuer germanischer Kultursprachen seit 1800*, 2d ed. (1952; Düsseldorf: Pedagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1978), pp. 66-67. For a discussion and case studies of pluricentric languages, see *Pluricentric Languages: Differing Norms in Different Nations*, ed. Michael Clyne (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992).
 3. See Larry E. Smith and Cecil L. Nelson, "International Intelligibility of English: Directions and Resources," *World Englishes* 4, no. 3 (1985): 333-42; Larry E. Smith, "Spread of English and Issues of Intelligibility," in *The Other Tongue: English across Cultures*, 2d ed., ed. Braj B. Kachru (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 75-90; see also Kachru, "Meaning in Deviation: Toward Understanding Non-native English Texts," in *ibid.*, pp. 301-26, and "Standards, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism: The English Language in the Outer Circle," in *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures*, ed. Randolph Quirk and Henry Widdowson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 11-30; for power and ideology, see relevant references in Kachru, "World Englishes: Approaches, Issues and Resources," in *Language Teaching: The International Abstract Journal for Language Teachers and Applied Linguists* 25, no. 1 (1992): 1-14, sect. 10, pp. 8-9.
 4. See Kachru, "Standards, Codification, and Sociolinguistic Realism."
 5. George Steiner, "Why English?" (Presidential address to the English Association, London, 1975), p. 4.
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 7. Braj B. Kachru, "The Second Diaspora of English," in *English in Its Social Contexts: Essays in Historical Sociolinguistics*, ed. T. W. Machan and C. T. Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 230-52.
 8. Kachru, "Standards, Codification, and Sociolinguistic Realism."
 9. For a detailed discussion, see Braj B. Kachru, "Models for Non-native Englishes," in *The Other Tongue*, pp. 48-74.
 10. See, e.g., W. Viereck and W. Wald, eds., *English in Contact with Other Languages* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1986); Braj B. Kachru, "The Englishization of Hindi: Language Rivalry and Language Change," in *Linguistic Method: Essays in Honor of Herbert Penzl*, ed. I. Rauch and C. F. Carr (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), pp. 199-221; Kachru, "Englishization and Contact Linguistics: Dimensions of the Linguistic Hegemony of English" (Plenary presentation at the 5th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, St. John's College, Cambridge, United Kingdom, April 1987). For a modified version of this paper, see "Englishization and Contact Linguistics," *World Englishes* 13, no. 2 (1994).
 11. Braj B. Kachru, *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions, and Models of Non-native Englishes* (Oxford, 1986; reprinted Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); and J. Cheshire, ed., *English around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
 12. Eyamba G. Bokamba, "The Africanization of English," in *The Other Tongue*, pp. 125-47.
 13. Braj B. Kachru, *The Indianization of English: The English Language in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).
 14. For references on these varieties, see Tom McArthur, ed., *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
 15. Cited in M. M. Mathews, *The Beginnings of American English: Essays and Comments* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931).
 16. That gives an estimated figure of over 750 million nonnative users of English.
 17. See David Crystal, "How Many Millions? The Statistics of English Today," *English Today* (January 1985): 7-9.
 18. India's Constitution recognizes English as an "associate" official language. There are no authenticated figures available for the total number of users of

- English: the estimates range between five and ten percent of India's population. A figure of five percent adds up to 40 million, and the ten-percent figure adds up to 80 million "English-knowing" Indians out of an estimated population of 800 million.
19. Personal communication.
 20. A number of reasons for resistance to paradigm shift are discussed in, for example, Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (New York: Longman, 1989); and Braj B. Kachru, "The Power and Politics of English," *World Englishes* 5, nos. 2-3 (1986): 121-40.
 21. Braj B. Kachru, "South Asian English: Toward an Identity in Diaspora," in *South Asian English: Structure, Use, and Users*, ed. R. Baumgardner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).
 22. For a detailed discussion of various attitudes toward idealization of the "native speaker," see T. M. Paikeday, *The Native Speaker Is Dead!* (Toronto: Paikeday Publishing, 1985).
 23. Cited in Grant, "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals, and the Means of Improving It," in *General Appendix to Parliament Papers 1831-1832* (London, 1831-32), pp. 60-66.
 24. James Beebe and Maria Beebe, "The Filipinos: A Special Case," in *Language in the USA*, ed. C. Ferguson and S. B. Heath (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 322.
 25. This caution applies particularly to the use of English in bi- or multilingual contexts.
 26. Braj B. Kachru, "The Spread of English and Sacred Linguistic Cows," in *Language Spread and Language Policy: Issues, Implications and Case Studies*, ed. P. H. Lowenberg (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1988), pp. 207-28.
 27. Braj B. Kachru, "Speech Community," in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994).
 28. Charles A. Ferguson, "Foreword," in *The Other Tongue*, p. vii (also in 2d ed., 1992).
 29. *Ibid.*
 30. Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).
 31. For a brief description of the varieties of English, see *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*; also see Braj B. Kachru, "History of English in South Asia," in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, vol. 5, ed. Robert Burchfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
 32. See Randolph Quirk in *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures*, pp. 27-28.
 33. David Crystal in *ibid.*
 34. The issues related to communicative competence and intelligibility have been discussed, for example, by the following: Larry E. Smith, ed., *Discourse across Cultures: Strategies in World Englishes* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1987); Cecil L. Nelson, "My Language, Your Culture: Whose Communicative Competence?" in *The Other Tongue*, pp. 327-39; Margie Berns, *Contexts of Competence: Social and Cultural Considerations in Communicative Language Teaching* (New York: Plenum, 1990); for ESP and world Englishes, see Braj B. Kachru, "ESP and Non-native Varieties of English: Toward a Shift in Paradigm," in *ESP in the Classroom? Practice and Evaluation*, ed. D. Chamberlain and R. J. Baumgardner (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 9-28; for world Englishes and testing, see Peter H. Lowenberg, "Testing English as a World Language: Issues in Assessing Non-native Proficiency," in *The Other Tongue*, pp. 108-21. See also symposium on testing English across cultures, guest ed. Fred Davidson, *World Englishes* 12, no. 1 (1993): 85-126.
 35. For a detailed discussion, see Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism* (London:

- Oxford University Press, 1992); and Kachru, "The Power and Politics of English."
36. Kachru, *ibid.*
 37. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986), p. 5.
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. Feroza Jussawalla and Reed Way Desenbrock, eds., *Interviews with Writers of the Post-Colonial World* (Jackson and London: University of Mississippi Press, 1992).
 40. Chinua Achebe, "English and the African Writer," *Transition* 4, no. 18 (1965): 27-30. Also see A. A. Mazrui, *The Political Sociology of the English Language: An African Perspective* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973).
 41. Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (New York: Anchor Press, 1976), p. 11.
 42. *Ibid.*
 43. Raja Rao, "The Caste of English," in *Awakened Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature*, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978).
 44. *Ibid.*
 45. This was conveyed to Raja Rao in a personal communication by Lawrence Durrell in 1960 after the publication of Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope*.
 46. Anita Desai, "A Coat of Many Colors," in *South Asian English: Structure, Use and Users*.
 47. Salman Rushdie, "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist," in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1891-1991* (London: Viking Penguin, 1991), p. 61.
 48. Jussawalla and Desenbrock, eds., *Interviews with Writers of the Post-Colonial World*, p. 144.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
 50. See, e.g., Braj B. Kachru, "Meaning in Deviation: Toward Understanding Non-native English Texts," in *The Other Tongue*; and "Symposium on Speech Acts in World Englishes," guest editor Yamuna Kachru, *World Englishes* 10, no. 3 (1991): 295-340.
 51. Leslie Fiedler and Houston Baker, *English Literature: Opening up the Canon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).
 52. Recent good examples of such creativity are, e.g., Shashi Tharoor, *The Great Indian Novel* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989); and Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).
 53. Achebe, "English and the African Writer," p. 47.
 54. The concept of "meaning potential" is used in the sense in which Michael A. K. Halliday used it.
 55. Nelson, "My Language, Your Culture," pp. 327-39.
 56. Research on speech acts and discourse strategy on world Englishes has been initiated at several places in recent years. For bibliographical references, see "Symposium on Speech Acts in World Englishes."
 57. Kachru, "The Power and Politics of English."
 58. See Michel Foucault, *Power-Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writing 1972-1977*, ed. C. Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).
 59. Senta Trömel-Plötz, "Language of Oppression," review article, *Journal of Pragmatics* 5 (1981): 67-80.
 60. Randolph Quirk, "The Question of Standards in the International Use of English," in *Language Spread and Language Policy*, pp. 229-41.
 61. Randolph Quirk, "Language Varieties and Standard Language," *JALT Journal* 11, no. 1 (1989): 14-25.
 62. Quirk, "The Question of Standards," p. 236.
 63. Braj B. Kachru, "Liberation Linguistics and the Quirk Concern," *English Today* 25, no. 7(1) (1991): 3-13.
 64. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 61.
 65. *EFL Gazette*, London, March 1989.

66. Christopher Brumfit, ed., *English for International Communication* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), p. 7.
67. Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism*, p. 8. See also "Symposium on Linguistic Imperialism," *World Englishes* 12, no. 3 (1993): 335-74.
68. Braj B. Kachru, "Why Applied Linguistics Leaks" (Plenary presentation at the annual meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Seattle, Washington, 1992).
69. Kachru, *The Indianization of English*. In fact, the most active process for creativity in world Englishes is that of translation and transcreation. I have discussed it in detail in "Transcultural Creativity as Literary Canon" (Keynote address presented at the conference on "Culture and Literature: Comprehension and Interpretation," East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 11-15 May 1992).
70. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*. See also Kamal K. Sridhar, *English in Indian Bilingualism* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1989).
71. See Kachru, "Models of Non-native Englishes." A number of perspectives on this provocative and important topic have been addressed in various sections in *Language and Standards: Issues, Attitudes, Case Studies*, ed. M. L. Tickoo (Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 1991); see particularly the essays by Randolph Quirk and Braj B. Kachru. The first part of *Teaching English Pronunciation: A Book of Readings*, ed. Adam Brown (London: Routledge, 1992) includes several insightful essays.
72. See, e.g., Larry Selinker, *Rediscovering Interlanguage* (London: Longman, 1992); for a critique of Selinker, see Yamuna Kachru's review of this book in *World Englishes* 12, no. 2 (1993): 265-67; S. N. Sridhar and K. K. Sridhar, "Bridging the Paradigm Gap: Second Language Acquisition Theory and Indigenized Varieties of English," in *The Other Tongue*, pp. 91-107.
73. This is also true of countries such as Singapore, Taiwan, and the Philippines. In West Asia and parts of Africa, it is not unusual to find South Asians and others from the Outer Circle of English actively involved in the teaching of English.
74. This debate on language "decay" actively continues in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, as it does in other parts of the English-using world. In fact, the focus of this debate, as expected, is not restricted to English but concerns other languages of wider communication, such as French, German, and Hindi, to give three examples. This list of fallacies is just illustrative. For a more detailed list of theoretical, methodological, formal, functional, and attitudinal fallacies about world Englishes in the Outer Circle, see Braj B. Kachru, "World Englishes and Applied Linguistics," in *Learning, Keeping and Using Language*, ed. M. A. K. Halliday, J. Gibbons, and H. Nicholas (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990), pp. 203-29, esp. p. 224.
75. For relevant bibliographical references, see Braj B. Kachru, "The Bilinguals' Creativity," in *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 20-33.
76. See Kachru, "Englishization and Contact Linguistics" for case studies of English across languages, particularly "code-mixing"; and for an annotated bibliography on this topic, see Tej K. Bhatia and William Ritchie, guest editors, special issue on "Code-mixing: English across Languages," *World Englishes* 8, no. 3 (1989).
77. See Kachru, "World Englishes: Approaches, Issues, and Resources," p. 9.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.* See also *Discourse across Cultures: Strategies in World Englishes*.
80. Kachru, "World Englishes: Approaches, Issues, and Resources," p. 9.
81. *Ibid.*, sec. 11, p. 9.
82. See references listed in note 34.
83. The term "nativization" refers to the linguistic processes—conscious or unconscious—by which a transplanted language, in this case English, is localized. The process may be given a name that identifies it with reference to a language and a region, e.g., Africanization, Indianization (cf. Kachru, *The Indianization of En-*

- glish). See also *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, pp. 682-83. The term "acculturation" refers to the cultural and social influences on a language in a context where it is used as an additional language, not native to the area; for example, English in Africa or Singapore.
84. See references listed in note 76.
 85. Henry Kahane, "A Typology of the Prestige Language," *Language* 62, no. 3 (1986): 495-508; and Henry and Renée Kahane, "Decline and Survival of Western Prestige Languages," *Language* 55, no. (1979): 183-98.
 86. For references, see Kachru, "World Englishes: Approaches, Issues, and Resources," p. 9.
 87. Kahane, "Typology of the Prestige Languages," p. 495.
 88. Ibid.
 89. Ibid.
 90. Seth, *A Suitable Boy*, p. 501.
 91. See references in, e.g., Tulsi Ram, *Trading in Language: The Story of English in India* (Delhi: G. D. K. Publication, 1983). See also Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*; Svati Joshi, ed., *Rethinking English: Essays in Literature, Language, History* (New Delhi: Trianka, 1991); Probal Dasgupta, *The Otherness of English: India's Auntie Tongue Syndrome* (Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993).