PRATEEK SHANKAR

CITIZENS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON POSTCOLONIAL INDIA ·

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis presents what I call *extralingual citizenship* which theorizes an expansion of translingualism to include the ethnoracial logic of the nation–state and demonstrate the entanglement of language, governance, and education in the policing of knowledge economies and discursive practices. I build on the work of Kachru on World Englishes, Tupas on unequal Englishes and extralinguistic value, Rosa and Flores on raciolinguistic ideologies, and translingual scholars such as Trimbur, Cannagararah, and Gilyard to frame extralingualism as a kind of citizenship, attempting to shift the focus of English pedagogy and practice away from the syntactical and etymological concerns of language *use* to the agentive prospects of the language *user*, while reinforcing its deep entanglement within the nation–state ideology of bordering. I center this study in India, framing the English language as an archive of the memory and afterlife of colonialism, exploring the idea of extralingualism through (i) Gauri Vishwanathan's Gramscian exploration of the establishment of English literary study in colonial India, (ii) three pieces of autobiographical fictions written by Ahmed Ali, Ramabai Ranade, and Shevantibai M. Nikambe, (iii) a juxtaposition of the formative language debates of the Constituent Assembly of India with the recently updated National Education Policy of 2020, and lastly (iv) a comparison of the Spoken English coaching industry in India with the growing tradition of Writing Centers in India's emerging private liberal arts schools to speak to the various *English–markets* reified by extralingually differentiated Englishes. My aim, across the full length and breadth of this project, is to reframe English as a contested linguistic field where multiple Englishes become analogous to the respective forms of capitalism, sociality, and subjectivity constructed through them.

Keywords: extralingualism, World Englishes, translingualism, extralinguistic value, linguistic imperialism, decolonial language pedagogy, citizenship, subjectivity, nation–state/colonial governmentality.

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INTRODUCTION

Whose English Is It Anyway?

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Let us not forget that the most violent denunciation of the West produced by Frantz Fanon is written in the elegant style of a Jean-Paul Sartre. The West has not merely produced modern colonialism, it informs most interpretations of colonialism. It colours even this interpretation of interpretation.

Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism,* 1989, xii.

It begins with a closeup. We see the skewed shadow of a man against a glossy white wall, its volumetric silence broken only by his energetic voice. He says:

Hey, bro, let me tell you what had went down. I was two bands away from getting, bro, whole barber shop, bro. Come on, mama. Bro. Peanut gonna call my phone talking about. I just got paid. I looked at the phone. You just got paid? What?! Man, where the dice at? I'm ready to shoot. We can roll. Last time I shot with it, 1300 in my pocket. Easy. Off top.

As he speaks, the shot widens to reveal a Black man leaning against the railing of a balcony. To his left, sits another Black man, the Pulitzer Prize and multiple Grammy award–winning rapper Kendrick Lamar, who asks: "What happened?" The man replies:

What happened? Man? Peanut is what happened. Had me hot on my mama. Hot. Seven, seven, seven. Back to back to back to back. Bro, I was mad. He was all in my bag, in my pockets and my whole Duffy. I was ready to get out.

The camera continues to zoom out. We now see an elderly white man sitting to the left of Lamar: the billionaire Ray Dalio. Three men sitting on a black wrought iron balcony, framed against the pristine white walls of an apartment building. Lamar turns to Dalio and says:

Actually, what he's saying is, he saved up his money to get a local barber shop. He then made a friendly business wager with Peanut and hoped to secure more money for his business, but eventually losing it all with one roll of the dice. Ray, what you think?

"I think his problem is volatility", Ray replies, using a slew of high-handed financial jargon to encourage the man to diversify his investments. Lamar promptly translates. "Basically, bro, what he's saying is, slow money wins the race".

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In reviewing this exchange, consider: what compels Lamar to interpret on both men's behalf? One would assume they are speaking the same language. Yet, Lamar chooses to translate the Black man's African American vernacular (AAVE) to a version of English that his white companion can understand. There's a relative ease in the way he carries out this translation: this role is clearly not new to him. In fact, one could argue that his translation isn't even linguistic: it's sociocultural and heteroglossic, telling of the epistemic imaginations that both men inhabit. One man's "wager" becomes another's "dice", meaning transferred across signs even as its *extra-linguistic value*[1] is not, demonstrating a hybridity and internalized hierarchy within the English language and an unequal demand for translation amongst its variegated users. Ask yourself: how often are <u>you</u> compelled to translate <u>your English</u>? And, by contrast, who is?

Put simply, all Englishes are not made equal; their social implications (and applications) are marked by distinct ethnoracial histories, haunted by vestiges of colonialism, feudal stratification, and slavery, that pervade into the contemporary moment and inform a divergent constellation of subjectivities and material realities. To borrow from Derek Gregory (6–12) and Braj B. Kachru, this *colonial present* informs the appropriation and pluricentrification[2] of the English language into multiple World Englishes (WE), fractured across an unequal exchange of linguistic centers and peripheries. Writing in *Other Tongues: English across cultures*, Kachru orders this pluricentrification in his "Three Circles of World Englishes" – the "Inner Circle", consisting of the

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[1] Ruanni Tupas frames *'extra-linguistic value'* as being "[..] attached to [White] English (and other contextually dominant languages/varieties) as a means of explaining the hegemony it enjoys, as well as to understand as (hidden) resistance the plethora of persistent 'errors' and 'deviations' that characterize non-elite use. The attempt is to theorize a more inclusive yet nuanced (anti-)paradigm than the binary between 'individual' and 'community' language use (and, of course, national/international/global vs. local/specific) [...]." (2015: xi)
[2] See Kachru, Braj B. *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*. 2nd ed., Pergamon Press, 1983.

sites of origin of the English language and its subsequent spread through the first diaspora, namely the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland & anglophone Canada; the "Outer Circle", sites created through British imperial expansion i.e. India, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Philippines, and its other erstwhile colonies; and lastly, the "Expanded Circle", that includes sites where English plays no historical or governmental role but is still used for international communication, namely China, Russia, Japan, non-Anglophone Europe, South Korea, and Egypt.
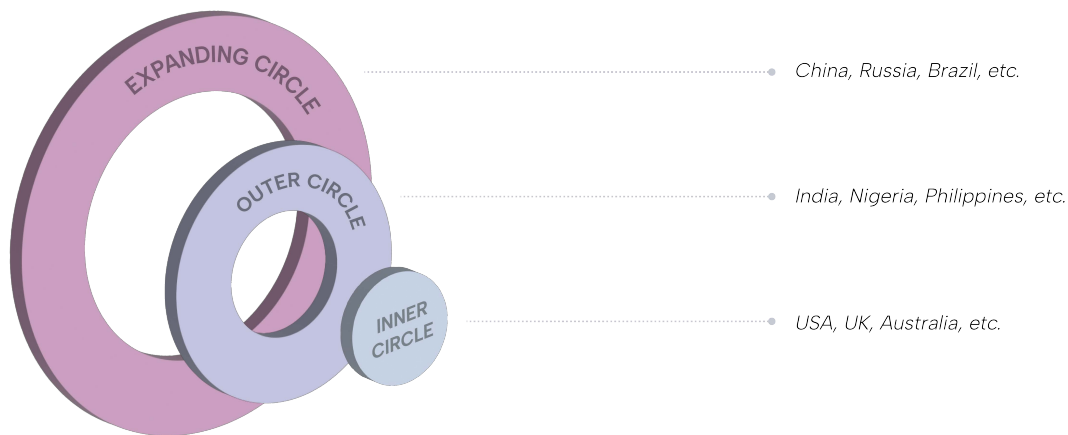
Figure 1. Three Circles of World Englishes, as framed by Braj Kachru.

Despite its seminality, Kachru's framing has been critiqued for assuming a center-periphery binary in the evolution of English language practices. It ignores the non-linear transcultural flows that contribute to the co-development of Englishes across geographic boundaries. Here, Tupas:

> [....] while WE research has challenged the monolithic nature of English in significant ways, it has been critiqued for not going far enough, for reproducing the same normative linguistic framework and thus contributing to an exclusionary paradigm. A major shortcoming pointed out is that the Englishes of the post-colonial world are often described along the lines of monolingual models, by comparing their grammatical structures with those of center Englishes, thus reinforcing centrist views on language while ignoring eccentric, hybrid forms of local Englishes. (5)

Even so, the growing scholarship on WE[3] has been integral in bringing the inherent multiplicity of the English language to the forefront. However, the same cannot be said for public consciousness

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[3] See B. B. Kachru, E. Schneider, C. Mair, et. al.

which attempts to resolve this using one of two strategies. First, in the disproportionate celebration of English as a global language: the multiplicity of Englishes is reframed as one single English expressed multiply due to its supposed global character. In practice, the annual appropriation[4] of non-Anglophone vocabulary into the ever-growing pantheon of "English words" disallows a closer inspection of the interdimensional cross-pollination of multiple Englishes, contexts, and sensibilities. The second strategy is the institutional framing of WE as a deviance from a so-called Standard English (SE), extended by the differentiation and hierarchization of a number of colloquial sociolects and postcolonial by-products of English as being peripheral. This is enacted through the institutional demand for English proficiency (IELTS, TOEFL, et. al.) and the formulation of TESOL and ESL as a distinct pedagogic code. To be fair, there has been a concerted effort to include World Englishes within TESOL programs (and the broader language education community) since Kachru et. al. first identified this paradigm shift in the late 1980s. TESOL scholars such as Young, Greenfield, Flores, Rosa, et. al, have made systematic efforts to acknowledge the unequal codification of WE users, as experienced by the discriminatory demand for translation and proficiency, as well as the social construction of WEs as threats to one another. Yet, these attempts remain mostly peripheral – their biggest achievements limited to North America – and inadvertently reinforce the same binary structuralism that centers SE proficiency. Consequently, Lu & Horner have advocated for a *translingual* approach that situates language practices within a "temporal-spatial frame" where they are always "emergent, in process (a state of becoming), and their relations as mutually constitutive" (587). While this approach acknowledges the transcultural co-development of language, Gilyard points out a

[..] tendency to flatten language differences in some theorizing about translingualism. Translingualists are clear about the fact that we all differ as language users from each other and in

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[4] According to the Global Language Monitor, English language dictionaries add approximately 800 to 1,000 new words every year (in the 20th century alone, more than 90,000 words have been added). A significant number of these are loanwords: linguist David Crystal estimates that the English language has appropriated words from at least 350 languages including Flemish (*hunk*), Romany (*cushty*), Portuguese (*fetish*), Nahuatl (*tomato* – via Spanish), Tahitian (*tattoo*), Russian (*mammoth*), Mayan (*shark*), Gaelic (*slogan*), Japanese (*tycoon*), West Turkic (*horde*), Indic (*jungle*, *bazaar, juggernaut*), Walloon (*rabbit*) and Polynesian (*taboo*).

relation to a perceived standard. Often elided, however, is the recognition that we don't all differ from said standard in the same way. (287)

He argues that it creates a "linguistic everyone" which suggests a "sameness of difference", ultimately flattening language difference within intersecting reifications of World Englishes (288). The work presented here doesn't intend to merely celebrate these divergent World Englishes, nor am I suggesting abandoning English in favor of some indigenous vernacular. Instead, I build on the work of Tupas on unequal Englishes, Rosa and Flores on raciolinguistic ideologies, and translingual scholars such as Trimbur, Cannagararah, and Gilyard to introduce the notion of *extralingual citizenship*. By virtue of its inherent social value, language and language use function as a sort of passport that reflexively inform societal access and individual subjectivity. This social value is mediated by ideologies of the nation–state, the native speaker, racial and casteist supremacy, the ethnocentric myth of the monolithic nature of English, its hegemonic status over other languages, as well as the commodification of language in contemporary markets – attitudes that were manufactured during the colonial era and remain largely undisputed in public consciousness, policy, and technology (Tupas 6).

Performed language has material force, as Keith Gilyard (287) puts it, as is demonstrated in the advertisement with which I began. Developed by pgLang for *That's Money,* CashApp's 2022 financial literacy campaign, the advertisement raises Kendrick's translation of AAVE into a performance of the inequality of WEs and the irony of their entanglement, illustrating their role in providing access to literacy, and indeed, what sociolinguistic vocabularies are considered "literacy" in the first place. The implication of these imbalanced extralingual citizenships is obvious: consider ebonics where the use of AAVE is institutionally penalized despite being exploited for commercial gain in popular culture. In effect, while the use of WE as a cultural commodity is grossly fetishized for capitalist consumption within the contemporary neoliberal framework, its users continue to be delegitimized and denied a claim to English language nativity.

An important distinction to note here is between language *use* and the language *user*. In framing extralingualism as a kind of citizenship, I attempt to shift the focus of English pedagogy and practice away from the syntactical and etymological concerns of language use to the agentive prospects of the language user, while reinforcing its deep entanglement within the nation–state ideology of bordering. Fundamentally, I intend to expand the notion of translingualism to include the ethnoracial logic of the nation–state and demonstrate the entanglement of language, governance, and education in the policing of knowledge economies and discursive practices. Rather than flattening this language difference, I attempt to address "the erasure of historical and unresolved struggles that are involved in meaning-making practices and knowledge production" (García and Baca 29). Our understanding of language – despite the porosity of its use and evolution – remains locked within silos dictated by ethnic, racial, and geographic boundaries.[5] In their bid for an imagined community[6], nationalist desires for monolingual identity deny the asymmetricality of language use through institutional codification. A case in point, here, is the slow rupture of Hindustani into Hindi and Urdu – mirroring the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 – and their adoption (or attempts thereof) as national languages in their respective geographic by–products. Here, I speak to the contested constitutional lobbying in favor of Hindi in India and the undisputed acceptance of Urdu as Pakistan's national language post–Partition. This is made even more poignant by the eventual consolidation of Bengali–speaking East Pakistan into Bangladesh in 1971. And yet, social reality remains largely pluricentric as Chaise LaDousa shows in his analysis of language mediums and schools in Varanasi, India.

> People consistently contrasted Bhojpuri as *gāv kī bhāsā* (language of the village) and *ghar kī bhaṣā* (language of the house) to Hindi as *rāstrabhāsā* (national language) or *deś kī bhāsā* (language of the land/nation). As such, Hindi could stand proudly next to English, often described as *antarrāstrabhāsā* (international language). Schoolchildren and teachers alike [also] described Hindi as *mātrabhāsā*, or mother tongue. (*Hindi is Our Ground* 49)

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[5] See: Pennycook, Alastair. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, Routledge, 2006, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203088807.
[6] See: Benedict, Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1983.

LaDousa's analysis demonstrates the instability of language ownership in India concurrently differentiated and ordered as the mother tongue, home language, or national language, whose use case varies as per evolving definitions of class, ethnicity, and national identity. And yet, nationalist constructions of language aggressively lean towards monoglossic and homogenous language use. Here, language–as–codified–nationalism informs the institutional discourse of accuracy and appropriateness ("proper English"), defined by and disseminated through social practice, government policy, school curriculums, and job markets. This logic justifies its encounter with alterity in popular culture and literature whose apparent deviance from standardized language is brushed off as colloquialism or slang (à la *ghar kī bhāssa̅*): perfectly fine for the messy, informal dialogue of everyday but deemed ineligible for higher–order language use.

The interaction of these processes is not linear by any means: they occur as a living entanglement – a melting pot that I frame as the *churn* – that is essential for producing new linguistic forms but is ultimately limited by the standards imposed by the state apparatus. Language is, perhaps, most surreptitious in its regulation of social contact where the centrality of misunderstanding in language use masks the very cause of this communicational distance. Misunderstanding is the first, and most obvious, element of intercultural encounter, where the process of translation becomes the paradoxical site of both misinterpretation and language production. However, the potential for misinterpretation becomes a threat to centralized state machinery whose legitimacy depends on the logic of bordering. As a consequence, it regulates this churn. The radical vitality of language use is thus characterized as language *misuse*, as inaccuracy, discreetly converting its essence into the evidence of its guilt and validating the need for language policing and regulation. By extension, language misuse creates a language *misuser*, who is the primary focus of this study. Put differently, linguistic regulation dictates the language (mis)user's 'value' as both subject and commodity within neoliberal society, and ultimately governs their access to education, work, and social access. This regulatory spillage is performed

as an internalized linguistic caste system that seems obvious but is rarely confronted in mainstream society. An open secret, if you will. Even in writing this manuscript, I hesitate to diverge from academically-accepted verbiage at the risk of appearing… unintelligent? Crass? Uneducated? I could very easily switch code and tell y'all the truth, no cap, spit facts unfiltered and pray that you understand me… but I plead cowardice. Extralingual citizenship is, thus, an umbrella term that hopes to capture and articulate the pervasiveness of these asymmetrical limitations. The prefixing of 'extra' here can be concurrently read as aspects of citizenship (social, racial, sexual, et. al.) supplemented by language (extra*lingual,* as in 'over and above') as well as those that are deeply linguistic (*extra*lingual, as in 'especially'). My framing of extralingual citizenship can be understood, therefore, as the unstable entanglement of both readings and their resulting asymmetricality.

While my interest in WE is inherently global, I have localized my research within India as a case study for the extralingual performance of English, tracing a roughly chronological (albeit non-linear) history of English education in the subcontinent. In Chapter 1, I extend Gauri Vishwathan's analysis of English literary education in colonial India to speak to the Englishes (and respective extralingual citizenships) that emerged in the aftermath of the Macauley Minute, pointing to Babu English – a register spoken by colonial India's English-educated elite – to articulate the mapping of racial identity onto language and vice versa. My interest here is to demonstrate the raciolinguistic ideologies that informed the teaching, performance, and disavowal of those Englishes that threaten dominant, hegemonic registers of the language (here, British English). In Chapter 2, I examine three examples of postcolonial Indian literature from the turn of the 20th century as a site of linguistic self-determination, namely Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, Pandita Ramabai Ranade's *Himself: The Autobiography of a Hindu Lady,* and Shevantibai M. Nikambe's *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife*. These fictionalized autobiographies demonstrate how English disrupted the sociopolitical landscape in India, tracing

the ontological fractalization – a sort of doubly conscious, in–between space – that emerged due to the encounter of the English language with local social, cultural, religious, and sexual traditions. Finally, in Chapter 3, I extend this conversation to current Indian language policy and its material implications, including the formative language debates of the Constituent Assembly of India and the recently updated National Education Policy of 2020. Furthermore, I juxtapose Spoken English coaching centers in India with the growing tradition of Writing Centers in India's emerging private liberal arts schools to speak to the different *English–markets* reified by extralingually differentiated Englishes in the country. My attempt, across the full length and breadth of this project, is to reframe English as a contested linguistic field where multiple Englishes become analogous to the respective forms of capitalism, sociality, and subjectivity constructed through them.

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CHAPTER 1

Ideological Englishes

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English, framed by Alastair Pennycook as "the global language of miscommunication" (5), is particularly emblematic of the asymmetricalities I have outlined thus far. In *Masks of Conquest*, Gauri Viswanathan reveals the co-development of British political and commercial interest and the establishment of English literary study in India using the Gramscian model of hegemony. The British colonial enterprise in India, while predicated on its central mission of economic gain, masked its exploitative practices in the guise of moral intervention through English literary education (20). From the vigorous efforts of secularized institutes in imperial South Asia to the more uneasy attempts of Christian missionary schools, the propagation of English literature among the 'natives' was ultimately carried out to ensure the authority of the British government and to create a stable state in which British mercantile and military interests could flourish. This was as much an imperial effort to police native subjects as it was its own citizens. As Ashis Nandy points out in *The Intimate Enemy*, the early colonizers (roughly between 1757 and 1830) were largely opportunistic mercenaries from the East India Company with little to no intention to govern and were often willing to assimilate with the natives:

> [...] while British rule had already been established, British culture in India was still not politically dominant, and race-based evolutionism was still inconspicuous in the ruling culture. Most Britons in India lived like Indians at home and in the office, wore Indian dress, and observed Indian customs and religious practices. A large number of them married Indian women, offered puja to Indian gods and goddesses, and lived in fear and awe of the magical powers of the Brahmans. (Nandy 5)

Amassing huge fortunes in India, these early colonizers became self-styled nawabs whose extravagant excesses attracted the ire of the English Parliament (5–6). One speaker in the House debate, Henry Montgomery, is said to have remarked, "If we wish to convert the natives of India, we ought to reform our own people there, who at present only give them examples of lying,

swearing, drunkenness, and other vices" (Vishwanathan 24). The institutionalization of English literary education, in this context, becomes one of a number of imperial strategies to regulate this omnidirectional cultural leakage, gaining synonymity with notions of morality, virtue, and – most prominently – truth. Between 1817 and 1835, the growing conflict between Orientalists and Anglicists on the value of native languages and literary practices "was not simply over language or literature, but *the status of knowledge* itself" (101, emphasis mine). Here, languages' claims are raised from the simple interpretation of meaning into an embodiment of truth. Take, for instance, the excerpts mentioned below. First, Macaulay writing in his infamous Minute of 1835:

> […] I have never found one among them [the Orientalists] who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. […] [The English language] stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West. It abounds with works of imagination not inferior to the noblest which Greece has bequeathed to us […]. Whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations.

Writing in response to Macaulay, Orientalist John Tyler demanded that the study of indigenous language, history, and culture be promoted in tandem with European knowledge:

> If we destroy it [Oriental studies] we shall degrade both ourselves and the people we undertake to improve. A history of the successive systems of Science and philosophy though it may not teach the true nature of things will yet afford much valuable information of another kind. It will teach what mankind have thought and how they have reasoned about these things and the successive steps by which they have arrived at Truth. It is in short the history of human opinions and this is at least as important as that of human actions.

The debate was conducted in terms that "transformed the choice between languages into *a choice between the promotion of truth and the propagation of error.*" (Vishwanathan 101, emphasis mine). Here, theories of curricular policy are raised into binary evaluations of the truth claim of knowledge, with nativity constructed akin to error, falsity, and dogma, and English – with its Biblical associations and post-Enlightenment brand of intellectuality – bearing the ultimate

claim to truth. By a fairly simple leap of imagination, the logic of this binary evaluation is extended to its respective language (mis)users, mirroring the xenophobic discourse on racial purity.

The conclusion of the debate I outline above saw the adoption of Lord Bentinck's 1835 English Education Act decreeing that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone" (41). English, in this instance, becomes a proxy for European knowledge; in turn, "Englishness" becomes a metonym for Europeanness, transferring its imposed superiority over indigeneity onto the language itself. It reads as a simple formula: to know English is to gain access to Europe, to civilized intellectuality and high morality. However, in practice, it becomes a "mask for economic exploitation [...] successfully camouflaging the material activities of the colonizer" (20). Robert Frykenberg, in his critique of *Masks of Conquest,* argues that by overlooking its indigenous foundations, Vishwanathan presents a binary linkage of English literary studies to British rule (272). His principal example is the teaching of English literature to Maratha Brahman youth in Tanjore some thirty years prior to these English debates. Geographic incongruencies aside, Frykenberg seems to entirely miss the point, ignoring the hegemonic power of English that motivated this teaching in the first place. Colonial subjectivity is haunted by the vestiges of this hegemony, forcing heteroglossic language users to tear their psyche on linguistic lines, assigning asymmetric values to the language-of-home (say, one's mother tongue) and the language-of-society (here, English). Quoting Nandy:

> Such disjunctions between politics and culture became possible because it is only partly true that a colonial situation produces a theory of imperialism to justify itself. Colonialism is also a psychological state rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both the colonizers and the colonized. It represents a certain cultural continuity and carries a certain cultural baggage. (2)

How do we make sense of the cultural baggage that comes with the English language? English has since taken on many forms in its postcolonial life, and yet the conflation of 'truth' with English

continues, only now it is reserved for a specific kind of 'proper' metropolitan English, as Kachru et. al. have articulated in earlier scholarship. What *that* English is specifically? Nobody knows. In practice, it isn't simply *what* English is performed but *who it is performed by* that ultimately validates its claim to legitimacy.

Consider the use of Multicultural London English (MLE) that borrows from sources as diverse as Jamaican Patois, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic, and Cockney. MLE was birthed and is simultaneously delegitimized by the living present of the colonial encounter even while inheriting a class character in its characterization as a sociolect of the English language[7]. How does something like Hindi take on a completely distinct linguistic identity from Urdu, despite the immense overlap of heritage, literature, and vocabulary, but English registers like MLE, which carry a unique body of vocabulary distinct from British English, not bear the same value?[8] I believe the answers lie in the socialization of language, in the values ascertained not only by language use but also by the racial and class character of the language user. Here, I extend Flores' concept of nation–state/colonial governmentality as a "general framework for analyzing the production of governable national and colonial subjects that fit the political and economic needs of modern society" ("Silencing the Subaltern" 264–273). Nation–state/colonial governmentality has at its core the production of deviant populations that threaten national integrity. Here, the *language misuser* defines language misuse, as opposed to the other way around. SE, read this way, is not a specific linguistic register as much as it is an after–product of a preconceived native speaker. It mirrors the center–periphery logic that underlies the discourse on racial supremacy.

The pluricentricity of World Englishes is no accident. It is the colonized subjects' attempt to reconcile this asymmetricality. It is, quite simply, the English language weaponized and repurposed against itself, reimagining what language means, how we transform it and make it our

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[7] In *Word on the Street: Debunking the Myth of a "Pure" Standard English* (2001), Linguist John McWhorter argues that "the terms language, dialect, and variety, and other such words intended to organise speech into coherent groupings are infact themselves arbitrary markings". (42)

[8] Here, consider the value of a language's claim to "Englishness". An adjacent relation to English leaves traces of its hegemonic identity on MLE and other variants, partially explaining their resistance towards non-Anglophone identities.

own, and what that does to our reading, performance, and disavowal of colonial trauma, history, and subjectivity. It is postcolonial resistance performed through linguistic abundance, and it is precisely this resistance, this abundance, this celebration of alterity that compels the imposition of a linguistic caste system, delineating SE from its supposed postcolonial corruption. The colonial privileging of English speakers at the peak of the imperial enterprise now extends to English users deemed appropriate by the state apparatus. One needn't look further than the synthetic construction of Babu English in colonial India as a separate "illegitimate" variety spoken by India's English-educated bureaucracy to understand the mapping of racial identity onto language use and vice versa. This is similar to how AAVE, Spanglish, and other BIPOC English registers are delegitimized today, astutely illustrated in Rosa and Flores' concept of raciolinguistic ideologies or "the process through which language and race are co-constructed to frame the language practices of racialized communities as inferior" ("Undoing Appropriateness" 149–152). Here, V Sreeja on Babu English:

> Dubbed as the mimic men, they [Babus] were the favourite objects of lampoon of many Indian and English fiction writers and ironically they were ridiculed for the same facts they were admired for – their knowledge/a little knowledge of English, their (almost successful) aping of other symbols of Englishness and the apparent, relative proximity to the colonial master. The evolution (or counter evolution) of the term Babu is in itself testimony to the process of denigration that the class suffered in the wake of colonisation. Although it ["Babu"] is used as a courteous term of address in many Indian languages, the raj period bestowed it with a contemptuous sense. […] In an attempt to elevate themselves to the levels of their masters, they end up being laughing stocks. ("Mimicry and Subversion" 13)

In her analysis of English language letters written by Bengali civil servants in late 19th century India[9], Sreeja defines the Babu English style as being marked by "excessive stylistic ornamentation, politeness and indirectness", "the discourse organization [..] of a South Asian language", and an inordinate "use of subservient address forms". For instance: "With deep regret

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[9] The book, compiled in 1890 under the title "Baboo English"; or, "Our mother-tongue as our Aryan brethren understand it: Amusing specimens of composition and style", was published by H.P. Kent and is credited to an Englishman named 'J.W.T.'

and unfeigned sorrowfulness your poor slave approaches his poor tale at the footsteps of your honours throne . . . he may meet with forgiveness of his sins." (TWJ 6). Similarly, "With due respect and humble submission, I beg to bring to your kind notice that for a long days, I have not the fortune to pay you a respect, or not to have your mental or daily welfare." (Wright 82). These were, she continues, "part of linguistic forms prescribed for [English] subordinates to use in addressing their superiors during the early days of the British rule in India" (Sreeja, "Babu English Revisited" 144). And yet, when mimicked by brown 'Babus', these linguistic forms become a recipe for ridicule. Evidently, language skins meaning, even as the color of one's skin informs what value is afforded to them.

Nowhere is this asymmetricality more apparent than in the business of education. In my own (limited) practice as a Peer Tutor at the Center for Arts and Language at the Rhode Island School of Design, I am routinely horrified at the sheer number of BIPOC students that request English grammar counseling simply because a professor deemed their language use as insufficient, despite their writing carrying strong academic and argumentative merit. It should come as no surprise then that requests for assistance with grammar and syntax are disproportionately received from either international or multilingual American students of color. This is despite the landmark 1972 NCTE resolution titled the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" which states:

> We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language –– the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.

A special edition of College Composition and Communication dated April 1974 clearly defines these discriminatory grammar practices:

> Traditional grammar books were unapologetically designed to instill linguistic habits which, though often inconsistent with actual language practice and sometimes in violation of common sense, were intended to separate those who had "made it" from those who had not, the powerful from the poor. (NCTE 13).

To be clear, I am not advocating that we abandon English grammar education altogether; it is, after all, a technical and material necessity for any language. Our scrutiny is necessitated, however, where grammar and dialect inform the assignment, or lack thereof, of social value and privilege. Ultimately, if we are to truly – and I use this term with much caution – decolonize English, we must allow the inherent pluricentricity of its postcolonial speakers to inform how it is taught, consciously interrogate who is allowed to claim nativity of the English language and be mindful of the pernicious manifestations of raciolinguistic ideologies in contemporary classrooms.

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Authored Subjectivity

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2.1. Between Linguistic Horizons

In the process of transformation from Indian to "brown Englishman," I found that I had lost not only my freedom but also my culture and individuality, and I have been engaged ever since in search of my self, my identity. Where between the heart and the mind had it been waylaid? Slowly, through the years, light began to filter through the pictures of Delhi to which I turned for my past.

Ahmed Ali, *Raison d'être*, 1993, xiv–xv.

It was the eve of Indian independence. After fourteen years of service in varying capacities as a scholar, teacher, diplomat, and novelist, the Urdu literary icon Ahmed Ali found himself at Nanjing University in China. He had just been appointed a Visiting Professor by the ruling British government of India and would spend two years teaching English at the behest of the British Council. Ending his tenure in 1948, Ali sought to return to his native New Delhi in India. However, the India he had left behind two years ago was not the one he hoped to go home to. In the time since his departure, his country had endured an unstable mitosis, splintering the subcontinent into two conjoined twins in a violent partition of land, livelihood, and language. One colony became two free nations, and yet, Ali became a new kind of prisoner. Having never stated his preference as a government employee, the then Ambassador of India in China K.P.S. Menon refused to let him return to India, arguing that as a Muslim he would have to go to Pakistan instead…. which is where he would live until the day he died, never again returning to the streets he called home.[10]

Eight years prior, at the height of the Progressive Writers' Movement (PWM)[11], Ali would write a prescient novel about his home. Written in 1940, *Twilight in Delhi* is the story of an Indian

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[10] See: Introduction by the author, Ahmed Ali, *Twilight in Delhi*, Rupa Publishing Co., Delhi, 1993.
[11] The PWM is a progressive Urdu literary movement that Ali founded along with Sajjad Zaheer, Rashid Jahan, and Mahmud–uz–Zafar in 1938. It is now called the All India Progressive Writers' Association (AIPWA). Nonetheless, its goals remain the same: to use literature in order to raise the fragmented social castes and classes of India and unite them against the British, which had found ideological and practical support in Communism.

father struggling to negotiate the complex forces shaping Delhi in the wake of English colonialism, parallels that Ali would personally experience not even a decade later.

Set between 1911 and 1919 in a newly-colonized New Delhi, the novel is book-ended by two revolutionary moments of change: on one end, the Coronation Darbar, which was an Indian imperial-style mass assembly that commemorated the proclamation of King George V as Emperor of India; and on the other, World War I. At the center of the novel, however, are its two protagonists, each embodying a specific sociocultural imagination: the father, Mir Nihal, and his nostalgic celebration of lost Mughal glory, and his son Asghar's embrace of English notions of modernity in defiance of familial traditions. Albeit not stated explicitly, these two imaginaries capture a central tension within the novel, a loose binary negotiation of tradition and modernity, as understood and embodied by these two characters. I explore the negotiation of these subjective ideals through the metaphor of twilight (borrowed from the title of the novel), of a waning day slowly melting into the purple embers of a new evening, the slow middle between an end and a beginning. Reflecting on the novel, Sumatra Baral writes:

> Twilight indicates in-betweenness and liminality – the position of Delhi between two languages – English and Urdu and two empires, the Mughal and the British. [......] Twilight, which usually hints at a transition between day and night, here posits itself between life and death, tradition and change, orthodoxy and progression.

This half-light semi-darkness speaks to the bilingual (if not plurilingual) colonial speakers' experience of the in-between, of a sort of double consciousness[12] engendered by their oscillation between linguistic traditions. To clarify, my concern here is not what Monica Schmid has described as *language attrition* or "the loss of, or changes to, grammatical and other features of a language as a result of declining use by speakers who have changed their linguistic environment and language habits" (11-17). Instead, I point to the psychological motivations and aftereffects

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[12] I use the term 'double-consciousness' here in extension of its framing in W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black People.*

informed by this linguistic dissonance, further heightened in the case of *Twilight* by Ali's choice to write the novel in English, despite local criticism and constant rejection from British publishers[13]. The novel was part of an enormous body of controversial work produced by Ahmed Ali and his peers in the Progressive Writers' Movement. These were Urdu literary dissidents, attempting to shake the foundations of religious and social orthodoxy through a radical retelling of North Indian lived experience, most notably in a collection of Urdu short stories titled *Angaaray* that would ultimately be banned (fig. 2). Yet Ahmed Ali chose to write *Twilight* in English. Could we read this as the author mirroring his younger protagonist's English aspirations? Judging from an early portrait, Ali does appear to style himself in the manner of an Englishman (fig. 3), very much in line with the stylistic propensities of *Twilight in Delhi's* Asghar[14].
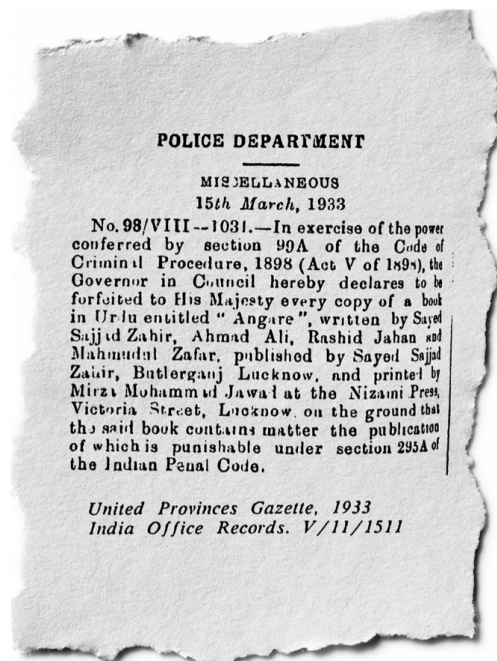

Figure 2. Notification on the ban of *Angaaray*, published in the *United Provinces Gazette* in 1933. (left)
Figure 3. A portrait of Ahmed Ali smoking a pipe, circa 1955. (right)

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[13] In fact, if it wasn't for E. M. Forster's interest in the manuscript, *Twilight in Delhi* might never have been published. It would ultimately be published by Hogarth Press, under the careful patronage of Virginia Woolf (D. Anderson 81).

[14] Interestingly, Asghar's lover Bilquis, whose caste identity Mir Nihal vehemently disproves of, is named after Ali's real world wife Bilquis Jahan who would go on to translate the novel into Urdu. Titled *Dilli ki Sham*, most Urdu readers are completely oblivious of the English version and consider the translation to be the original.

Ali offers some clarification in a 1975 interview with the *Journal of South Asian Linguistics:*

> I have been wondering why I write in English. […] It was not because, as some people have said, that I wanted to curry favor with the British. That's nonsense. It was an escape for me from many things. I could not express myself in Urdu when I was young, so I had to express myself somehow and English was all right for them [his family] ~ it was the ruler's language, the baré sahib's [big officer's] language, so they couldn't take objection to that in their minds. Their outlook was very orthodox, very narrow-minded. My older cousins had such an outlook, my aunt as well. […] Urdu had been taken away from me because of the great resentment people—my uncle's family—had toward my writing in Urdu (JSAL 122-3).

His comments point to the position English held (and continues to hold) as a marker of social mobility and intellectual progress in Indian society. Could this explain the motivations behind his choice to write in the language of the colonizer? Speaking to that effect, David D. Anderson notes in his 1971 review of *Twilight in Delhi*:

> That the novel was written in English was of significance in 1939, in those last days of the British Raj, as Ahmed Ali sought a publisher and a wider audience than the Muslim population of India alone could provide (81).

Ali himself lamented similarly about his novels, "If presented in Urdu, their [his characters] concerns would die down within a narrow belt rimmed by Northwest India" (xvi). However, others have argued that English offered Ali a way to avoid the reactionary violence of his fundamentalist Urdu-speaking critics, especially considering the public outcry against prior work like *Angaaray* [15] and the PWM as a whole. In this context, it is pertinent to look at the historiography of Urdu and its evolution into an emblem of Muslim identity. Historiography "is related to ideology – especially those aspects of it that contribute to the politics of identity among speakers of Hindi and Urdu in South Asia" (Alam 349). Deeply telling, in the development of an indissoluble link between Muslim

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[15] All but five copies of *Angaaray* were destroyed by the colonial police, two of which were sent to British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections. A microfilm of the book was discovered in the British Museum in 1987 which has since been recovered, translated, and republished, most famously by Snehal Shingavi in 2018.

identity and the Urdu language, is the story of the Urdu Maidan. Writing to this effect in a 2010 essay in *Celebrating Delhi,* Sohail Hashmi:

> The term Urdu has its origin in the Turkish word Ordu [which means] army camp. The market where the soldier went to buy his daily needs came to be called "Urdu Bazaar." *The open ground where the soldiers camped next to Jama Masjid was known as "Urdu maidan",* and the Red Fort, the camp of the Supreme Commander, was the "Urdu-e-Mualla." (137, emphasis mine)

Over the years, the Urdu Maidan and its adjoining Urdu Bazaar became an essential interlocutory site in the development of Hindustani, a protolanguage that birthed both Urdu and Hindi. This was primarily due to the interaction of Farsi-speaking soldiers and merchants with the various dialects of Delhi as well as the co-development of a local tradition of *shayari* on the steps of the Jama Masjid and its adjacent areas. And yet, decades later, a Hindi Maidan was named somewhere near the Daryaganj Police Station in New Delhi under the premise that if there can be an Urdu Maidan in Hindu-majority Delhi, there ought to be a Hindi one too. Here, Sohail Hashmi draws attention to the colonial project of associating Urdu (written in the Nastaliq script) with Muslims and Hindi (written in the Devanagari script) with Hindus. John Borthwick Gilchrist (1759–1841), the first President of Fort Williams College in Calcutta, designed language courses for the officers of the East India Company and set up the first translation bureau at the college. Hashmi continues:

> The translation bureau did remarkable work in providing texts on diverse subjects to the people. The college initiated the policy of making two sets of translations, one in Urdu in the Persian script for 'Mohammedans' and the other in Hindi in Devnagri script for 'Hindoos'. This act of Gilchrist eventually created the idea of two separate cultures, for language and culture are joined by umbilical cord. (139)

A knowledge of the politics of Urdu in the subcontinent throws fresh light on Ali's choice to write the novel in English. Perhaps he hoped to separate himself from the religious associations that were forced onto his native Urdu as well as the attendant notion of orthodoxy that Ali was vehemently against. It's worth noting that Ali left the PWM in 1940 – around the same time he began writing *Twilight* – following disagreements with its leader (and his friend) Sajjad Zaheer

whose staunch communist inclinations Ali deemed as being dogmatic and counter-intuitive to his vision of the PWM. Like many other Indian Muslim intellectuals of his era, Ali had spent some time at the Aligarh Muslim Anglo-Oriental College (today known as Aligarh Muslim University), an English-medium college that was also known as a reformist hub. It's evident that Ali was vehemently opposed to any kind of ideological dogmatism, whether in the form of religious orthodoxy, imperial conquest, or communist revolutionism. Could his English-medium education along with this dismissal of fundamentalism, have attracted him to the kind of modernity propagated by English literary imagination? Evidently, in moments of twilight, subjectivities organize themselves around hope and aspiration, as I explore within the novel itself.

D. Anderson describes the language debate as reflected in *Twilight in Delhi* as "an embryonic manifestation of the attempts to resolve the problem of linguism in India and Pakistan since partition and independence in 1947" (85). Urdu, once considered the language of the streets of Delhi, came to be recognized as a major vernacular in Pakistan shortly after partition. At the time, nationalist critics argued that *Twilight in Delhi* had no bearing on the development of a Pakistani literary tradition because it was written in English. The debate became particularly heated following its translation into Urdu in 1963 by Ahmed Ali's wife, Bilquis Jahan. Titled *Dilli ki Sham*, the translation is acknowledged by multiple critics (and Ali himself) as being first-rate. Yet, D. Anderson notes:

> [..] the peculiar situation emerged in which a work appeared in the language indigenous to its background, customs, and idiomatic usages only after having been written in another tongue. Almost immediately the uniqueness of the situation became a factor in debating the language most appropriate to the work. (85)

One critic, Ibne Sa'ied, deemed the Urdu version as clearly inferior to the English because it "[...] does not have the same poignancy, it seems to have lost the depth [of the English version]". Specifically, he accused the translation of being guilty of a "distortion in idiom":

> The language [English] which was used to create an atmosphere of romance, mystery, illusion, the moral and spiritual fabric of the inherently Oriental characters of the story has been reduced to a compendium of idioms, slangs, colloquialisms, proverbiology and cliche–dom.

In response, supporters of vernacular literature presented a typically righteous response, for instance in this review by "Acquarius" in the *Morning News of Karachi*:

> The English language has never possessed a vocabulary or idiom in which a novel depicting the life of a particular milieu in the annals of the city of Delhi could be faithfully and correctly written . . . It is only the Urdu language which could have depicted the life of Delhi of a particular milieu more naturally and more faithfully in which *Twilight in Delhi* should have originally been written.

The assessment of both critics (as well as their opinion on the effectiveness of the work itself) hinges on their literary judgment of the translation (D. Anderson 85–86). Nevertheless, these judgments are limited by their monolithic reading of language which discounts its porous, non–static boundaries. In fact, Joshi argues that with *Twilight,* Ahmed Ali pioneered the creation of a language and literary form for Indian novelization that was independent of the hegemony of English "taste, opinions, morals, and intellect" (211). Harish Trivedi notes that the theme and tone of the novel are derived directly from the Urdu verse form *shehrashob* which deals with neglect and mismanagement (70). In other words, by virtue of his multilingualism, Ali's writing in English inherently changed the language, which remains a far more interesting takeaway than the continued contestation of language suitability. This speaks to the power of literature in negotiating the discontinuum of twilight, of placing contending subjectivities in a world of their own, to confront, cohere, and hopefully, understand each other. Here, Joshi:

> The English–writing intelligentsia in India was thus a kind of bridge trying to span, symbolically, the "two worlds of the Ganga and the Thames through the novel". If the anglicist edicts of the previous century deployed the British novel to create a one–way traffic of ideas and ideals from metropolis to colony, Anand's (and Narayan's and Ali's) appropriation of the novel in English a century later was an attempt to force the traffic both ways, an exchange that was to occur fully with Indian writers of the 1980s. (211)

Twilight is an ode to life in 1910s New Delhi, just before the British would recreate the city in their own image. Within the novel itself, Ali's characters are split, with the elderly Mir Mihal glancing nostalgically at the vestiges of Indo-Islamic heritage in the subcontinent, in ruins after the failure of the 1857 Rebellion/Mutiny[16]. By contrast, Mir Nihal's son Asghar is prime for assimilation and starts to find a way to a possible "modern" future, only to be stymied at every turn by a conservative social order. The novel is divided in its attention between father and son, ultimately committing to father over son, past over future, aware that its retrospective gaze can only be a tragic one. This retrospective gesture is mirrored in Ali's life as well: with *Twilight in Delhi,* the author announced a definitive public break with the Progressive Writers' Movement he had helped found six years earlier. With its moody interiority, *Twilight in Delhi* marks Ali's stylistic break with social activist fiction. The novel's characters are nominally anti-colonial but have no self-consciousness about their own role in subjugating others, especially women, and Mir Nihal is reduced effectively to nurturing a diminishing stock of pet pigeons on the roof at the expense of the human relationships in his life. Despite the overlapping and overdetermined retrospective qualities of the novel, *Twilight in Delhi* cannot help but also be in some sense a proleptic gesture: a twilight that looks back on the day that is slowly ending (the British Raj, the Indo-Islamic legacy in Indian society) but also looks forward, to the unavoidable eventuality of the night.

With Asghar, the desire to marry for love rather than through a conventional family arrangement is at times directly linked to his forward-thinking and 'modern' identity. Asghar is in love with Bilqees, the sister of his best friend Bundoo, of whom his father disapproves on account of her lower station of birth. Much of the early plot of the novel revolves around this crisis. The link between love marriage and progressivism can be seen in passages like the following:

> 'I won't marry any other girl,' Asghar said peremptorily. 'I will marry her or no one else. You know that none of my wishes have been fulfilled. I wanted to go to Aligarh to study further; but father put

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[16] A beggar appears in the novel who is nicknamed "Bahadur Shah" (presumably after the last Mughal ruler of Delhi) whose seen in the novel reciting the his namesake's famous verses about exile and loss.

his foot down. He wouldn't hear the name of Aligarh. It is after all a Muslim institution, but he says that it is all the evil-doing of the Farangis who want to make Christians and Atheists of all of us. But that is finished now. I have given in to him. But in this matter I won't listen…'

Aligarh MAOC was, as mentioned earlier, the college that Ahmed Ali himself attended (another parallel between author and protagonist), at the time the center of progressive thinking in the Indo-Islamic context. Asghar had lost the battle with his father to go to Aligarh but seems determined to win with regard to his marriage interest. He does eventually win when his mother goes behind his father's back and arranges for the marriage to Bilqees to go ahead; even his father eventually gives his assent. But Asghar quickly comes to realize that a progressive motive for marriage, driven by romantic idealization rather than family obligation, is not really sustainable when it is purely one-sided. His idealization of Bilqees, he realizes after the marriage occurs, is not reciprocated, as she has a much more traditional idea of her role as a wife than he does of her. Twilight, within the context of the novel, becomes a site of discontinuity – and by extension, ambiguity – where regrets, aspirations, and expectations amalgamate into a delicate portrait of movement, change, and existential reformation. Ali models his own philosophical dissonance in the evolving subjectivities of his characters as well as in the distance between the sites of narrative: as lived in by the characters in the novel, and as experienced by its readership[17].

Further, within and beyond the novel, we encounter transitory subjectivities, author and character reflexively experiencing and redefining themselves within a marked discontinuity. Twilight, in this context, becomes a mode of knowledge, an in-between that resists description, a liminal (un)becoming that transgresses two imaginaries of seeming incompatibility, conjuring a discontinuum that is as generative as it is inertial. In the context of my work, twilight is a metaphor for language's inherent in-betweenness and the centrality of miscommunication and cultural incompatibility in not only the mediation of existing subjectivities but also the creation of new

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[17] *Twilight in Delhi*'s publication in London, combined with the reception of it Urdu translation in India, created a uniquely international audience.

ones. I locate my research within this linguistic twilight, investigating the transitory subjectivities that emerged and (d)evolved in response to English at the turn of Indian independence as well as the powers, specific sites – be it caste, class, or gender location – and motivations that informed this transfiguration. *Twilight in Delhi* is a powerful example of this transfiguration, of a markedly non-English family engaging, countering, and coming to terms with the subjective possibilities of a "modern" English imagination.

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2.2. Language and the Desiring Subject

I cannot think what enjoyment the girls find in going to parties. [...] Did we have these enjoyments in our days? And yet we grew up and prospered. Where did we go to school? Did we even handle a book? We went to the temples daily and worshipped Maravti. We did household work, and attended to veni phani [the toilet]. The girls of these days want to go to school, to parties, to sabhas, and eat fruit from the mlench [unclean] hands. [...] People are mad after English. Who are these English? Are they not incarnations of monkeys? Only the tail is not allowed them. What if they are rulers? We must not forget our caste and religion! Truly sin is raging, and the world is coming to an end. Oh Narayan! do thou open the eyes of the people.

Shevantibai Nikambe, *Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife, 1895*

In thinking about English and its emergent subjectivities, I turn to a 2012 book by Shefali Chandra titled *The Sexual Life of English: Languages of Caste and Desire in Colonial India*. The central argument of the book, framed best by the author:

[...] breaks with commonsense assumptions that the prevalence of English in India marks the lasting success of British colonial culture, the inevitability of an Anglo-American globalization, or the rise to dominance of a pan-regional and cosmopolitan middle class. [...] Instead, I argue that the English language was disciplined and materialized through the unfolding politics of rigorously policed and sexualised modernity. (4)

Chandra's reading of the history of English education in India artfully introduces gender and caste as active agents in the articulation of new subjectivities, socialities, and forms of extralingual

citizenship. Using a wealth of (relatively unknown) literature from the turn of the 20th century, written primarily by women authors from the subcontinent, her work captures the surreptitious ways in which British India's English-educated Indian elite secured the power of the English language within their own caste and class position (5). While their register was derogatorily termed Babu English, as previously discussed, knowledge of the language ultimately afforded elite natives new ways to extend their privilege in Indian society. In turn, by extending English education only to their own wives and daughters, these men mapped the "colonial-native matrix over their marital bonds" to create a new female Indian subject (5). Chandra notes:

> [...] British India's English-educated subjects taught English to their own woman [....] Bringing English to their wives and daughters, British India's English-educated men successfully secured the language of power within their class and caste location. [....] This idealised female figure was key to the India elite's quest for cultural equivalence with Europe, its distinction from "other" Indians, and its ability to speak in the name of a national commodity." (5)

I explore these new subjectivities and forms of sociality through two pieces of literature that I borrow from *The Sexual Life of English*. First, *Himself: The Autobiography of a Hindu Lady* [18]*,* a 1938 autobiography of Pandita Ramabai Ranade, and second, *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife*, an 1895 novel written by social reformer Shevantibai M. Nikambe.

In *Himself,* Ramabai documents her experiences learning English from her Brahmin husband (and social reformer) M. G. Ranade and its subsequent effects not only on her own psyche but also on the social contract she shared with her husband. Ramabai, who was only eleven at the time of her marriage, is said to have lacked a compassionate bond with her much older husband. Instead, M. G. Ranade decided to teach his new bride the English language. Their nocturnal pedagogic endeavors in the privacy of his office/classroom became a proxy for domestic intimacy. Speaking to this "symbolically affective bond", Uma Chakravarthi queries,

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[18] While the novel was originally written in Marathi, for the purpose of this study, I use an English translation by Katherine Van Akin Gates. It should be noted that the addition of 'Himself' to the title was made by the translator.

"Short of brutally consummating the marriage what would one do in such a situation except begin teaching the illiterate wife in alphabet?" (217). How these experiences shaped Ramabai provides a model to understand an evolving female subject in India at the turn of the twentieth century; in this case, an upper-caste Hindu wife. Chandra notes:

> Ramabai's memories sheds light on the interface between English and sexual identity, between individual desire, and social power. [...] Her individuated desire to possess the cultural power of English was interwoven with her awareness that it was her male relatives who were learning the language. (144)

Ranade's step-brothers, who were around the same age as Ramabai, had also begun learning English at that time. By aligning herself with the social power of English within an unconventional marital contract, Ramabai was able to access a phallogocentric social power previously alien to Indian women. Most notably, it reconfigured her relationship with other women in the household, particularly with her widowed sister-in-law Durga, who had been denied the opportunity to pursue her education because she was married at a very young age (139). Chandra:

> English education threatened to disrupt existing domestic hierarchies and, by the way of the "new" compassionate love [between Ramabai and her husband], to diminish the authority of other women in a female-centered household. (148)

Indeed, one could argue that Ramabai's selective education was sustained within the household through the expectation of free widowed labor. The lack of English education, in the case of the widowed Durga, produced another kind of female subject, one marked by labor, marginalization, sexual punishment, and a staging of lack. Chandra articulates the position of Durga and other women in the household when stating that "English-educated women would disdain their domestic roles and thus cease to respect domestic markers". At the same time, Ranade's ability to mediate Ramabai's education elevated his own power within the household (145). Chandra notes that "Durga's complex reactions averred that 'English' was a mobile, linguistic sign of vast material ramifications, indicating, expressing, and actively shaping a new hetero-conjugal

contract" (145). Evidently, the extralingual citizenship afforded to Indian women remains regulated by their marital association with masculinity. Shevantibai Nikambe's *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife*, is similarly complicit, evident in the patriarchal construction of its titular protagonist as a 'wife'. Depicted as a young, married, virginal Brahmin girl, the novel explores its protagonist Ratan's desire for an English education within the limitations of an orthodox Hindu society made insecure in the face of an all-consuming colonial power. The novel opens with a dedication to the then Empress of India Queen Victoria (fig. 4),
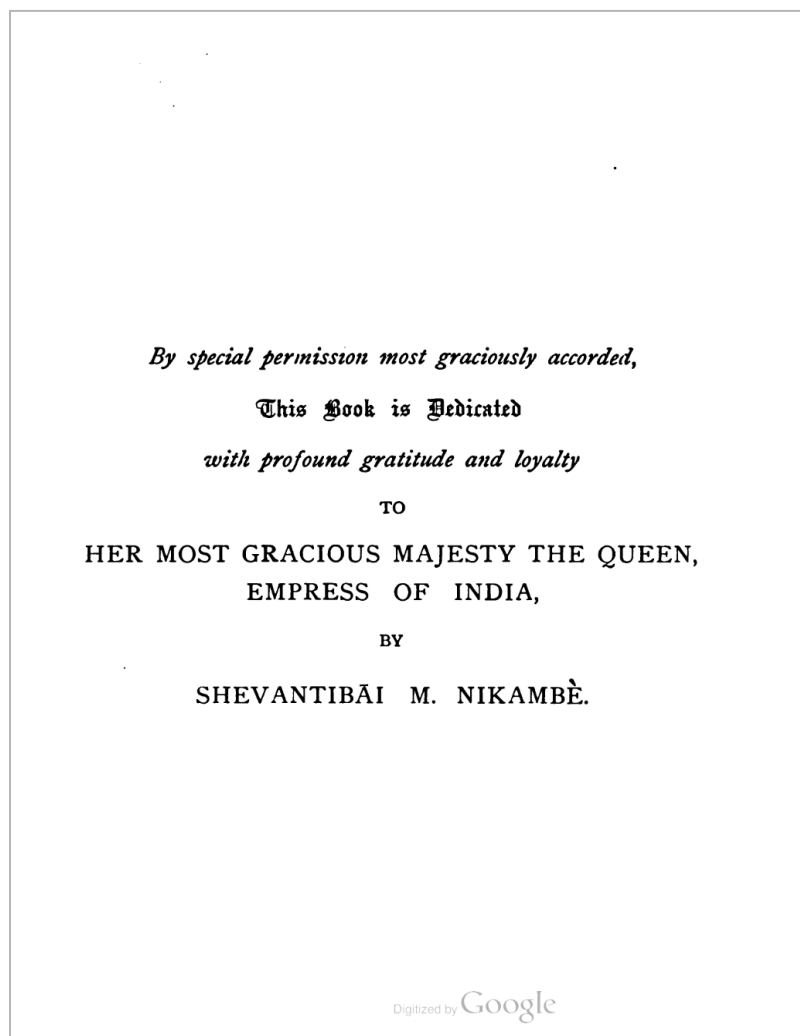

By special permission most graciously accorded,
This Book is Dedicated
with profound gratitude and loyalty
TO
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE QUEEN,
EMPRESS OF INDIA,
BY
SHEVANTIBĀI M. NIKAMBÈ.

Digitized by Google

Figure 4. Dedication to Queen Victoria in Nikambe's *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife.*

with the author's preface additionally emphasizing India's indebtedness to her "happy rule… brightening and enlightening the lives and homes of many Hindu women"[19] (150). This not only frames the author's relationship with Empire but also illustrates the co-dependency of the imperial government and the local upper caste establishment in the negotiation of power in colonial India, with the English language serving a mediatory role in the expression of sociopolitical authority. It's worth noting here that Nikambe eventually converted to Christianity despite being a Brahmin, the highest caste in the Hindu socio-religious order. In her introduction to the 2004 edition of *Ratanbai,* Chandani Lokugé notes that "[..] her conversance with the English language and the novel form confirm that she belonged to the segment of the Indian society most exposed to and influenced by westernization" (xvi). This segment of Indian women, while demonstrative of the caste-based localization of English hegemony, points to the notion of the 'New Woman' and the intrinsic position of the English language in enabling access to this construction of modernity. Here, Lokugé:

> The term applies [..] to the Indian woman who emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century as a consequence of British colonialist influence that included educational and socio-religious reforms. Defying institutionalized patriarchal ideologies that enforced her domesticity and subjectivity, the New Woman sought greater equality between men and women. The value of women as educated and self-reliant individuals, and active participants in domestic and public life comprised the most important ingredient in the later nineteenth-century ideal. (xvii, n9)

As a fairly diplomatic educationist, Nikambe's conception of the 'New Woman' is perhaps not as radical as Lokugé's framing, given her recorded submission to gendered domesticity. In an essay titled 'Pandita Ramabai and the Problem of India's Married Women and Widows', Nikambe glorifies the Indian wife as the 'priestess' of the 'sacred temple of the home' (14-24). Further, Lady Ada Harris, in her preface to *Ratanbai*, points to Nikambe's curricular aims as an educator to "aid students to reach an elevated status as happier and better *homemakers and mothers* rather than as self-developed individuals". And yet, *Ratanbai* – as a piece of autobiographical fiction – is

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[19] Note the use of subservient address forms as also seen in the case of Babu English.

still a site of anti–patriarchal dissent, using its plot to speak to the subterranean challenges faced by the writer herself as she negotiates the Indian–British encounter for her protagonist. Most pointedly, she deploys the rhetoric of reform borrowed from the discourse on the 'New Woman', evident in her juxtaposition of Ratan's desire for colonial modernity against Kaku, her orthodox great–aunt. The latter personifies a resistance to liberal social reform – especially the colonial English variety – lamenting that under the rule of the British, upper-caste Hindus are in danger of losing their caste: "We are Arya, but our Aryanism is getting all defiled". Speaking to this, K. S. Ramamurti argues that *Ratanbai* is "more a propaganda story than pure fiction, but its appearance was significant since it voiced and exposed the cause of women's education and of the emancipation of Indian women" (79–80).
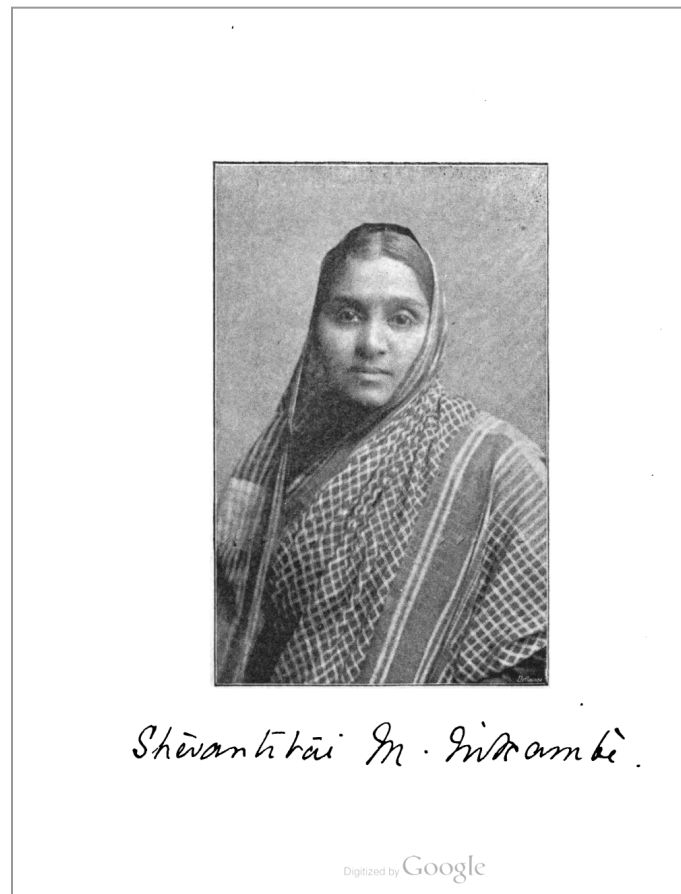

Figure 5. A portrait of Nikambe in a traditional sari and head–covering, circa 1895. Her signature, however, is in English.

Here too, similar to tensions highlighted in section 2.1, we engage with the centrality of twilight as the site of extralingual discontinuity and the centrality of desire as a guiding force towards English language acquisition despite the hindrances posed by orthodox social practice. Ratan's desire for radical reform, when compared to Kaku's conservatism as well as their author's own career as an educator of exclusively high-caste Hindi women and widows, underscores the instability of extralingual citizenship. English language use, in this context, is a key mode of soft power that radically transforms the subjective capabilities of the language user as well as their relationship to the ruling state and their place in it. Fundamentally, I argue that an education in the English language is an introduction to the state of twilight-as-lnguistic-discontinuum, to both sociolinguistic dissonance and possibility, their unstable boundaries rendering a new kind of female citizen in colonial India.

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2.3. Script/Post-Script

I took off our language and wore my English, like a mask, so that others would see my face, and therefore yours.

Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous,* 2019: pg

Ali, Ramabai, Nikambe. The examples presented in this chapter paint numerous portraits of extralingual citizenship as mediated by the English language in colonial India, as well as the entanglement of language with the sociality of the language user. *Twilight* bleeds nostalgia, neglect, and even anger in the face of unprecedented sociopolitical change; parallelly, *Himself* and *Ratanbai* offer representations of unstable domesticity and social reform. And yet – across examples – the writer and protagonist alike are driven by aspiration: for change, for resolution, for love. Here, literature becomes the site of interrogation; twilight is mediated through the *written* word; an English presence looms across the page leaving its traces across the postcolonial desire

for self-determination, indelible even in its rejection. Whether we like it or not, we are forever haunted by the European foundations of the English language; in its words, we discover a grammar for our shared colonial trauma; in its absence, we demand translation; in its reimagination, we attempt to reorganize who that 'we' (and ultimately, who the 'I') really is. In recognizing these ghosts, the boundaries of self-hood – as defined by geography and gender, race and caste, education and social capital – come apart, giving way to new forms of sociality and futurity in the continued negotiation of language and power. Here, finally, Ali:

> [...] I have not written for individuals; I have written for myself. I am only sorry that they [his Indian readers] have failed to realize that what I was giving them was their own, of which they had no awareness. I was giving it to them. But how many people try to know themselves? And if they come to know themselves, God knows what they would do, either commit suicide or begin to dance in sheer ecstasy. (JSAL 182)

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CHAPTER 3

Policy-ing Tongues

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In 2020, the Ministry of Education in India (administered by the ruling BJP government) introduced a radical amendment to the National Education Policy (NEP). Historically, this is the third education policy formulated by the Indian Government after a gap of nearly 34 years. The National Policy on Education 1986 was first modified in 1992 as the Program of Action, tweaked further by the T.R. Subramanian Committee in its report in 2016. The NEP 2020, as it now stands, is based on the Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee report submitted in 2019, a committee of nine eminent academics and scientists headed by Dr. Kasturirangan, who led the Indian Space Research Organisation for nearly a decade and is the Chancellor of the Central University of Rajasthan and NIIT University. The stated aim of the policy is "to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds" (6). However, despite its introduction over two years ago, it has not yet been enforced in any significant way. Thus far, only the state of Karnataka has committed to implementing the policy, with the intention of rolling it out to 20000 anganwadis and schools in the 2023-24 academic year (hindustantimes.com). At the heart of this amendment, however, is the question of language, and the continued effort to resolve the problem of interregional communication in India. In the section – "multi-lingualism and power of language", the NEP states that "wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be home language / mother tongue / local language / regional language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible" (13). The goal, according to a rather congratulatory article by Paliath and Dhinakar, is to create access to education, especially among the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the population. However, speaking to the practical limitations of the policy, critics (including my own mother who has been teaching

in and administering Indian schools for over four decades) have pointed to the lack of qualified teachers proficient in regional tongues as well as the relative unavailability of textbooks and study materials written in anything but English or Hindi. These two, more concealed, dimensions of the new proposed policy challenge its image as a document of radical reform. Outlook India went so far as to frame NEP 2020 as "A Policy which brings wonders in the Education Fundamentals" when it has, in fact, been critiqued for its potential to increase class disparities within Indian society. There are fears that EWS student populations may receive delayed proficiency in English and lose out on consequent job markets and education opportunities. This is not to say that the NEP 2020 ignores the material importance of teaching the English language which it assures will continue to be a subject offered to students. The policy claims that schools will have the flexibility to decide the medium of instruction and does not prevent students from learning in English, whether from the beginning or later. However, given the track record of the ruling government, whose tendency is to make and fail to deliver on grand pronouncements, it is hard to gauge what the implementation of the NEP 2020 will actually look like. That said, its introduction has reinvigorated the debate on languages and mediums of instruction in India. To that end, this chapter examines the regulatory origins of language policy in the Constituent Assembly Debates of 1949 and juxtaposes it against the state of education in contemporary India using the work of Chaise LaDousa and my own analysis of emerging liberal arts pedagogies in the country.

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3.1. One Nation, One Language

I turn first to publicly available transcripts of the Constituent Assembly Debates to explore the foundational conceptions of Indian language policy. My analysis hinges on one specific session: on the 12th of September 1949, representatives of the various ethnic identities that

comprised the subcontinent sat down to debate the question of a national language for the newly independent nation of India. The question of language and the attendant issue of script proved to be so contentious and divisive that when India was partitioned on 14 August 1947, Pakistan declared Urdu to be its national language. As a Muslim-majority state, West Pakistan's decision may be understandable, as the linguistic question appeared to be settled along religious lines after partition. However, in East Pakistan, where Bengali was spoken by the majority, this was inappropriate. In India, however, the situation was entirely different. After the disasters of partition, India emerged as an independent, democratic, and secular state, the motherland of all its residents, regardless of religion, caste, or linguistic background. The language debate had been put on hold by the Constituent Assembly in 1948, but by the autumn of 1949, it had become far too politicized to ignore or postpone any further. The debate lasted three days, but the decision was "crucial to India's secular credentials and would have far-reaching implications for the progressive notion of a popular, demotic language" (T. Ahmed 216).

However, the quest for secularism remained arguably tenuous as is revealed in the transcripts of the debates. Shri. Mohammed Hifzur Rahman, a Congressman from the United Provinces, advocated for Hindustani in both Devanagari and Nastaliq scripts, arguing that its organic ubiquity made it an ideal candidate ("Constituent Assembly Debates" 1344). Others, including Hindu fundamentalist Shri. R. V. Dhulekar, also a Congressman from UP, positioned Hindi in the Devanagari script as the obvious choice, declaring India to be "the Hindi nation, the Hindu nation" (1350). Some Hindu lobbyists even ventured so far as to demand Sanskrit be declared the national language, despite others framing it as a dying language. While the positions presented thus far spoke in favor of a *national* language, it was almost unanimously agreed upon that English should serve as the *official* administrative language, at least for the first fifteen years, given its access to global society and European knowledge. For the purpose of my study, I focus on the vitriolic discussions that ensued regarding the position of English in the new nation, isolating

three opinions that demonstrate the scope of the debate and the conflicting ideologies embedded in and actualized by language policy. The first by Shri. R. V. Dhulekar:

> What will the ghost of Lord Macaulay say? He will certainly laugh at us and say, "Old Johnnie Walker is still going strong" and he will say, "The Indians are so enamoured of the English language that they are going to keep it for another fifteen years. ("Constituent Assembly Debates" 1949)

Dhulekar's derision of English is not surprising. Throughout the debate, pro-Hindi lobbyists seemed to conflate ideas of freedom, language, and religion with nationhood. Suniti Kumar Chatterji has rightly termed this "Hindi nationalism" ("Report of the Official Language Commission", 278). Similarly, Shri. Shankarrao Deo, representing Maharashtra, exposed the pro-Hindi lobby's assumption that accepting "Hindi" amounted to the acceptance of the slogan, "one culture" and "one language" (T. Ahmed 217). Here, English stood as Hindi's most virulent opponent. That a nation should have one language is a fairly basic assumption of dominant nationalist theories. However, the reasons for pursuing such an ideal, in the context of the Debates at least, rested on the critical problem of interregional communication given India's aggregated plurilingualism. Speaking to this effect, Shri. B. N. Munavalli from Bombay states:

> If today, Mr. Krishnamachari or Maulana Abul Kalam Azad or Pandit Balkrishna Sharma and myself have to talk together, not in the English language but in our own tongues., it will be a veritable babel. It is out of such a babel that the English language has drawn us together. And if any attempt is made now to banish the English language from this country. India will lapse into barbarism. We must have an international language and English is a language which is spoken by sixty crores of people. English is not now the property of the English people alone. It is their property and mine. ("Constituent Assembly Debates" 1949)

While Munavalli derived his logic from the nation's internal needs, Mr. Frank Anthony – representative of the minority Anglo-Indian community and who notably chose to be referred to as 'Mr.' and not the local 'Shri.' – looked outward:

> [...] the English language is one of the few good things that the British incidentally, perhaps unthinkingly, gave to this country, and so opened up a treasure house of literature, thought and

culture which a knowledge of the English language has given to the Indian people. ("Constituent Assembly Debates" 1949)

It was this framing of English, curiously similar to Lord Bentinck's resolution of 1835, that finally swayed the majority of the assembly in favor of using the language, at least in an administrative capacity. However, the ultimate outcome of the debate is rather questionable. After two days, Shri. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, representing Tamil Nadu, and Shri. K. M. Munshi, representing United Provinces, introduced a proposal to the Constituent Assembly which became known as the Munshi–Ayyangar formula after its sponsors ("Constituent Assembly Debates" 1314–1491). This formula established Hindi in the Devanagari script as the official language of the Union. The states of the Union would keep their regional languages, while English would be used for legislative purposes, in the supreme and high courts, and for interregional communication. The use of English as the official language of the government was expected to last at least fifteen years, to give Hindi sufficient time to mature into a national language[20]. This expectation establishes two ideas: first, that Hindi was understood to be an underdeveloped language, even by its most radical advocates; and second, that English – by virtue of its global ubiquity – would continue to serve a governing role in India. Here, I reiterate Pennycook's framing of English as "the language of global miscommunication" (5) to locate the kinds of subjectivities that emerged as the nation slowly negotiated the implications of this constitutional decision. For the purpose of my research, I borrow a cartoon (fig. 6) from Raja Ram Mehrotra's *Indian English: Texts and Interpretation* to point to the various pidginized Englishes that have emerged in the decades since the ruling. Each version, in turn, points to a unique subject: the English–educated politician (top–left), the language crossing "aunties" conversing in a mix of Punjabi and English (bottom–center), the Hindi speaker who inadvertently uses English words in daily speech (top–right), among many others. While this is in no way exhaustive, it reveals the dynamic interaction of the English language with

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[20] A modified three–language policy was suggested by the Education Commission in 1964–1966 and was finally accepted by the India Parliament in 1968 after significant discussion. The formula as enunciated in the 1968 National Policy Resolution which provided for the study of "Hindi, English and modern Indian language (preferably one of the southern languages) in the Hindi speaking states and Hindi, English and the Regional language in the non–Hindi speaking States".

different sites, subjects, subjectivities, and motivations in India that ultimately inform its linguistic fractalization. Here, Tupas and Rudby:

> The penetration of English into the sociocultural landscape has made it possible for its users to appropriate the language and construct hybrid and multiple cultural identities for themselves. The localization and appropriation of English in these communities evidence the many ways that users of English index their ownership of the language through altering it to fit their local contexts and purposes. (4)

At the end of the day, the twilight of language feeds off of its speakers' attempts to communicate (and eventually miscommunicate) to organically uncongeal any puritan ambitions for monolingualism. As it is spoken, written, and actuated, a language unfurls, and with it, its users.

Figure 6. A cartoon from a national daily newspaper from New Delhi, circa the 1990s.

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3.2. Angrezi Medium[21]

Even so, the same cannot be said of the language's material manifestations that remain entangled in the continued evaluation of India's problem of interregional communication. This is demonstrated most directly in the divergence of instructional mediums within the Indian schooling system. In *Hindi Is Our Ground, English Is Our Sky*, Chaise LaDousa speaks to the distinct social codes embedded in the aspiration for English-medium education vis-a-vis Hindi and other regional languages:

> English-medium schooling has taken an increasingly prominent place in people's class aspirations. It has enabled the already knowledgable to make good use of the new possibilities of liberalisation, and others to attempt to engage with English, largely through schooling (19)

This codification occurs simultaneously in the consumption and co-creation of knowledges within the school as well as in job markets and higher education. Indeed, English proficiency is deeply intertwined with the potential for social mobility and the creation of a new middle class in India. This "craze" (*krez)*[22] for English is often inconsistent with domestic expressions of language (read: language-of-home, the mother tongue, et al), as described by Debi Prasanna Pattanayak in *Multilinguism and Mother Tongue Education*:

> Schooling is a major break in the natural acquisition of language where ignorant pedants teach the non-existent logic, identify varieties as incorrect, create a low self image be branding the home language as non-standard and try to establish their right to teach the correct [language] as the standard. It creates the first major emotional disturbance, the first alienation from reality and it sows the first seeds of social discrimination, violation and repression.

LaDousa's work demonstrates that the medium-based division of schools in India allows for different visions of national belonging and what is considered central and peripheral in the nation. Moreover, it demonstrates how the language-medium division reverberates unevenly and

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[21] I borrow the title 'Angrezi Medium' (or English Medium) from a 2020 Hindi-language dramedy of the same name.
[22] The term "craze" (or *krez*) is a Hindustani colloquialism that loosely translates to "obsession".

unequally throughout the nation, and how schools reflect the tensions caused by economic liberalization and middle-class status. In an interview with the principal of the Saraswati School in Varanasi, Chaise raises a question regarding the experience of a Hindi-medium student entering an English-medium environment. This prompts the mention of a feeling of inferiority on the part of the Hindi-medium student vis-a-vis English-medium students and environments" (LaDousa 37) which the interviewee frames as a 'complex' (*kampleks*). This colloquial expression captures the inability to resolve twilight-as-linguistic-discontinuum, so common in its social usage so as to highlight the ubiquity of language-informed class disparities in Indian society, as well as demonstrate the transcultural cross-pollination between languages. Here, the sign remains the same – unlike Lamar's translation in the Introduction – but its texture changes when carried across linguistic contexts. 'Craze' is not the same thing as *krez.* A 'complex' is not the same thing as a *kampleks.* The latter speaks to the very real fear of being perceived as a language misuser, and the subsequent denial of the extralinguistic values – intelligence, class, authority, etc. – associated with it. This leads to what linguist Elaine Richardson describes as a "stereotype threat" or the tendency for people to withhold certain expressive aspects of their language from formal communication, creating the need for code-switching and translation[23]. The experience of this *kampleks* is, thus, mediated by the routine encounter of raciolinguistic ideologies built into a stratified education system. A direct outcome is the articulation of multiple streams of English education in India performed within a spectrum of class identities. These are Englishes that are communicated as much as they are lived. The bourgeois inhabit an English that is analogous to hegemonic British and American varieties, at least in its class character. Within the broader linguistic field, however, most Indians populate various degrees of pidginized (and inordinately delegitimized) Englishes gathered through the medium of their schooling (or lack thereof). The interplay of these variegated subjectivities results in the production of different *English-markets* within the broader marketplace of languages.

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[23] For instance, in the American context, when Black people are told not to use their dialect in school. (Young 64)

In an attempt to clarify: consider the readership of an Arundhati Roy against that of a Chetan Bhagat: each comes with its own preconceived notions of intellectual rigor, accessibility, and social realism. Without being overly reductive, I use these authors as specific markers of their respective English-markets, of the clear demarcation between the "novel" and the "storybook" as distinct literary modalities, as experienced and described by their respective target audiences. Bhagat's writing in particular, which caricatures the lived experiences of a specific transitory socially-mobile segment of society, points to what LaDousa calls "the discursive space of a new middle class" (7) made possible by the enactment of instructional mediums, school curriculums, and educational policy in an increasingly liberalized India. These English-markets can be understood as inhabiting differing positions within binary center-periphery constructions such as rural/urban, Indian/Western, and professional/creative, interchangeably mapped onto a logic of correctness and appropriateness and afforded varying degrees of agency and extralingual citizenship. Therefore, the discursive space occupied by specific configurations of the extralingual citizen extends to the creation and differentiation of markets, material opportunities, and expectations. English, in this context, is more than the language of global capitalism: it is a contested linguistic field, where different Englishes become analogous to the forms of capitalism constructed through them.

Consider the English Coaching industry in India, a reification of the demand for English proficiency in call centers, to seek higher education (through TOEFL or IELTS), apply for government jobs, or attempt the Civil Services Examination (among various other channels of social mobility). These coaching centers do not function as formal educational institutions, often set up within residential colonies in dense urban areas, but instead, occupy the same liminal space that births the experience of the *kampleks.* Indeed, its existence is a tangible response to the language-informed class disparities that the term encompasses. Writing in a 2021 paper on

UPSC coaching centers, Chais LaDousa provides a comprehensive illustration of the inner workings of these institutions:

> One of the most successful coaching teachers I met in Delhi was named Ram. He had come to rent out a three-room flat in the heart of Mukherjee Nagar's cluster of multi-story buildings devoted to coaching tutorials. One entered a waiting room that was adjacent to Ram's office. To the side of the office was a narrow hallway that led to Ram's assistant's office and a bathroom. [..] Across the way from the waiting room was a lecture hall that accommodated approximately 40 students. The room was equipped with a chalkboard mounted above a slightly raised platform from which Ram delivered his lectures. Such was the setup of all of the coaching teachers I met who had been working for anywhere between 10 and 25 years. [...] Most of the students were from smaller metros or from small towns, and explained that the prospects for work, either at home or where they had gone to university, were particularly bad. (114)

These centers occupy an unregulated location in the informal economy of the nation that has commodified English proficiency training. These sites are not concerned with the status of knowledge as much as its material possibilities. This is evident in how these centers are marketed, correspondingly taking advantage of the public desire to overcome the experience of the *kampleks*. Consider these two advertisements for coaching centers:
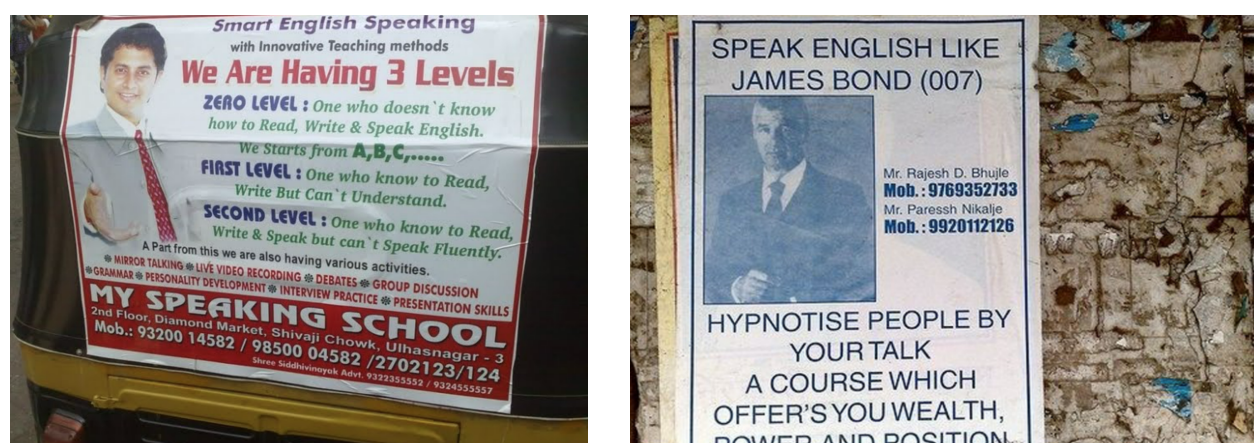

Figure 7. Public advertisements for English Coaching Centers in Ulhasnagar (left) and Mumbai (right), both in the state of Maharashtra in India.

The first (fig. 7, left) appeals to various target markets, defined as "ZERO LEVEL", "FIRST LEVEL", "SECOND LEVEL" in an explicitly hierarchized framing of language proficiency. Further, its

promise of "Smart English Speaking" suggests a correlation between English acquisition and intelligence, exaggerated by the image of an Indian man in a suit. The second advertisement (fig. 7, right) takes this even further. "SPEAK ENGLISH LIKE JAMES BOND (007)", it says, along with an image of a white man in a suit, speaking simultaneously to a desire for whiteness as well as the class status that the popular spy represents. This allusion to James Bond collapses whiteness, class, and success into one category: the knowledge of the English language. "HYPNOTISE PEOPLE BY YOUR TALK. A COURSE WHICH OFFER'S YOU WEALTH, POWER AND POSITION", the ad continues, reinforcing the language's promise of class mobility and social status.

I contrast these coaching institutions with Writing Centers in India's recently established liberal arts universities. These include Ashoka University, Jindal, Flame University, and Symbiosis, among others, which have – over the past decade – popularised liberal arts pedagogy in the Indian subcontinent. Their branding variously alludes to critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, globalism, and multidisciplinarity as key learning outcomes which leak into their conceptions of the Writing Center as a site for critical education and attract a distinctly upper-class clientele. As a result of their relative success, there has been an enthusiastic debate over the value of liberal arts education in India, so much so that even IIT Bombay has launched its own liberal arts, science, and engineering program. Above and beyond these initiatives, there is perhaps no greater indicator than the recommendations in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which effectively legitimizes the liberal arts trend in India. While the 2019 draft version of NEP 2020 does not explicitly state this, it is quite evident that Indian policymakers hope that a greater emphasis on the liberal arts – understood in the policy as multidisciplinary education – will help to improve the low employability rates of college graduates. In its section on higher education, NEP 2020 identifies "a rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study" as one of the main problems in Indian higher education. As a solution, it "envisions a complete overhaul and re-energizing of the higher

education system", including "moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education" (33–34). Within this context, Writing Centers have evolved into student–friendly sites where guides, tutors, and counselors work with students to improve their written work, critical faculties, analytical skills, and research capacities. This brand of intellectualism is in stark contrast to the pragmatic "Smart English" promised by coaching centers. Here, unlike coaching institutes, basic English proficiency (and the resolution of the *kampleks)* is not the primary learning outcome; instead, the focus is on language as a site for higher–level meaning–making, knowledge production, and analysis. While both pedagogic models – coaching institutes and writing centers – are valid responses to the class context of their offering, they enforce dramatically different conceptions of the English language and their attendant markets, which have little to no overlap.

It's worth noting that the NEP 2020 cites ancient universities in India, like Takshashila and Nalanda as historic sites of multidisciplinary education, and accordingly emphasizes that the "knowledge of many arts or what in modern times is often called the 'liberal arts' (i.e. a liberal notion of the arts) must be *brought back* to Indian education" (34). Despite these attempts at historicization, liberal arts education and attendant writing center pedagogies have been noted as being primarily of North American origin. Here, Hotson and Bell:

> As neocolonial commodities, U.S. writing courses and writing centers are also easily exported, especially as American English is the lingua franca of knowledge acquisition and publication. (53)

Further, while the commitment to decolonial approaches in contemporary writing center conversations is well–established[24], its fundamental premise remains fairly problematic. Here, Hotson and Bell expand on the use of writing centers as neocolonial tools by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) over the last 15 years:

> We observe this currently occurring in Brazil and Russia, where DOS regional English language officers (RELOs), "a kind of . . . teacher–diplomat", support the establishment and national

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[24] See: V. Villanueva, V. A. Young, L. Greenfield, K. Rowan, et. al.

organization of writing centers as U.S. cultural diplomacy initiatives to "support the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives, advance national interests, and enhance national security by informing and influencing foreign publics". (51)

This is a radical departure from "HYPNOTISE PEOPLE BY YOUR TALK. A COURSE WHICH OFFER'S YOU WEALTH, POWER AND POSITION". Instead, we confront writing centers as a site of neocolonial soft power similar in ideology to Anglicist language ideologies that informed Lord Bentinck's educational policy of 1890. The regulation of wealth, power, and position, in this context, is raised to geopolitical terms and continues to be defined extralingually. Subsequently, this alignment with neoliberal values affords students access to a kind of global class mobility that remains completely alien to clients of English coaching centers. In this context, the NEP 2020's attempts to introduce primary education in the mother tongue will only deepen the chasm between these English-markets and most likely invent new ones. Indeed, these attempts to instill a "deep-rooted pride in being an India" completely disregard the local transmutations of the English language that now hold a strong claim to "Indianness" as well as an enthusiastic local desire to share a part of the hegemonic power of English. If anything, the policy is erroneously nostalgic: it dreams of a lost Indian identity that it frames as being antithetical to the ontological reverberations of the English language. The policy, with its current ambitions, is a pronouncement of institutional denial. It disregards what I have previously framed as the churn, and denies twilight-as-linguistic-discontinuum as being an integral heteroglossic reality, a living fact that contemporary policymakers best keep in mind when thinking of language and education policy in India if we are ever to address the social, curricular, and material needs of future students.

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Conclusion

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Having concluded my research (at least within the scope of this project), I leave you with some closing points of inquiry. First, how do we ascertain a global grammar to English without becoming overly reductive? Can we accommodate the inherent fractalization of the English language — and the various linguistic and cultural traditions it has been influenced by — in its teaching and performance? Consequently, can we teach English such that it encompasses the myriad material values the language makes possible while still addressing/countering/reorganizing the moral/social/ideological logics it extends? And, ultimately, if none of this is possible, then where does this leave us, and what might still be the gift of such a line of questioning?

My immediate impulse is to attack English at its roots. Perhaps, it no longer makes sense to teach English simply as a language, given its complex – and often violent – history. After all, English is an archive of both the memory and afterlife of colonialism. It is, as I have previously expressed, a contested linguistic field, and not one simple thing, where multiple differentiated Englishes become analogous to the respective forms of sociality, subjectivity, and materiality generated through them. Its teaching must, at the very least, speak to the centrality of this complex hegemonic history. The wider arena of the extralingual field of English has the capacity to reorganize existing grammars of appropriateness and social access; to center the agency of its speakers in the production of knowledge and its emergent economies, and to even strip the language of the ontological anxiety, the internal Other–ing, the *kampleks*, it generates. The question now is: how can we extend this extralingual framework into the design of education curriculum and policy? Consequently, wherein the learning and developmental cycle would such an intervention be most effective? This, right here, is the work.

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LIST OF FIGURES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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AAVE	African American Vernacular English
BIPOC	Black, Indigineous, and People of Color
CAD	Constituent Assembly Debates
DOS	United States Department of State
ESL	English as a Second Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
MLE	Multicultural London English
NCTE	National Council of Teachers of English
NEP	National Education Policy
PWM	Progressive Writers' Movement
RELO	Regional English Language Officers
SE	Standard English
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UPSC	Union Public Service Commission
WE	World Englishes