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R. K. Narayan: Straddling Metropole and Malgudi

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In her essay "Resistance through Sub/Mission in the Novels of R. K. Narayan," Hyacinth Cynthia Wyatt argues that "among Indian authors writing in English, R. K. Narayan was among the first to resist Western cultural dominance" (197). It is not immediately clear how "dominance" should be understood in this context. Considering the general absence of overt anti-western themes in Narayan's work, whether in the years preceding or following Indian independence from Britain, one may wonder just where the "resistance" to western dominance, cultural or political, is to be accurately observed. Would Narayan's novels really be best understood and appreciated as anti-colonial or "western-resistant" expressions? Wyatt cites Narayan's persistent focus on the "diversity and idiosyncracies of the people of India" (197), and maintains that Narayan's novels "show the threatening reality of the growing influence of the West with the psychological effects it has had, and continues to have, on the Indian psyche" (198). While it is true that a few characters in some of the novels openly express anti-western sentiment, and while it is true that various characters who embody ideals of an increasingly "modern" ethos incite conflict in the narratives and may be understood to display a moral shallowness, one would be very hard pressed to make a convincing case for Narayan's "resistance to Western cultural influence," should Wyatt have chosen to express it in even this less dramatic fashion.

After all, despite Narayan's personal authenticity and his unwavering commitment to the local color of his fictional south Indian Malgudi, and even though one can readily ascertain in his works the regenerative power of some traditional principles and practices, one simply cannot overlook Narayan's immense debt to the English tradition and his personal reliance on at least a handful of English individuals

and English institutions. In addition, Narayan relied upon a very extensive western readership, whom he clearly had in mind over many decades as a targeted audience. Narayan did not make his mark by resisting or being anti-colonial or anti-western, which is not at all to say that he favored colonial structures or preferred western ideals, because he did not. While he remained faithful to his observations of the local and invested his tales with elements drawn from the great epics and the folk traditions of his culture, it is highly likely that without his obvious colonial dependence on the English language and on particular English agencies and agents his tales of the local would not likely have aspired far beyond an intensely local, though highly appreciative, native audience. That Narayan does ultimately succeed in making his fictional locale familiar on an international level makes for a fascinating and ironic tale of good fortune, hard work, and the unexpected, just the sort of plot Narayan would showcase in his work throughout his long and remarkable career.

As a child in a mission school, Narayan naturally had to study English. He recalls in his essay "English in India," that English was given primacy of place in school, even though he was first taught both Sanskrit and Tamil at home:

In the classroom neither of these two languages was given any importance; they were assigned to the most helpless among the teachers, the *pundits* who were treated as a joke by the boys, since they taught only the "second language," the first being English as ordained by Lord Macaulay. English was taught by the best teacher in the school, if not by the ruling star of the institution, the headmaster himself. The English Primer itself looked differently styled from the other books in the school bag, with its strong binding and coloured illustrations.¹ (*A Story-Teller's World* 20)

Despite the seductive aura surrounding the English language, however, the author remembers pausing over some of the references, which were alien to his experience:

"A was an Apple Pie"...and went on to explain, "B bit it" and "C cut it." The activities of B and C were understandable, but the opening line itself was mystifying. What was an Apple Pie?...To our eager questioning, the omniscient one, our English teacher, would just state, "It must be some stuff similar to our *idli*, but prepared with apple." (*A Story-Teller's World* 20)

Narayan notes in this same essay the central place that English occupied throughout his life. At home his father, who was also a headmaster, had on his shelves volumes of Thackeray, Carlyle,

Dickens, Ruskin, Shakespeare, Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, and Browning; his father urged him not to miss out on reading Carlyle and Ruskin especially, and his family regularly read the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Bookman*, and *London Mercury*. Narayan recalls reading *My English Pilgrimage* by Professor Sadhan Kumar Ghose, in which that author recounts his enthusiastic travels in search of the sites of literary England (*Story-Teller's World* 21). Similarly, as a younger man, Narayan had a friend who went to Germany as an engineer and then to England with the sole purpose of seeking out a variety of literary sites associated with Shakespeare, Dickens, Keats, and others—a journey that left him “profoundly happy” (*Story-Teller's World* 21). Narayan also notes, however (as in his apple pie example), his personal dislocation from many of the experiences described in this literature. The Indian sense of love, relationships, and family structure, for example, could never be synonymous with the English, and he emphasizes his education in the Vedic tradition, the rich lore of gods and demons, the native mythologies and epics—but does not apologize for anything like “falling into” or being “pressed into” writing in English. Instead he defends his choice, and he looks to how English may ultimately be changed by its use in India and to what might be achieved in India via continued application of the English language:

[English] has served my purpose admirably, of conveying unambiguously the thoughts and acts of a set of personalities, who flourish in a small town named Malgudi supposed to be located in a corner of South India.

English has been with us for over a century, but it has remained the language of the intelligentsia, less than ten percent of the population understanding it....I feel, however, that it must reach the market place and the village green if it has to send down roots. In order to achieve it, the language must be taught in a simpler manner, through a basic vocabulary, simplified spelling, and explained and interpreted through the many spoken languages of India. When such a technique of propagation is perfected, we shall see English, whatever its official status, assimilated in the soil of India and growing again from it. (*Story-Teller's World* 22)

Further, Narayan points out in “The Problem of the Indian Writer” that “the English language brought with it not only a new type of literature but all the world’s literature in translation” (*Story-Teller's World* 14). Narayan became an advocate of English as one of the fifteen languages of India, and he accepted the benefits of exposure to English literature, culture, and ideals while never thinking himself anything but thoroughly South Indian. In Narayan’s world—both actual and fictional—various elements of English colonial culture, both positive

and negative, are absorbed into the fabric of daily experience. Narayan is an Indian author and not a would-be English author who happens to be Indian. English is his medium; and Malgudi is his subject. This subject is not consistent with, for example, the many English-language rejections of Englishness or dominance offered by Gandhi and others, but the evocation of the local in a language continuing to gain an increasing international foothold and certainly one with a tantalizingly large potential audience. For Narayan, there is nothing odd about this; it is the result of history, both national and personal.

The unassuming authenticity of his personal voice (conveyed to us in English) is one of the qualities most readers of Narayan have long appreciated. Narayan was himself pleased with such appraisal of his style. As evidence of his appreciation, Narayan saved a letter dated April 9, 1936 from Ranjee Shahani, who had written a review of *Swami and Friends* that he approved of. In the letter, Shahani says, “The great merit of your book (at least in my eyes) was that it was simple and natural as a whiff of scent from the rose bushes.”² Despite the “natural” qualities of his prose, however, the impact of some of those English authors whom Narayan routinely read while growing up evinces itself on occasion. The author’s early encounters with Dickens seem to have made an impact on him not in the development of his prose style, but in some of his habits of characterization. The coarse, blustery, domineering larger-than-life Vasu in *The Man-eater of Malgudi* recalls the equally immense, intimidating, and vociferous Thomas Gradgrind from Dickens’ *Hard Times* (even as Narayan points to the demon Bhasmasura as the thematic source for his character), and as Margayya in *The Financial Expert* is morally and physically transformed into a wheezing, cash-obsessed miser, sitting by candle light and counting his coins and bags of money, one cannot avoid his association with both Scrooge and Uriah Heep. It is not just the nature or habits of some characters that reminds one so strongly of Dickens, but the way in which Narayan somehow manages to present them on the borderline between the straightforwardly real and the surreal, the caricature, the cartoon image.

Much of Narayan is rooted in the mundane, the observable, the everyday, the comically realistic, but there are recurrent moments when the recognizable mutates to the unreal, the farcical, the extraordinary or melodramatic. Several examples come immediately to mind: Ravi’s crashing the film set and abducting Shanti in a fit of insane passion in *Mr. Sampath*; Margayya’s metamorphosis into an almost demonic miser in *The Financial Expert* (after “selling his soul,” essentially Faust-like, to the truly demonic Dr. Pal in exchange for rights to the shady but presumably [financially] magical text *Bed Life*); Raju aspiring to his own crafted persona as holy man, captive in the rural temple in *The Guide*; the character of Vasu and the manner of his death

in *The Man-eater of Malgudi*; and the character—especially during his public speech on the Cannibal Herb that will cover the earth by 2500 A.D.—of Dr. Rann in *Talkative Man*. Narayan's oscillation from descriptions of the everyday to his fanciful depictions of the humorously odd or even bizarre likely follow from a confluence of experiences and influences: first, his time as a reporter for the Madras newspaper *The Justice*, work which brought him into "close contact with a variety of men and their activities" (*My Days* 111); next, the epic and folk traditions of his native soil; and, additionally, his long and extensive reading of Dickens, Scott, and other English authors. Regarding his enthrallment with both Dickens and Scott, especially during his university days, Narayan writes in his autobiography *My Days*:

I admired Scott so much that I searched for his portrait and found one in a second-hand bookshop—a copper engraving as a frontispiece to a double-column edition in microscopic type, containing three novels in one volume, with many illustrations that brought to life all those strong-willed men and forlorn women in their castle homes. After Scott I picked up a whole row of Dickens and loved his London and the queer personalities therein. (60-61)

In short, the superimposition of one tradition on another is characteristic of Narayan's debt and allegiance to influences feeding his art from both his native soil and from the wealth of texts in English impressed upon and made available to him beginning at an early age.

Steeped as he was in the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata (thanks primarily to the early efforts of his uncle Seshachalam, who read these works to Narayan when the author was very young), and exposed as he was at home to the heroic medieval tales of a novelist like Scott, Narayan made long and ample use of exploring, parodying, and off-setting qualities of the heroic in his works. In his "Inaugural Speech...at the Kerala Sahitya Akademi" (1976), Narayan clarifies his own effort to provide counterpoints to the old heroic narratives, while simultaneously exploring the significance of the common and contemporary:

With all the traditional background it is inevitable that the modern writer should draw his inspiration from contemporary life, to seek relevance in the day to day situation of the individual. Our hero today is not a crowned head wielding a sword but the unknown common man armed with nothing more than an old umbrella as he sallies forth out of his home to face life's problems each day. (NCBU)

Narayan's emphasis on the "day to day situation of the individual" can thus be seen to transcend specific issues of colonialism, independence, or postcolonialism. His focus on the particular, on the specific character and his family, their personal struggles and aspirations, defines his work. Colonial politics may on occasion possibly be a catalyst behind some of the personalized troubles of his characters, but one rarely senses this. Instead, he recurrently engages with various manifestations of his favored subject, whose qualities he describes in an undated essay titled "The Common Man." After listing the common man's expectations regarding his future, including an undergraduate degree, a secure job, and growing respect among his peers, he delivers his characterization of a generalized, largely universal experience. Certainly Narayan's experiences are akin to many of his central characters over the years, broad human experiences that transcend concerns or issues specific to colonialism:

Life just kicked about all those nice edifices of vision. His father died and our friend found himself taking his place. Four sisters to be married, three brothers to be educated, the ancestral home and lands submerged in mortgages...His home now appeared to him as a very leaky ship which would go down any moment, and it did go down...The rest of his life might be described as one grand salvaging operation. It is this wrestling bout with existence that first bleached and then scorched the hair on his scalp. (NCBU)

This "wrestling bout with existence," on a highly personal (though universalizable³) level defines the field of existence for Narayan's characters, while the backdrop of larger social or political issues goes largely unremarked upon.

One reason sometimes offered for the near invisibility of political issues or the suggestion of political instability in Narayan's work—in contrast to his contemporaries Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, for example⁴—is that his traditional Hindu beliefs led him to the acceptance of or resignation to things as they are. Some read in Narayan a patient investment, pandit-like, in the immensely long playing out of the four cosmic yugas, within which situations such as colonial occupation or struggles for independence are both inevitable and mere trifles.⁵ Narayan does display a fascination with—and, surely, an abiding respect for—the traditional village story-teller and his commitment to the foundational tales and values of his culture; indeed, Narayan seems to delight in adopting elements of this village story-teller persona. Nonetheless he has, as Fakrul Alam very effectively demonstrates in his recent essay "R.K. Narayan and the End of British India," depicted the "throes of change" in Malgudi during the later years of colonial rule and the passage into the era of independence,

with an array of characters in a number of novels either embracing the energies of change, or resisting them in favor of a traditional past that may seem threatened. In this process of chronicling change, Alam clarifies that Narayan is "able to deal with the major issues facing Indians in the last days of the Raj without engaging frontally with politics in his novels" (83). The most "frontally" Narayan engages with an overtly political theme, in any sustained fashion, is in his *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955). He avoids overt political engagement with contemporary politics before *Mahatma* and abandons it afterwards.⁶ Why such an abbreviated foray into the political?

So far as the years prior to the publication of *Waiting for the Mahatma* are concerned, Susan Ram and N. Ram in *R. K. Narayan, the Early Years: 1906-1945* maintain that as early as the 1930s pre-*Swami and Friends* days, Narayan, a Brahmin, was in his writing "careful to avoid getting into any area of political controversy," primarily because other Hindu castes resented the Brahmins' historical domination and were bringing this anti-Brahmin antagonism into the increasingly turbulent political arena (146-47). So far as the immediately post-*Mahatma* period is concerned, and even in subsequent years, a convincing and simple explanation is that in a letter dated July 19, 1954, English novelist Graham Greene, having reviewed the manuscript of *Waiting for the Mahatma*, expresses to Narayan his disappointment on finding politics filtering into Malgudi since until that time he had experienced in Malgudi a more universal quality.⁷ This expression of disapproval from Greene would be more than sufficient to influence Narayan's focus and direction. While it would be a stretch to regard R. K. Narayan as a "satellite" or subordinate of Graham Greene, Narayan's hopes and prospects for publication in Britain, his avenue to the English language public in the west, lay very firmly in Greene's hands. Narayan was certainly grateful to accept Greene's efforts to secure his place, however modest, among the journal and book publishers in London. Narayan, an obscure Indian writer of small town life in South India, was certainly not capable of making these inroads into the London publishing network on his own, especially at so great a distance from the metropole. Greene's immediate, intense, and long-lasting attraction to and adamant support of Narayan has still not been fully explored and conveyed (though definitely most satisfactorily, to date, by Ram and Ram), but his quiet, persistent, sincere, and enormous efforts on Narayan's behalf are striking and deeply impressive. The approximately two hundred letters from Greene to Narayan (mixed with some letters of Narayan to Greene) now held in the Graham Greene special collection, Burns Library, Boston College, especially when read chronologically in their entirety, clearly establish that Narayan quite likely owes his reputation

to Greene—not his talent, of course, but his reputation—who became from the first, long before ever meeting Narayan personally, his determined advocate.

The story of Greene's role in getting Narayan's first novel published in England is well documented:⁸ how Narayan's friend Kittu Purna approached Greene, Purna's acquaintance while at Oxford, with the manuscript of *Swami and Friends* (then titled *Swami, the Tate*); how Greene responded to Narayan's material immediately, liking the novel well enough to press it on a reputable publisher like Hamish Hamilton; how Greene changed the novel's title because *Swami and Friends* would be easy to remember (*Swami, the Tate* would be "quite impossible for this country") and because it would have the advantage of "some resemblance to Kipling's *Stalky & Company*, to which I am comparing it on the dust cover";⁹ how Narayan mailed a signed copy of that first published novel to Greene, inscribed on the inside cover, "But for you 'Swami' should be in the bottom of Thames now."¹⁰

What is less well-known is the extent to which Greene remained involved with Narayan after *Swami and Friends* was printed. Hamish Hamilton rejected the manuscript of Narayan's second novel, *Chandran*, informing the author that "unfortunately, *Swami* was a sad failure, attracting neither the notice of the press or of the public, and I don't feel that *Chandran* stands much chance of doing better"; Hamilton indicates that he is sending the manuscript on to Mr. Greene, "as he acted for you before."¹¹ Greene then proceeded to secure Pearn, Pollinger, and Higham as literary agents for Narayan, and they succeeded in placing *Chandran* (subsequently titled *The Bachelor of Arts*, primarily because of Greene's dissatisfaction with the title) with Nelson's who, David Higham informed Narayan, were "first-rate publishers." Higham also assured Narayan that "Graham, by the way, has agreed to do a preface for *Chandran*, at Nelson's request."¹² In addition, Higham and associates notified Narayan in January of 1937¹³ that they were working together with Greene to place Narayan's short stories in various journals, such as *The Spectator*, *Nash's Magazine*, *Time and Tide*, *Life and Letters*, *The Fortnight*, and *The New Statesman*. In 1937 Narayan's short story "Fellow Feeling" was accepted for publication in the journal *Night and Day*, with Graham Greene being one of the editors.¹⁴ In October of 1938 Narayan received a letter from MacMillan & Company (London) that they had accepted his novel *The Dark Room*, and that copies had been sent to Graham Greene and Somerset Maugham.¹⁵ In 1939 MacMillan informed Narayan that they were interested in further "longer works" from Narayan, but regretted small sales of *The Dark Room*.¹⁶ Although he had succeeded in publishing three novels in England by 1938, due almost exclusively to the efforts of Graham Greene, small sales

continued to haunt Narayan. Through much of 1937, for example, Hamish Hamilton pressed Narayan for money owed them for several hundred copies of *Swami and Friends* that they would have to unload at a cheap price, unless the author wanted them shipped to him and would be willing to pay the postage. Apparently Narayan had requested they be shipped, but defaulted on the reimbursement; after numerous attempts to secure the reimbursement, Hamilton threatened to "put the matter in the hands of our lawyers."¹⁷ Narayan was struggling to make ends meet; he had become responsible for paying the rent on his family home since his father's death in 1937, was supporting his young wife, and was very soon to become a father himself. During this time and into the war years, Narayan continued to receive letters and telegrams from Graham Greene, keeping him apprised of his tirelessly ongoing publication efforts in England. There can be little doubt that because his first several novels sold so little Narayan would have been abandoned by the British publishing firms had Greene not persisted in pressing his own substantial influence on them.

Narayan was dependent upon Greene, not just in the earliest stages of his career, but in many ways throughout most of his career. In a letter dated March 7, 1966 (GGBC), Greene indicates that he is consistently involved with editing proofs of Narayan's manuscripts, cleaning them up substantially before they see print, and although by the mid-1970s it is apparent from Narayan's personal notes, letters, and journal entries that he is fully conscious of his international stature as a writer, is on friendly (non-political) terms with Mrs. Gandhi, and is traveling extensively, still he looked to Greene for affirmation. As late as 1974 Narayan writes to Greene that "with every book...I am full of misgivings and doubts until you read and tell me your opinion of it" (GGBC). When in 1976 Narayan was having considerable difficulty finding a publisher for *The Painter of Signs*, Greene intervened in order to help the author secure a reputable publisher. In a letter to V.S. Naipaul dated May 17, 1976 (GGBC), Greene expresses his frustration and disbelief over this state of affairs. Narayan writes to Greene in June 1977, "I thought it wonderful that the book [*Painter of Signs*] should have such a good reception, especially after being declined by twelve publishers, which is a record even for me!" (GGBC). Why was Greene such a long and determined advocate of Narayan? The two men did not meet until the 1950s and had until then a bond established and maintained only through written correspondence. Did Greene simply support Narayan as a fellow artist as he may have responded to another writer from England, or the United States, or Australia, or some other location, or did Narayan's status as colonial subject factor into Greene's early commitment to the young writer, a commitment that matured into deep admiration and affection over many years? The

evidence of Narayan's debt to Greene is substantial and clear; Greene's motivation for "urging" Narayan on the English print establishment in the early decades is less clear. Greene's sincere enjoyment of Narayan's work is apparent everywhere, but Greene's empathy for the oppressed is also well-known.¹⁸

For his own part, Narayan became a fully engaged manager of his business affairs, alongside his publishers, carefully watching over reprint rights and occasional efforts to transform some of his work to stage or screen.¹⁹ There is a rich record of Narayan's strong practical engagement with business interests in India and in the West, and this engagement is one of the critical keys, together with his prolific production of material, to his success as an author. "Resistance" to the West would almost certainly have forced him down another career path. He found the West intriguing, respected many elements of western, especially English, culture and tradition, and eventually spent time in both Britain and the United States, but always appropriately resented the haughty distance of British colonial administration including members of the Indian Civil Service, as he conveys in his largely historical essay "When India was a Colony", and never personally compromised the habits, traditions, and values of the local culture that shaped him.

Thus far only the "resistance" and not the "submission" that Wyatt refers to in the title of her essay ("Resistance through Sub/Mission...") has been explored, so a final note prompted by this title and thesis is in order. Concerning "submission," she intends the following:

Narayan submitted to and used British culture, but only superficially....[He] could choose to express himself through the novel, which is a European genre; but he used it as a strategic form to 'disclose' his resistance. (202)

Wyatt appears to want it both ways; her essay actually calls attention to the intriguing critical split in assessments of Narayan's socio-political positioning over the years. On the one hand, Narayan is regarded as one who resigns himself to things as they are, of accepting what life doles out (whether economically, politically, or socially), of patiently abiding the events of life;²⁰ on the other hand, Narayan is characterized as consciously and consistently repelling outside, especially western influence, and of advocating traditional culture true to the myths, rituals and village rhythms that serve as its moral/cultural foundation.²¹ Wyatt, well aware of this distinction, and hoping to position Narayan more comfortably and perhaps fashionably in a post-colonial/anti-colonial critical light, advocates his "resistance through submission," which is more semantic play than clear argument. More accurately,

Narayan's essential "Indianness" (if such a thing must be identified) can be recognized not in his rejection of or resistance to westernism, but in both his practicality and his characteristic inclusion or *absorption* of influences, his willingness to meld formative and substantial English language and literary influences with his personal style, vision, and history like "sugar in milk."

Notes

I am grateful for access to the R.K. Narayan special collection at Boston University and to the Graham Greene collection at Burns Library, Boston College. I am also grateful for permission received from the Graham Greene estate, via David Higham Associates, London, to quote from the letters of Narayan and Greene held among Greene's personal documents in the Greene collection.

1. This is clearly reflected in *Swami and Friends*, in which the Tamil pundit is described as the least effective, shabbiest instructor in the Albert Mission School; by contrast, the Headmaster teaches English.
2. Letter held in the R.K. Narayan special collection, Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University (hereafter cited as NCBU).
3. Narayan's approach to characterization is consistent with qualities for which Samuel Johnson praises Shakespeare in his "Preface to Shakespeare" (1765). Johnson notes that Shakespeare offers characters who are at once unforgettable as individuals, but are more importantly "the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find" (493). Narayan enjoyed reading Shakespeare throughout his life.
4. Exceptions to this would be the chapter "Broken Panes" in *Swami and Friends*, Veeraswami's fiery anti-British speech in *The Bachelor of Arts*, and Srinivas's political positions in his publication *The Banner in Mr. Sampath*.
5. See, as representative examples, V.S. Naipaul's often quoted consideration of Narayan's world view as "intensely Hindu" (*India: A Wounded Civilization* 12-13); Anita Desai, "R.K. Narayan and The Grand Malgudi Circus" (3, 9); Satyanarain Singh, "A Note on the World View of R.K. Narayan" 104-09.
6. Daisy's zealous involvement in the population control campaigns of the 1970s might be viewed as an exception.
7. Letter held in the Graham Greene special collection, Burns Library, Boston College (hereafter cited as GGBC).
8. See, for example, Narayan's *My Days*, 115-117; Ram & Ram, chapter 18, "Enter Greene," 143-58.
9. Letter dated 10 August, 1935, NCBU.
10. The book is held in the Greene collection, Boston College.
11. Letter of May 20, 1936, NCBU.
12. Letter from David Higham to Narayan, September 25, 1936, NCBU.
13. Letter, NCBU.
14. Reflected in letter of October, 1937, NCBU.
15. Letter dated October 11, 1938, NCBU.

16. Letter of March 15, 1939, NCBU.

17. Letter dated October 1937, NCBU.

18. As evidence, consider Greene's travels to Mexico to observe the persecution of Catholics, his travels to Kenya to observe first hand the uprising of the Mau Maus, his time spent in Indochina and in dialogue with revolutionaries in Central America and Cuba, etc.

19. The Narayan collection at Boston University contains a considerable number of letters and telegrams, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, displaying Narayan's reaction to requests for reprint rights (normally within India), with responses being returned from the interested parties that the author's fees are too high. In 1961 Harvey Breit and Patricia Rinehart produced a stage rendition of *The Guide*, first performed at both Oxford and Cambridge, but which Narayan subsequently worked to block before it came to New York because he felt it violated the spirit of the novel; legal haggling continued for several years. Pearl Buck and Ted Danielewski also wrote a screenplay of *The Guide*, the rights to which were later assigned to Dev Anand, in India. Similarly, "Lawley Road" was to be filmed in Puerto Rico, which led to further headaches for Narayan, and he abandoned all stage and screen ventures after the difficult experiences of the 1960s.

20. See, for example, M.M. Mahood, "The Marriage of Krishna: Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*," *The Colonial Encounter: A Reading of Six Novels* (64), as well as those sources cited in note 6, above, as representative examples of this critical perspective.

21. See, for example, Rosemary George's claim that Narayan's Malgudi "can be read as...the Utopia of a benevolent Hinduism. The order and pattern that Narayan maintains in his novels constructs a conservative nationalism in its confidence that Hindu India survives assaults of outsiders—be they Muslim or Christian . . . from North India or from England. Hence, all the 'loose' (i.e., immoral, Westernized) women and men in Narayan's novels are outsiders; they do not belong to Malgudi" (123). George's characterization of Narayan's rejection of or resistance to outside influences is consistent with Wyatt's argument describing the novelist's resistance to "Western cultural dominance." George goes on to assert that "Narayan's reiteration of the importance of a traditionally ordered society serves to consolidate the solace offered by Hindu nationalism in 1938, as in 1995" (124).

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Constructions of Englishness from the "Outside": Indian Accounts of Travel to England, 1880s – 1920s

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Colonial discourse theory has increasingly considered the importance of imperial experience in the self-constitution of "England" and "Englishness." In *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, Robert Young argues that

colonialism, in the British example, was not simply a marginal activity on the edges of English civilization, but fundamental in its own cultural self-representation. To date there has been comparatively little analysis of the construction of such a representation. Colonial discourse analysis is placed in the unique position of being able to examine English culture, literature, and indeed Englishness in its widest sense, from its determined position on the margins: not questing for the essence of Englishness but examining the representations it has produced for itself of its Other, against and through which it defines itself, together with the function of such representations in a structure of power in which they are used instrumentally. (174)

The construct of Englishness is incomplete without a consideration of "what 'the Empire' or a part of it, thought of the English" (Colls, intro). Attempting "to understand whose account of Englishness and the national culture was authorised" (Dodd 1) during the emergence of the idea of "Englishness" towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, Phillip Dodd finds that

a great deal of the power of the dominant version of Englishness...lay in its ability to represent both itself to others and those others to themselves....What constituted knowledge, the control and dissemination of that knowledge to different groups, the legitimate spheres and identity of those groups, their repertoire of appropriate actions, idioms and convictions