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Non-Native English Literatures: Context and Relevance

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The emergence of a large body of creative writing in English by its non-native users demands that we develop critical perspectives for understanding, evaluating, and appreciating such writing.[1] This body of writing comes primarily from former British colonies, such as the countries in the Indian subcontinent, in East and West Africa, and in the Caribbean.

Although the history of non-native creative writing in English goes back almost two centuries, quantitative – and, more important, qualitative – strides in such non-native English literatures (NNELs, hereafter) are a phenomenon of the last four or five decades. In India, literature in English by Indians may be said to have come of age in the late 1930s, with the publication of novels by Mulk Raj Anand (*Untouchable,* 1935), Raja Rao (*Kanthapura,* 1938), and R. K. Narayan (*The Bachelor of Arts,* 1937). In West Africa, similar development has been even more recent, a product of the late 1950s and 1960s (Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart,* 1958; Cyprian Ekwensi, *Jagua Nana,* 1961; Gabriel Okara, *The Voice,* 1964; Wole Soyinka, *The Interpreters,* 1965, and *A Dance of the Forests,* 1960). The same is true of East Africa as well (Wa Thiong'o Ngugi, *Weep Not Child,* 1964).

The biggest spurt in English writing has come in the years immediately surrounding the demise of the British Empire – an irony that has not been lost on the critics.[2] A creative impetus was provided by the nationalist movements, and by the revival of native traditions and reaffirmation of national dignity that came in their wake. In addition, two other factors were at play whose roles in this literary renaissance have not been sufficiently noted. One is the growth in bilingualism in English, creating sizeable numbers of English-knowing *indigenous* people who could be counted on as a potential audience for the new literature (see, e.g., Fishman et al. 1978; Reddy 1979). The second factor is related to the first but is more specific. It may be referred to as the (relative) "de-bureaucratization of English," i.e., the increasing confidence with which non-

native writers came to handle the language in registers other than the legal and administrative. This point is brought home when we compare the stilted and cliché-ridden style of the conversations used in Indian fiction around the turn of the century with those found in more contemporary writings. Here is an English translation of a passage from a Sanskrit purāṇa (Iyer 1905: 623; quoted in Holstrom 1973; 22): "O best of Brahmins, grieve not; I shall enquire into the case, and with Sundareshwara's grace find out the truth and do the needful." Note the use of bureaucratic clichés such as "enquire into the case," "do the needful." Non-native creative writing in English has come a long way from that teething stage, developing a diversity of themes, a variety of forms and techniques, and, not the least, an authenticity and idiomatic expressiveness.[3]

However, literary critics, language teachers, and (to a lesser extent) linguists have yet to realize the significance of this literature's existence. The spread of English around the world is an unparalleled phenomenon, as is the widespread creation of literature by non-native writers. Perhaps the only similar situations have involved the use of Latin in medieval and Renaissance Europe and the use of Sanskrit in South Asia throughout the subcontinent's history. Other smaller-scale parallels are the use of French by writers from francophone Africa, Spanish in Latin America, and, in a restricted sense, the use of Arabic in the Muslim world. The need for new critical perspectives has just begun to be realized in literary circles; see, e.g., Wright (1976), Larson (1972), Griffiths (1978), Walsh (1970), Mohan (1978), as well as the references in Narasimhaiah (1976) and Sridhar (1980). Comparative studies are still needed.

My aim is to point out why NNEL should be of interest to linguists and to teachers of English as a second language. The rest of this article deals with the following topics: the glottopolitics of NNEL; analyses of some linguistic and literary processes employed to extend the potential of the English language to express alien meanings; the "difficulty" of NNEL and its "relevance" to native and non-native speakers of English. My observations below should apply, by and large, to writings from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East and West Africa – but not to the Caribbean, where English is not non-native in the same sense.

The Choice of English for Creativity

The emergence of non-native English literatures should be viewed as an aspect of the worldwide spread of English documented by Fish-

man et al. (1978) and others. In many parts of the former British Empire, English came to serve as the link language between linguistically separated native populations, and as the language of the "intellectual makeup" (Rao 1943) of the emerging intelligentsia.[4] Although English came to play other roles, including serving as the language of administration and of law, it is the first two roles, together with its international spread, that are responsible for the development of English literature by indigenous writers. In India and West Africa, English is the primary mode of inter-regional communication among the educated. In West Africa, English is the only language in which a fair number of people are literate. (Contrast Swahili in East Africa in this respect, and the "national" languages in India.) Furthermore, for sizeable sections of the population – though still, admittedly, a minority – English is the primary language of expression. Because of their educational training, some people feel more at home in English than in their mother tongue. Although some are bilingual writers (A. K. Ramanujan writes in both English and Kannada, and Chinua Achebe writes in English and Igbo), the majority write only in English.

These writers have been criticized for "whoring after foreign gods" by ultranationalist critics who believe that one can only express oneself in one's mother tongue. Obiajunwa Wali in Nigeria and Buddhadeva Bose and Sacchidanand Vatsyayan in India[5] are among those who consider writing in English "a dead end." Implicit in this criticism are the following claims: that it is somehow "unpatriotic" to write in a language that is not native to the land; that one cannot express oneself as well in a foreign language as in one's own; and that no non-native writer can write as well as a native writer. Therefore the former is doomed to second class status, if not to outright oblivion.

These assumptions have been challenged by the writers and defenders of NNEL. The charge of treason is countered by pointing out that English was the language of national unification and the vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiment during the freedom struggle. National leaders whose patriotism is beyond reproach, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, wrote in English. Measuring patriotism by one's choice of language betrays a naïve and unthinking approach to such questions. A language belongs to whoever uses it, and is not the sole property of its native speakers.

In his celebrated essay, "English and the African Writer," Chinua Achebe (1965) rejects the claim that it is impossible for anyone to use a second language as effectively as his first. For some non-native writers, English is the sole language of literary expression; hence the question of whether they would have written better in their mother

tongue does not arise. For others, the choice of English seems to be determined by the theme. For example, Achebe, who writes poetry in Igbo and English but fiction only in English, says, "I think certain ideas and certain things seem better done in Igbo and other things seem better in English " (1975: 33).

The third assumption, that no non-native writer can write as well as a native writer, is contradicted by the examples of Joseph Conrad, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, and others. However, the writers themselves take a different tack in responding to this criticism. Most claim that they are not competing with native writers. Raja Rao, in his well-known and often-quoted preface to *Kanthapura,* says: "We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world around us as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish and the American. Time alone will justify it" (Rao 1943: viii). Chinua Achebe (1965: 29-30) expresses a similar conviction:

> So my answer to the question, Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing? is certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask: Can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker? I should say, I hope not. It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to be able to do so. The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. . . . It will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

Although most non-native writers feel that they can express themselves best in English, they need to "nativize" the language to suit their particular purposes. This nativization involves experimenting with the expressive resources of the language on various levels: vocabulary, collocation, idiomaticization, syntax, and rhetorical patterning. It also involves adaptations of English (Western) literary forms such as the lyric, the novel, the short story, and the poetic drama to express the writers' individual sensibilities.

Nativization of English in NNELs

While using English to express shades of thought and feeling that are not indigenous to that language's native speech community, non-native writers have found it necessary to introduce various innovations. These innovations – referred to as processes of nativization – have been studied from a linguistic point of view by Kachru (1969), Bokamba (1982), Angogo and Hancock (1980), and others. Here I shall only briefly allude to the literary-aesthetic motivation or justification for these innovations.

The most obvious problem, of course, is that of nomenclature: finding words for culturally bound everyday objects. Most authors simply resort to borrowing: *dhobi* (washerman), *kumkum* (vermillion mark), *obi* (receiving hut), and so on, with explanatory glosses either embedded in the text itself or appearing in an appendix. However, this process impedes the flow of the narrative and constitutes a conscious attempt to bridge the cultural gap. A more subtle and certainly more effective device involves "contextualizing" the new item by embedding it in a passage that makes the meaning of the term self-explanatory. This process is referred to as "cushioning" in Young (1976). Consider an example from Amadi's *Concubine:* "The *okwos* tore the air, the drums vibrated under expert hands and the *igele* beat out the tempo meticulously" (1965: 35). As Young says, it is obvious from the context that *okwos* and *igele* are musical instruments, with the *okwo* possibly being a wind instrument and the *igele* some sort of a percussion instrument whose primary function is to keep the beat. Although this device leads to inclusion of some extra detail, the greater integration of the new items into the context, and the unobtrusiveness of the introduction, make it worthwhile. This subtle weaving of native and non-native elements makes R. K. Narayan's prose read smoothly, while Mulk Raj Anand's style remains self-consciously experimental.

A more difficult problem is that of conveying modes of feeling and thinking peculiar to the writer's cultural milieu. To quote Raja Rao again, "one has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in a foreign language" (1943: ix). In this area we find the widest variety of experimental devices, all of them drawing on the author's mother tongue. The most common device is *calquing* or loan translation (see Bokamba 1982; Kachru 1981; Zuengler 1982). Successful loan translations may be said to have the property of *transparency,* despite their being literal translations of words and collocations from a foreign language. For example, consider expressions such as *dining*

leaf, receiving hut, and *bell-metal voice,* as well as idiomatic expressions such as Raja Rao's *a crow-and-sparrow story* (for cock-and-bull story), *a palm-width of land, to beat one's mouth and shout,* and *to stitch up one's mouth,* or Narayan's *If I hear your voice, I'll peel the skin off your back.* Not all *calques* are successful, however, especially when the translations lack the affective associations of the original. A case in point is Anand's literal translation of a Hindi swearword as "brother-in-law." Yet, by successfully resorting to the native language, the author is able to avoid hackneyed expressions (e.g., "fresh as a flower") and to create the cultural atmosphere of his work. As the Nigerian poet and dramatist John Pepper Clark points out, such translations come about because the author finds that "a thought you have has been very well expressed already in your mother tongue; you like that manner of expression so much you want to transplant it into English" (Clark 1972: 68).

Let us discuss two examples from Raja Rao's *Kanthapura.* In the first, an old woman asks a favor of a young man. In the Kannada sociocultural context it is customary for the favor-giver to make light of his generosity, so as to minimize the asymmetry of the situation created by the role reversal. Raja Rao conveys this subtle convention by literally translating the Kannada idiom into English: "Is it greater for you to ask, or for me to say yea?" (1943: 11). The effect would not have been the same had the author used an expression such as "Your wish is my command." A second example involves a host-guest interaction which calls for repeated coaxing on the part of the host and considerable coyness on the part of the guest. Raja Rao re-creates this Indian convention by having his hosts use translated Kannada expressions such as "Take only this much milk, aunt, just this much" and "Take it, Bhatré, only one cup more, just once." As C. D. Narasimhaiah aptly observes, "With people like us [Indians], used to being coaxed, the English forms, 'Won't you have a second helping?' or mere 'Sure you don't care for more?' will be ineffective and even considered discourteous" (1968: 13).

In these two examples, it is not "cognitive meaning" or "illocutionary force" that differentiates the native and non-native versions. Rather, it is the choice of language considered appropriate to a given speech situation. These differences in linguistic conventions may lie at the heart of the differences between native and non-native varieties of languages; they seem to be best studied by contrasting "contextual units" of the sort that Kachru (1966) has described.

In addition to the lexical, phrasal, and idiomatic transplants from the mother tongue, many authors' styles are also marked by the infu-

sion of native-language syntactic patterns. For example, the Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel deliberately parodies "Indianisms" in the poem "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa" (Ezekiel 1976).

Most writers, however, intend not to parody but to re-create the tempo and the feel of the native form in the English work. To convey the "breathless" quality of the native Kannada narrative, Raja Rao resorts to endless coordination, the closest possible approximation of the chain of participial clauses that mark the Kannada narrative. The following passage from *Kanthapura* (Rao 1943: 137) is illustrative:

> Then the police inspector saunters up to the Skefflington gate, and he opens it and one coolie and two coolies and three coolies come out, their faces dark as mops and their blue skin black under the clouded heavens, and perspiration flows down their bodies and their eyes seem fixed to the earth – one coolie and two coolies and three coolies and four and five come out, their eyes fixed to the earth, their stomachs black and clammy and bulging, and they march toward the toddy booth; and then suddenly more coolies come out, more and more and more like clogged bullocks. . . .

A syntactic device favored by R. K. Narayan is the verbless sentence fragment (equivalent of Kannada and Tamil discourse patterns): "Don't touch, not completely dry yet," "We must be serious about it, no time to joke, no joking matter" (Narayan 1976: 135, 69). He also uses sentences without subjects, especially in narratives:

> When a man says "I love you" . . . it sounds mechanical. . . . Perhaps credible in Western society, but sounds silly in ours.
>
> He wondered how it was. . . . Speculated why he should not move to Daisy's flat, a neutral area. . . .
>
> [There is] Still a lot of space – why don't you buy a few things that you may need on the way?

More obvious characteristics include questions without inversions: "And you'll allow me to speak?" "Brother, you are with me?" "But I can hold meetings for you, Moorthy?" (Rao 1943: 126, 125). Such questions in standard English request confirmation, while in this text they are direct translations of Kannada questions which do not involve inversion. Raja Rao also uses left and right dislocation to re-create the effect of the oral narrative, as in "My heart – it beat like a drum" and "And he can sing too, can Jayaramachar" (Rao 1943: 163, 14).

Such transference of mother-tongue patterns into English also serves to overcome the problem of "linguistic alienation" which

plagues all non-native writers (Ogundipe-Leslie 1969). It bridges the cultural gap and makes the use of the alien medium more acceptable to the non-native speakers themselves. When carried to extremes, however, it poses serious problems of intelligibility and exposes the writer to the charge of preciosity. The more bizarre specimens from the Onitsha market literature illustrate this danger. Consider this passage from Frank Odili's *What Is Life?* "Why not to your spiritual interest in God keep the good rule of your main created life? Are you actually redundant in fetching up your needs when you are physically looking fit to that? If you are not, then, what is your most greatest need of the life? Do you want to be greedy . . ." (quoted in Collins 1968: 16).

Clearly there is a need to separate deviations from native English that result from inadequate learning of English from those deviations that result from deliberate experimentation by writers proficient in English. Gabriel Okara experiments with the subject-object-verb word order, attempting to reproduce his native Ijaw structures. In the following passage from *The Voice* (1964: 13) one is hard put to divine the aesthetic function of the inversion, except in the vicinity of the second sentence:

> It was the day's ending and Okolo by a window stood. Okolo stood looking at the sun behind the tree tops falling. The river was flowing, reflecting the finishing sun, like a dying away memory. It was like an idol's face, no one knowing what is behind. Okolo at palm trees looked. They were like women with their hair hanging down, dancing, possessed. . . .

Proverbs abound in non-native English novels. As Achebe says, "Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten," and Nigerians seem to be as rich in this oil as in petroleum crude. Proverbs are also frequently used by the better writers of Indian fiction in English. They provide shorthand character sketches, or quintessential statements of motifs and conflicts; they mediate between authorial comment and objective description; and they serve as objective correlatives of crucial, sensitive developments in action (see Lindfors [1968] for a detailed study). For instance, Okonkwo in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1959: 6) is characterized with a single proverb: "If a child washes his hands, he could eat with kings." This statement refers to Ikonkwo's qualities as a self-made man whose industry and discipline led to his achievement of high status in his community. Okonkwo's fate as a tragic hero is summed up (1959: 117) in a choral comment on a proverb: "The saying of the elders was not true: that if a man

said yes his *chi* (or personal god) also affirmed. Here was a man whose *chi* said nay despite his own affirmation." As distillations of traditional wisdom, proverbs provide the author with a convenient shorthand for depicting implied value systems.

The use, abuse, or non-use of proverbs can itself differentiate characters. Wole Soyinka's *Interpreters* and Amos Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* contain few proverbs, reflecting the dissociation of urban and rural sensibilities. On the other hand, the abuse of proverbs by a character through distortion of meaning is an effective device to convey his flouting of traditional values.

The expressive potential of proverbs and other culture-bound speech patterns is brought out by Achebe in the following passage (1965: 29):

> Allow me to quote a small example from *Arrow of God* which may give some idea of how I approach the use of English. The Chief Priest is telling one of his sons why it is necessary to send him to church:
>
> "I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something then you will bring back my share. The world is like a Mask, dancing. If you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying 'had we known' tomorrow."
>
> Now supposing I had put it another way. Like this for instance:
>
> "I am sending you as my representative among these people – just to be on the safe side in case the new religion develops. One has to move with the times or one is left behind. I have a hunch that those who fail to come to terms with the white man may well regret their lack of foresight."
>
> The material is the same. But the form of the one is in character, and the other is not. It is largely a matter of instinct but judgment comes into it too.

These authors' experimentation with English involves another dimension of particular interest to sociolinguists, especially to those involved with ethnography of communication. This is the artistic use of speech stratification and conversational conventions. Wole Soyinka's brilliant use of language is marked by the assured facility with which he moves from one speech style to another in the complex linguistic

environment of his characters. In *The Interpreters* and *The Road* he freely moves from Standard English to pidgin to Yoruba, and through different mixtures of all three, as the situations – or the sociolinguistic variables – demand. (For a discussion of the use of pidgin in literature, see Todd 1974: ch. 5.) In Achebe's *No Longer at Ease,* Joseph talks to his foreign-educated brother Obi in Standard English on the telephone. Soon afterward, turning to his friends, he comments in pidgin, "'E like dat. Him na gentleman. No fit take bribe" (Achebe 1961: 77). A similar creative use of speech variation in Singapore and Malaysian English writing is discussed in Platt (1980).

Before we leave the topic of experimentation with language, we must note that not all non-native English writers use "nativized" English. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and Okara's *Voice* are, no doubt, instances of sustained experimentation, but with other authors and in other works the extent of innovation varies widely. This seems especially true of poetry.

Non-native writers of English have experimented with literary forms, as well as with the language itself. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* breaks the bounds of the novel as we know it in the West, taking on the form of a *sthaḷa purāṇa* (local legend). It embodies such traditional devices of oral literature as the tale within a tale, frequent autobiographical asides, injections of direct address to the listener, and rhetorical questions concerning the right or wrong of individual actions. Its structural principle is dictated not by the Aristotelian unities but by the centrality of the community which undergoes upheaval during the freedom struggle. The author has not attempted to write a realistic novel. Like every traditional Indian story, his involves mythologizing characters and events, giving them added meaning and stature. The same quality that would make *Kanthapura* a failure as a realistic novel also makes it a doubly realistic narrative: while we are aware that the events have been transformed in the narrator's mythopoeic imagination, we also recognize that this makes the Indian narrator authentic and credible.

To take an African example, let us consider Wole Soyinka's *Dance of the Forests* (1963), written in celebration of Nigeria's independence. This play successfully integrates traditional performance skills with the structure of Western drama. (See Griffiths 1978 and Larson 1972 for detailed analyses.) Emphasizing the continuity of past, present, and future, and fulfilling the traditional injunction to invoke one's ancestors in any contemporary celebration, *A Dance of the Forests* embodies a continuous interplay between the lands of the living and the dead. The climax involves the descent of the half-

child (the unborn child of a woman who died pregnant ages ago), symbolizing the past in the making of the present. Soyinka resorts to traditional Yoruba dramatic practice at this point. During the concluding "dance of the child acrobats," the half-child is tossed into the air and apparently caught on the points of two knife-blades. The play's brilliant poetic dialogue is interlarded with song, mime, and dance.

The Question of Relevance

The non-native English writer's experimentation with language and form raises several questions. First is the issue of intelligibility (see also Nelson 1982). Does these authors' introduction of native language make their works obscure? Can native speakers of English be expected to acquire the cultural and literary background needed to fully comprehend this literature?

As was pointed out earlier, there are good and bad ways of introducing culture-specific materials. A mature artist such as Achebe or Narayan usually takes care to embed the strange material in a self-explanatory context. Such embedding, in fact, may be proposed as a measure of success in the evaluation of non-native literatures. This criterion derives from the principle of the autonomy of the work of art as well as from a sense of responsibility to the reader. On the other hand, as T. S. Eliot says, one need not understand every word in order to enjoy and appreciate a creative work: "Good poetry communicates before it is understood." Moreover, the alleged difficulty in understanding non-native literature in English seems to be no greater than that involved in understanding any important work, be it *The Waste Land* or *Paradise Lost* or *Ulysses.*[6] Different readers react to these writers and their works on different planes of understanding; to paraphrase Eliot again, "You get from poetry what you bring to it." Generations of non-native students have enjoyed and profited from their study of English literature without ever having seen a daffodil or a snowflake. On the other hand, if one is doing serious literary criticism, one should equip oneself with a knowledge of the author's cultural and literary traditions.

Should non-native literatures in English be judged in terms of the canons of English literature, or with reference to other native literatures? Because they are written in English, these literatures demand to be considered in the company of other works in English. To twist Achebe's phrase: If one writes in a world language, one should be prepared to be judged by world standards. (In this respect, the pro-

tests of some African critics that "Western standards cannot be applied to their literature" seem hypocritical. By the same token, I consider the poetry of Sri Aurobindo and the novel *The Serpent and the Rope* by Raja Rao to be failures, no matter how "uniquely Indian" the sensibility they express.[7]) At the same time, non-native English literatures also belong to the canon of native literatures, if only because English is one of the many languages in the usually multilingual countries where such literature is written. In short, the approach to these literatures must be no different from that used in comparative literature in general.

What is the relevance of this literature to professional linguists and to teachers of English as a second language? For linguists, the growth of non-native English literatures provides a unique opportunity to study the nativization of English in different mother tongue groups, and to compare the similarities and differences in the processes of indigenization. The linguist might even arrive at a grammar for breaking the rules of grammar (see, e.g., Sridhar forthcoming). He might also investigate the relationship between the creative writer's deviations from the norm and the deviations current among speakers of that non-native variety of English. And then, of course, there is that sociolinguist's paradise – the question of attitudes toward nativization held by non-native speakers themselves.

Linguists also have an opportunity here to study the empirical basis of the oft-made distinction between productive and unproductive innovations in the language. The bold linguistic innovations found in the works of Amos Tutuola and G. V. Desani are often characterized as stylistic cul-de-sacs, whereas those in books by Raja Rao or Wole Soyinka are hailed as breakthroughs. What linguistic factors contribute to such differences in response?

In order to bring out the relevance of this literature to the teaching of English as a second language, I must backtrack a little. As Kachru (1981) rightly observes, the TESL profession has proceeded far too long on the assumption that non-native speakers' major motivation for learning English is the so-called integrative one; i.e., to culturally identify oneself with the native English speech community. Most learners of English today are in the so-called Third World countries, and they learn English primarily as a tool for acquiring scientific and technological skills. In many of these countries English is learned primarily for *internal* use, to communicate with speakers of other languages *within* the country. In these contexts English will have to serve as a vehicle for conveying various native cultures, traditions, customs, thought patterns, and social concerns. The English teacher

must teach the kind of English that can serve this function. Creative writers (who represent the most acute and sensitive observers of a culture) have been struggling to fashion English into a suitable medium for the expression of their immediate social and cultural reality. If English teachers are to "deliver the goods" to speakers of these "other" languages, they must teach the kind of English best suited for these speakers' needs. What better resource do we have, in this attempt to identify the possibilities and limitations of nativization, than writings which succeed or fail precisely on this count?

The use of non-native literatures for teaching the English language also helps overcome another major pedagogical problem, that of developing culturally suited teaching materials. Instead of trying to teach English to students from Malaysia or Ghana through "April is the cruellest month breeding/Lilacs out of the dead land mixing/ Memory and desire . . ." when for them April is "no more or less cruel than any other month and summer cannot surprise one if it is summer all year round" (as Anthony Burgess [1970] wrote, describing his frustration in trying to translate the poem into Malay), why not use literature that deals with the life that is familiar to them, that they can identify with?

Finally, non-native English literatures can and should form a part of the ESL teacher's training because no language teaching is complete unless it introduces the learner to the richness and beauty of the language's literature. And no teacher is adequately trained who fails to understand and appreciate the language and culture of his students. Non-native English literatures offer a unique shortcut by which the teacher can acquire this essential knowledge and understanding.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Braj B. Kachru, Manfred Görlach, Ann Lowry Weir, and Narayan Hegde for their thoughtful comments on an earlier version of this article.

2. "There is a sense in which English [in India] never had it so good. The obituary notices written for the language, written and postponed over the last seventeen years [since India's independence in 1947], have now been reluctantly withdrawn" (Rajan 1965: 80). This seems to be true of non-native writing in French as well. See, for example, Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to Frantz Fanon's *Les damnes de la terre* (1961).

3. The jargon-ridden style illustrated here should be distinguished from the style marked by *register confusion*, or rather *register neutralization*, that marks much of non-native writing in English even today. The latter is perhaps an inevi-

table outcome of the development of institutionalized non-native varieties removed from active contact with native varieties in their original sociolinguistic settings. The earlier style was stiff and severely cramped in its ability to express the full range of emotions and thought patterns; the contemporary styles are not so limited. For further discussion, see Kachru (1969), Young (1971), and Sridhar (1975).

4. As Rajan puts it, "a large slice of Indian life, and particularly of its decision-making strata, continues to reason and act in English" (1965: 81). For a detailed discussion of the continued use of English in India, see K. Sridhar (1977).

5. Cf., e.g., Sacchidanand Vatsyayan ("Agyeya")'s remark at the 5th All-India Writers' Conference, December, 1965: "To be an Indian as a writer is first and foremost to write Indian, to write in an Indian language." For a detailed account of the controversy generated by Buddhadeva Bose's criticism, see Lal and Raghavendra Rao (1960).

6. "If intelligibility were the only difficulty, then no user of English would tolerate the insult to his intelligence of all the lengthy commentaries to, say, Eliot's *Waste Land*" (Gunasinghe 1966: 148).

7. "The uniqueness of these emerging literatures is to be found in their 'exotic' local color, 'quaint' speech patterns and rhythms, neologisms, and (more significantly) the protest quality of their writing. To accept them simply for these largely sociological characteristics is to apply more generous critical standards than are evoked in assessing the work of white writers in English" (Wignesan 1966: 113).

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