The Tortoise and the Leopard, or the Postcolonial Muse

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Colonizers' Language/Colonized Language: The Issues at Stake

"You taught me language . . ." assumes that Caliban had no language earlier because he had no language that Prospero could understand. One wonders what his language of communication was before. Does this imply that he did not communicate at all, or that he did so like a non-human? Now that Caliban has learned Prospero's language and even won Bookers and the Nobel using it, does this imprecation still hold true? This brings us to the importance and power of intelligible language while also asking the salient question, intelligible to whom? These are questions that inform the writing of literatures in the colonizers' language and the teaching of those literatures in institutions of the once colonized. I would like to argue, however, that these questions that stem from a literary issue are not confined to literature at all—the power and status of the colonizers' language in the once-colonized country works in complex and subtle ways that permeate the postcolony's social and economic structures. Indeed, the politics of language and its playing out in the interstices of daily life may well be said to characterize the descriptive term postcolonial, a reality that cannot but inflect the work of the academic located in these areas.

In an attempt to understand and theorize these politics, this paper addresses the process of reading the literatures in the language of the colonizer written by the colonized. In all colonized societies, oral and/or written traditions of verbal art existed before the colonizers arrived with their language and the specific structures of socialization based on this language as well as particular hierarchies derived from it. In order to understand the process of production of literatures in the colonizers' language in these societies and offer certain speculations on the communities of reception that these processes interpellate, it is necessary, therefore, to consider the relations between orality and literacy and their implications for development and progress, at the basis of which lies the idea of civilization predicated upon writing and written documentation. I will attempt to show that these fundamental issues, relating to the context and process of producing literatures by the colonized in the colonizers' language, have a crucial bearing upon the academic discipline of literature as it is taught in universities of postcolonial/third world location and elsewhere. As an academic located in India, working on and teaching the literature of Nigeria—two countries that share an erstwhile colonizer and its language—it is of interest to me to see how these similar structures operate in two geographical contexts, in two different literary systems. Both of these are underpinned by a colonial past that bequeathed not only a common educational and cultural policy that included a tradition of language and literature, but also social hierarchies of opportunity and access structured by these policies. This reality leads me, located as I am, to ask whether the seamless singularity of an "English" literature is adequate to study the varieties of English available across the globe. On the other hand, are the rubrics of "postcolonial literatures" or the offensively titled "third world literatures" adequate in methodology? While it is intuitive that the texts from different geopolitical areas, even if written in the same language, must be differently inflected, this is often ignored in many English literature syllabi in my country that pride themselves on opening the canon to include, say, Chinua Achebe. A comparative approach to the study of an English text from India, Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Things,*[1] and one from Nigeria, Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*,[2] enables us to identify the similarities and differences that their respective literary systems represent. Thus before I turn to the actual task of reading the texts that will form the focus of the paper, it is imperative to locate them in the context of the histories of two differing yet related repertoires of colonial practice. Such an approach exposes the fallacy of homogeneity and thereby interrogates the labels "English literature," "postcolonial literature," and "third world literature."

In what follows, I first construct a framework for the teaching of English in India and Nigeria with respect to the cultural and educational policies of the British colonizers in both these areas. Then I locate the texts at the interstice of these policies and the indigenous oral traditions, exploring the position and influence of both upon the production of an Indian and Nigerian literary system, within which the specific texts to be read can be said to function. Next, the reading of the texts compares two literary systems and the position of the colo-

nizers' language in each. I explore the negotiations represented in the texts between the language-world constructed through colonial policy and continued by postcolonial educational policies, and the "vernacular" world that existed before the coming of the colonizers. This helps one to discern the effects of each upon the other, thus delineating the dynamics of the literary process in the colonizers' language and its position within the literary system of the postcolony. Within this framework arise the following questions: Written as these literatures are, in a global language, what is their status in the communities of their origin, and in the global community? What are the epistemological issues involved in reading them? To whom are they addressed and by whom? Ultimately, I would like to raise a question that seems so obvious that we often forget to answer it in our practice: What is the function of the colonizer's language as the vehicle of postcolonial writing? I am arguing that the use of English in postcolonial writing is a political maneuver that must be recognized, for to abstract English from its sociohistorical specificity into the realm of the "universal" that literature so easily becomes would be a strategic silencing at worst, and a naïve obfuscation at best. This is the position from which the following readings proceed.

Colonizers' Languages and Colonial Histories

At the climax of the Nigerian nationalist movement, Charles Buxton, commentator on colonial affairs, reanimated the shared history that a common education policy bestowed upon the subjects of the British empire: "The educated Indian—the babu—was regarded with precisely the same mixture of contempt and jocularity as the educated African of today. Yet what has happened? In less than half a century those babus had become the statesmen of India. They were still a minority but without their consent and cooperation we could no longer carry on the government of India at all."[3] Macaulay's dream of a class that would act as intermediary between the colonizer and the vast mass of the colonized seemed to act as a facilitating mechanism for the theory of Indirect Rule that the British exercised in African colonies. Richard Hailey,[4] whose monumental *African Survey* (1938)[5] investigated the working of this concept espoused by West African colonial administrator Lord Lugard, raised a pertinent question: "Can we be sure of the continuance of that degree of acquiescence in our rule which is a necessary condition of administrative progress?" Hailey had no doubt about the way in which this was to be ensured—rather than "constitution mongering" it would be more worthwhile to "identify potential elites who could be trained to assume enlarged responsibility of the colonial state . . . (these) native authorities (could become) direct heirs of colonial sovereignty."[6] Given this confession, it is evident that the experiments tried out in India were brought to fruition in Africa—one might well see ominous signs, precursors of homogeneity implied in the current discursive label "postcolonial."

One difference was clear to the colonizers, however—the difference predicated upon literacy. At the time of colonial contact, most of sub-Saharan Africa did not possess script culture. India, however, had a tradition of documented literature that predated Christianity and, as the nineteenth-century Indologists[7] discovered, had participated in exchanges with the "classical" Greek world from which European civilization claimed descent. It was difficult to write off the Indians as quite the same kind of barbarians as the Africans. I shall argue that the existence or absence of script culture and its implication in colonial cultural policies are important influences on the Anglophone literature of Nigeria and India. These influences are generic as well as thematic as I shall attempt to discern in the two texts that we here consider—Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Things*.

English came to the Igbos and the Bengalis much before it arrived in the rest of Nigeria and India, respectively. In the latter case, Calcutta was the first city of the empire where English literature as a discipline began its journey.[8] But as Roy herself tells us, the arrival of St. Thomas at Calicut and the conversion of high-caste Brahmans in Kerala to Christianity underwrites her text. The Igbos too adapted easily to the Christianizing influences of the missionaries as well as to the language itself—certainly more easily than the Islamic nations of northern Nigeria.[9] This may well explain the nature of nationalist leadership provided by the Igbos. It could also clarify the reasons for the Igbo-dominated bureaucracies of British-ruled and then independent Nigeria. This led to the transfer of power to the Northerners being seen as the wisest option by the British. The genesis of the Biafran conflict within a decade of Nigeria's independence had its roots in the cultural and political decisions taken by the colonizers.[10] These considerations are important to keep in mind while reading Achebe's work—but one might wonder how they relate to the work of someone who belongs to the following generation like Roy, who was born after Indian independence and who would be more influenced by the policies of the Indian government than by those of the colonizers. An explanation for this might be found in a review of the status of English in the postcolonial India.[11]

The status of English as a language of power in India during the first fifty years of its independence remained the same as in the days of the Raj. The genesis of "modern" India—which is largely English-literate India—is a discontinuous but identifiable process that began with the policies put in place by the colonizers and differently inflected by the largely Western ideals of

progress and development espoused by succeeding political parties who came to power through the democratic system. Whether these parties were given the mandate to pursue these ideals by their rural and agricultural electorate is a matter that is only now being questioned in public. Writers of Roy's generation were products of that developing, modernizing, and increasingly global India. How does this historical context resonate in literary texts both explicitly and implicitly? That is our main consideration in the following section.

Entering the World of the Colonized

When young Adela Quested, as well meaning as they come, wanted to see the "real India,"[11] in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*[12] the collector, Mr. Turton, sent out invitations to a bridge party. It is easy to identify those Indians who were invited. Adela's and Mr. Turton's "real India" was a partial construction based on colonial policies, and the creator of the whole scenario, Edward Morgan Forster, was one among the very few colonials who were acutely aware of this. Forster knew that there was, within the same geographical borders, another India besides the India that spoke and understood English. Perhaps as the natural outcome of his sexual orientation that made him so sensitive to the mechanics of marginalization, Forster not only noticed but also recorded the presence of the magnificent Punkhawallah in the Chandrapore courtroom and the crowds in the bazaars, who, he was careful to point out, were not invited to fraternize with the English. That Forster could record their presence without the usual descriptive apparatus that characterized the Gunga Dins on the one hand and the barbaric hordes on the other lay at the root of the curious, diffident non-answer to his question, "Can an Indian and an Englishman be friends?"[13] With such a start, it is but a step to asking, which Englishman, and which Indian, in a pair of societies so intricately divided along lines of caste. In fact, Roy is quite capable of delineating these divisions, in both the Syrian Christian community in which her novel is set, and in the larger history of the communist movement in Kerala, where the events in the story occur. Velutha, the small man, the mombatti or the tallow stick,[14] so to speak, is almost reminiscent of Forster's Punkhawallah in physique and sex appeal—but with one variation. He is an educated Untouchable, one who can not only sense the historical injustice meted out to him, but also discern the means of redress offered by an ideology that was instrumental in forging European modernity. He is perhaps the result of independence, though there is no evidence of that fact because, as Roy tells us again and again, the landlords who owned his father did him favors as a way to ensure his and his children's endless loyalty, much before independent India officially outlawed Untouchability. But this is a crucial piece of information, this difference between Velutha and his father, who is the one to go to the mother of his mistress, Ammu, and offer her the glass eye that she had arranged to have made for him, out of a sense of shame for what Velutha had done. In his view—ironically, his "view" was constructed literally and metaphorically by vision made possible by the landlord class—the sin of the Untouchable Velutha's sexual liaison with her divorced daughter could only be expiated if he told her the truth and returned the eye she had given him. But Velutha's attitude was a quiet defiance. Velutha had traversed that divide between Touchable and Untouchable, which is seen here as quintessentially Indian, and reached, even if he could not formulate it in his mind, the category of human—quintessentially liberal-modern-Western, and certainly put into circulation in India through the colonizing structures. This was what the independence of India had achieved—it had institutionalized these imported structures in the name of democracy without ensuring or even caring whether they could function. In our experience, independence in a colonized state is actually a colonially defined concept, copied from the colonizers' system almost without adaptation. It taught Velutha his natural rights, but it did not engineer a society that would recognize them. As Roy assiduously points out:

> communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from within the communal divides never challenging them, never appearing not to. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heady mix of eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism, spiked with a shot of democracy.[15]

Did Velutha know this, or did he come to recognize it too late when he had tampered with the laws of love, through his relationship with the Syrian Christian landlord's divorced daughter? It is not the responsibility of literature alone to provide answers—but as Ikem, the writer in *Anthills of the Savannah* says, "A novelist must listen to his characters who after all are created to wear the shoe and point the writer where it pinches."[16] This assumes that the writer can "hear" the same language as the characters, and for the postcolonial writer in the colonizer's language that is an avowedly difficult proposition. Roy is eminently capable of diagnosing this condition:

> Chacko told the twins that though he hated to admit it, they were all Anglophiles. . . . Pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their own history and unable to retrace their steps because their footsteps had been swept away. He explained to them that history was like an old house at night. . . . To understand history," Chacko said, "we have to go inside and listen to what they're saying. And look at the books and the pictures

on the wall. And smell the smells But we can't go in, Chacko explained, because we've been locked out. . . .Our dreams have been doctored. . . . We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. Our sorrows will never be sad enough. Our joys never happy enough. . . . Our lives never important enough to matter.[17] The self-pity of these ramblings, typically brimming with middle-class despair, leaves no possibility of thinking that this might not be wholly true or even generally applicable. The world that is available to Rahel and Estha at the outset is such a world, and the language in which they learn it, and by extension other worlds, belongs to this available one. Here we are in a world written in English, understood in English, and striving to write several worlds that have no access to English. That is the task of the colonized writer using the colonizer's language.

So, if we ask whether the Forsterian invitation extended to Velutha, the answer in Roy's text will be no. Roy recognizes Velutha, his past, his betrayal by history and by his own society—and that, for her, is the source of tragedy. In "post"colonial, literate India, a text like Roy's might only record this betrayal. This is not Velutha's text; it is the text of Rahel, Estha, their mother Ammu or even their family. Velutha exists; he acts; the people from whose perspective the story is told are sympathetic to him—but here seems to be a classic case of the subaltern not being able to speak. What he says cannot be heard by those in whose world he finds himself because in the only language they speak his experience is an unfamiliar one, the experience of the Other. His motives are known only to himself, as are his feelings. His world, the hut where his crippled brother lies all day, where he carves wooden toys for the children, is a refuge whose true potency lies in the fact that it is forbidden. In other words, the writer of this text, like many others, takes the characters she can speak as/for to visit those whom she cannot speak as/for, thereby displaying their (and her own) rejection of the hierarchies that traditional Indian society enforced. Both she and the characters she can speak as/for therefore enunciate their position on the side of modernity, opposed to the superstitions and the prejudices that neither they nor the harbingers of modernity, the colonizers themselves, can understand or condone. It also gives rise to the uncharitable speculation that Velutha exists in this text in order to ensure that this modernity has the opportunity to set itself against prejudice and superstition, thereby proving its credentials and vindicating itself.

This is not to argue that these hierarchies and prejudices are part of some pristine tradition that must be approved only because they are apparently "Indian." Rather, it is to state the obvious—the perspective of the writer and a set of her characters is limited by the language in which she and they have thought through these categories, a language that opposes tradition with modernity and then aligns the bad and the good accordingly. Velutha, the reader might argue, also shares in this differentiation. And the reader would be right—Velutha's tragedy is in fact an alienation from this world and his spurning by the new world that he has identified as one that will redress the injustice done to him. In fact, that is the only role that Velutha can play in a text of this sort, and his end is the only end that can be envisaged for him in such a text. But this conclusion still does not answer the question whether, in a text where he can be heard, this would necessarily have been the case. Are the likes of Velutha fulfilled only when they are accepted by the world of modernity? How do they negotiate success in such a world, or are they condemned to die as Velutha does in this text?

Roy's intentions are clear from the quote she uses from John Berger at the head of the text, "No longer can a single story be told as if it is the only one." But it can be counterposed with another from Martin Heidegger[18] "Language speaks, man listens, but he can't hear everything." Heidegger underlines the necessity of translating oneself into the thought of the other language. In the postcolonial situation, however, the other language is often the Other's language too—and despite the best intentions of the writer, hearing is overlaid by historical and social factors. The technology of writing served initially to fix texts in a single authoritative version, grant the privilege of authorship denied in the fluidity of the oral milieu, but in fashioning the book as a thing, an artifact, writing as technology also puts constraints on the one who writes. This constraint Roy acknowledges: "for practical purposes in a hopelessly practical world . . ."(Roy 34). The story has to begin somewhere and continue until the last page arrives. This is not the oral situation of the marketplace or the fireside; this is not even the endless tale of the Kathakali that Roy contrasts to the commercial tourist-beguiling truncated editions, of classics made easy for "imported attention spans."[19] Even with the best of intentions, the many-layered world that the postcolonial writer chooses to represent is contained in a single language. And it is again, of necessity, a world that may not function in a single linear causality or according to a single linear time scale, but as it is a written world, it must begin and end, even if does not have a designated middle. And so, the writer works with these constraints—and her virtuosity lies in her manipulation of them. For, all the worldviews and discourses jostling for space in the single-story-multiply-told cannot be given equal space and equal voice, despite the writer's intentions. It is her voice and her judgment of worth that finally arranges these discourses into a hierarchy—and in the unraveling of this hierarchy lies the postcolonial writer's assessment of her chosen language.

To address this issue, perhaps we can turn to two episodes in Achebe's text. The Oxford-educated poet and journalist Ikem Osodi is currently the editor of the National Gazette, a position that carries with it considerable power, the power that the press is supposed to wield in a democracy. Except that in Kangan, the fictitious state in which Achebe sets his story, a constitutional head of state has just declared himself President for Life, supposedly in the best interests of the country. In the "Referendum" that follows this professedly reluctant self-elevation, Ikem's home province of Abazon is the only one that does not oblige by voting in favor of Life Presidentship. The reason for this is enunciated by the Old Man who comes with the delegation of Abazonians to meet the Life President when their region is wracked by a drought after the President has stopped the laying of water lines there, following their No vote. He says,

> When we were told two years ago to vote for the Big Chief so that he could rule for ever and ever and all kinds of people we had never seen came running in and out of our villages asking people to say yes, I told my people: we have Ossodi in Bassa. If he comes home and tells us that we should say yes, we will do so because he is there as our eye and ear. I said: if what these strange people are telling us is true, Osodi will come or he will write in his paper and our sons will read it and know it is true.[20]

Ikem is English-educated, but he remains a son of Abazon. Indeed they look upon him as their eye and ear, someone who is, through his education, capable of interpreting modernity for them, in order to facilitate their survival in changing times. The Abazonians are small men, traditional and perhaps full of prejudices—but they are survivors who will not succumb to tragedy without struggle. And like practical people who use all the strategies at their disposal in times of war, they have no qualms about using English and the person who can deal in it as weapons for their own survival. As the same old man explains, "A dancing masquerade in my town used to say, It is true that I do not hear English but when they say Catch am nobody tells me to take myself off as fast as I can."[21] The very use of English here is different from the usual, and this reveals a conceptual apparatus that underlies the very act of cognition itself, rooted in orality rather than in a script culture—the word for understanding and knowing (which we now realize are inherently "literate" terms, so to speak) is "hear." Knowing or understanding a language or, by extension the world-view encapsulated by it, is being able to "hear" it. This hearing is necessary for survival even when the milieu has changed.

African writers in colonizers' languages have been conscious of taking a step into uncertainty by using these languages. For them, these are not only different languages, but different orders of living. For example, in the Senegalese Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'aventure Ambigue*,[22] a novel about the coming of the French school to the Diallobe peoples, the elders of the community decide to send the future prince, Samba Diallo, to France to be educated so that he may learn from the colonizers the art "of being victorious even when you are not in the right."[23] The colonizers' language has its uses and those uses cannot be denied any longer. The negotiations made with the language of power underwrite the strategies of survival. There is a specific role for those who can communicate in the colonizer's language. This underwrites their use of this language and circumscribes the content and form of all such commu nication. In Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Matigari*[24] too, all the workers on the plantation contribute to send one of their sons to the white man's school—the fact that he turns into a comprador, betraying his own people and furthering his own ends shows that he is an ingrate who has not fulfilled his responsibility to his benefactors. And so, those like Ikem or Chris or Beatrice in Achebe's text who have learned to use the language with facility have a duty to the country, to the mass of the people who have neither the means nor, if their duty is fulfilled, the need to acquire a foreign tongue.

Achebe's position in the language debate in African literatures is illustrated by the responsibilities he outlines for the English-educated elite in this text. And in the process, he outlines the responsibilities of the anglophone African writer as well. As the two taxi drivers who come to meet Ikem say:

> But na for we small people he de write everytime. I no sabi book but I sabi say na for we this oga de fight, not for himself. He na big man. Nobody do fuckall to him. So he fit stay for him house, chop him oyibo chop, drink him cold beer, put him airconditioner and forget we. But he no do like that. So we come salute him.[25]

This may be contrasted with the position of the English language and those proficient in it in Roy's text. At the outset it must be stated that there is no homogenous Kerala, no seamless Syrian Christian community, no typical traditional landlord family in the text—there is none of the ironic exoticization of the locales of one's childhood that has become an irritating feature in Indian writing in English. The differences that wrack the world she writes about and their interaction that sets up a chain of events slowly entwining around one another and then branching out, hydra-headed into directions beyond the control of single causes or effects or controls, weave the texture of reality in the novel. However, as Strathern[26] points out,

> The West forever tries to access (the counterworld of concrete individuals and natural forms and stubborn non-linguistic forms) through composing and decom-

> posing language itself—to trick it into revealing the unintended. . . . Among the images pressed into the service of critical reflection is the tenacious Western sense that experience gives the individual access to a vantage point from which to apprehend the constrained nature of the world. Seen as an amalgam of conflicting and alternative elements, the internal heterogeneity of social life provides the spaces through which the critic can slip. It is not that individuals and experiences are free from constraints themselves (clearly they are artefacts dependant on certain discourses). Rather one instance, one set of values, precepts, images—is ever equivalent to the whole of perceived reality. The non-equivalence of language (or culture) to life is the starting point. . . . This suggests a multiplication of possible forms where refiguring must always depend on another perspective. . . . (The) west has an investment in the metaphor of language as carrier of culture and culture texted like a language.[27]

The colonizer's language is called upon to perform this feat in the texts written in it—access the worlds foreign to it and then translate them for those who read that language, and often enough, none other. These texts therefore have to deal with recalcitrant realities that cannot be contained by the conceptual worlds of that language yet must somehow be expressed in it. It is a slippery path that writers must tread, and their negotiations reveal the compromises that are inherent in their own positions, even while they attempt to extend themselves into these recalcitrant realities. For Roy's protagonist Rahel, the love-affair with the English language begins precociously as her mother reads her Kipling, her Rhodes scholar uncle makes her look up meanings of words that must then be looked up in turn, and her great aunt insists on perfect "per NUN see ya shun" for all English read, including Shakespeare. No wonder then that the English visitor to Kangan, Achebe's fictitious African state admits, "I understand that the best English is written these days by either the Africans or the Indians. And that the Japanese or Chinese are not too far behind."[28] No wonder also that Rahel's English cousin Sophie, despite being born and brought up in England and being older by two years than Rahel and her twin Estha, has no idea what their grandaunt is talking about when she quotes from Ariel's song in *The Tempest*. Rahel and Estha not only are conversant with the canon, even the popular English of Elvis Presley and *Sound of Music* are part of the language-world they inhabit. It is completely unintentional, perhaps, but the mockery that underlies the Keralite pronunciation of Comrade Pillai's niece as she recites "Lochinvar" or his son who declaims, "Friends Romans Countrymen . . ." is contrasted with Rahel and Estha's facility for the language, carefully nurtured by their family members. It is true that they also have a Malyalam teacher, and they are suitably disgruntled when the Australian missionary Miss Mitten admits she has no idea that Malyalam is a language—she thought people in Kerala spoke Keralese. But the story told from the perspective of a pair of children who have grown up nurtured on the English language satirizes both the Indian usages as well as the Indian pronunciation. This position inadvertently mirrors the author's own. In her hybrid, fittingly postcolonial prose sprinkled with local witticisms and Hindi usages, the failed anglophiles come in for criticism only because they have tried to internalize the language and failed, yet do not know the extent of their failure—or they have internalized too well like Chacko, the Rhodes scholar uncle, who is forever metaphorically wedded to the "mother country" in his inability to consign to the past his English ex-wife. The writer is none of these, and there is an ambiguous silence about Rahel, Estha and Ammu, their mother, whose choices in life, it might be said, led to the children's language ability. This ability is itself a shield against the world that harshly judges the divorcée and her fatherless children. The extent of this harshness is intensified by their grandparents' wealth (to which they and their mother have no claim, as they have no "Locusts Stand I"), their ability to read the language backwards and their mother's discovery of sexual pleasure with the Untouchable Velutha, when society demands that she, as a failed wife, remain celibate. It would be reading too much to categorize the traditional world that does not traffic in English, or at least fails to do so if it tries, as evil. Yet it is this world, cunning, conniving, hypocritical, and without a facility for English, that oppresses both Velutha and Ammu and her children, in various degrees. In this Roy is representative of a generation that hungers to reconnect with its roots because they have, four decades after independence, discovered the subterfuge of mental colonization long after the political reality has been transformed. But how is this connection to be made? Because it is overlaid by a language they have learned well, the past is now no longer accessible in any other language. Ammu's children are surely part of the generation whose "mother tongue" cannot but be English—their father is a Bengali, their paternal grandfather an Oxford Blue, their mother a Syrian Christian from Kerala. The language of communication at home, though nowhere is it mentioned in the novel, can only be the "link language" that the colonizer brought in order to bind the varied country together. The culture that this hybrid English spawns, then, is the culture of a "modernity" that asks for progress, agitates for rights of Untouchables, women, and minorities, but more often than not in a language and from a conceptual repertoire inaccessible to those groups. One is reminded of an early essay, "The Novelist as Teacher," in which Achebe says:

> Because of our largely European education we may be pardoned for thinking that the relation between European writers and their audience will automatically replicate itself in Africa. We have learnt from Europe that a writer or an artist lives on the fringe of society. . . which in turn looks on him with suspicion if not hostility . . . I am assuming of course, that a writer and his society live in the same place.[29]

Two questions arise immediately. First: is this a condition that exists in all postcolonial literatures written in English? We can further complicate this question by asking if there are differences across colonies ruled by different European powers and, therefore, heir to different literary systems and colonial policies of education and culture. But here we will consider only the case of English, not from a mistaken assumption that because they are written in English, a Nigerian novel and an Indian novel must be basically similar—an assumption that underlies the inclusion of both such novels in the revamped English literature courses of many an Indian university. For one thing, the status of pidgin in Achebe's text, and in the work of many other Nigerian writers, merits consideration. As language is a marker of class in the postcolonial situation, so the taxi drivers, Gelegele market women, people who live in the rural areas speak this language that they have forged out of the encounters between their own and the language that the colonizer tried to use as a divisive force and a source of power. In a sense this is a creative subversion of a mechanism of power of which many Nigerian writers have made maximum use. The historical reason for this may be that a particular class of people, especially among the urban Yoruba, had to develop a means of communication to facilitate trade, their chief means of livelihood. In a Nigeria forced into being by colonial administrative convenience, where Igbas and Ijaw, Hausa and Yoruba had to live side-by-side as Nigerian despite their manifest cultural and linguistic differences, what else could have been the common language of communication? In Wole Soyinka's[30] plays like *The Road* or *The Beatification of Area Boy*, set in the underbelly of modern urban Africa, pidgin is almost the lingua franca—it is definitely the language of the people. Another possibility is that a vast number of ordinary people who may not have come into contact with English in colonial times did so following the oil-boom in Nigeria. Besides these factors, from the time that Christianity spread in the area that later became Nigeria, there was the production of chapbooks written in what can be called "incorrect" English that fueled the huge Onitsha market book trade in Igboland. These books were written in English ostensibly, but their idiom and their grammar owed more to the locally spoken language than to the King's (or Queen's) English. The beginnings of English writing in Nigeria[31] may have had a consciously correct yet idiomatic writer like Achebe himself, but it also included a consciously incorrect Amos Tutuola and a Chief Fagunwa, who used the Roman script to write *The Forest of a Thousand Demons* in Yoruba. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the central characters who returned from England to be employed in powerful positions speak in pidgin quite unselfconsciously. Ikem is even involved with Elewa, whose mother sells tie-dye cloth in the Gelegele market and therefore cannot speak anything else but pidgin. There is no hierarchization of English and non-English here, though there remains the satirizing of the anglophiles like Beatrice's father and the naïve student who turns obedient Life President, His Excellency Sam himself. While the former is presented as a domestic and professional tyrant, Sam's rise over his one-time friends, Chris and Ikem, is reminiscent of the succumbing of many postcolonial African states to an individual's lust for personal power. Perhaps this is the beginning of the process that produces, almost twenty years later, the issues of democracy corrupted for personal ends, the lie of independence, that Rahel identifies and her creator decides to struggle against. But in the meantime, the means of the struggle, the very terms on which the struggle must be understood and the strategies framed, have changed, such that now the language in which she must frame them is permeated with the apparatus of modernity. This apparatus, needless to say, needs correct English to decipher and operate.

The difference between Achebe's and Roy's texts outlined above is predicated upon two different cultural histories, two different applications of colonial policy (albeit by the same colonizer) and two different literary histories in the colonizer's language in two separate locations. It is also predicated on the difference between the vitality and availability of the oral milieu in the lives and minds of British-educated writers in each country. I would argue that the distance between the oral and literate traditions is greater in the Indian situation, for several reasons. There already existed a distance historically—the accessibility of education and literacy in Sanskrit existed long before the coming of the colonizer. The colonial encounter, in some places supported this education, and in others created an elite through education in English. The colonial language as well as the colonial religion were used in some cases to escape the entrenched indigenous divisions and in others to further accentuate those divisions. As Roy points out in the case of Christian converts of the higher caste and the lower caste in Kerala:

> Twenty per cent of Kerala's population were Syrian Christians, who believed they were the descendants of the one hundred Brahmins whom St. Thomas the Apostle converted to Christianity when he travelled East after the Resurrection. Structurally, Marxism was a simple substitute for Christianity.[32]

> When the British came to the Malabar, a number of Paravans, Pellayas and Pulayas . . . converted to Christianity and joined the Anglican Church to escape Untouchability. . . . It didn't take them long to realise that they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. They were made to have separate churches, with separate services and separate priests. . . . After Independence they found they were not entitled to any Government benefits like job reservations, or bank loans at low interest rates, because officially, on paper, they were Christians and therefore casteless.[33]

The distance from the oral milieu grew gradually and relative to the penetration of script culture—the first generation of English literates were closer to the oral milieu than the second generation of their children, even as the first generation were further from it than their own parents who had perhaps been educated mainly in the local language. In the case of Africa, how ever, this relative distance was shorter than in the Indian milieu. Primarily, this was because in African colonies the oral milieu persisted until the colonizers had entered the areas and established the structures of differentiation, which occurred, especially in the case of rural areas, at a much later date than in India. The establishment of European spheres of influence did not occur systematically until the Berlin Conference of the mid 1880s, and the span of colonial statehood was much shorter than in India. The spread of the colonial language was, therefore, also comparatively more restricted, and those who came within its grasp were as much rooted in the oral milieu as those who were outside of it. Writers of Achebe's generation were certainly closer to the oral milieu than those of Roy's, but in the former case, the status of English was also inflected by the expectations of the oral or "vernacular" milieu of the writer's society and the writer's conscious attempts to fulfill those expectations. One might say that the shorter period of colonial rule in Africa did not really give English a chance to "settle" and become internalized in large parts of British ruled Africa. This was not the case, however, with French, where the policy of "assimilation" was strictly enforced to create black French *citoyens*, in roughly the same period of time. In contrast to Achebe's milieu, in Roy's case, not only is the writer more historically distanced from the oral milieu, but her class position is also underpinned by this distance. Her identity is, in fact, constructed on the basis of both language use and the hierarchy of opportunities and access that her class position makes available to her. Therefore, even in a delicately sensitive delineation of difference and hybridity like Roy's, there is the possibility of exoticization or of satire when the "good tradition" and the "bad tradition" are depicted. The reason is that the author does not live in the same world as do most of her Indian characters. Similar criticisms have been made about Achebe as well, for much the same reasons, with respect to his failure to delineate gender ideology and relationships among the Igbo before the coming of the colonizers. Nzegwu argues that Achebe's representation of gender and relationships is more Christianized than the reality of Igboland.[34] This has led to a mistaken portrayal of gender organization among the Igbo. A similar argument can be made against most Indian writers in English: that the milieu they are familiar with is limited by the cultural politics of colonization, and when they attempt to step beyond that limitation, they produce the user-friendly, essentialized India of the bestsellers.

The second question is: what then does one expect from the English writer in a postcolonial society? To the latter, Achebe's poet-journalist Ikem Osodi had replied, when asked to give solutions to problems that he diagnosed in Kangan: "Writers do not give prescriptions, they give headaches."[35] But ultimately, it is Achebe himself who has a few strategies to offer to the likes of Beatrice, Chris, and Ikem—strategies that they realize are available to them as British-educated elites who hold power in the capital city of Bassa, far removed from the hardships that the rest of the people face, both in the less affluent streets of Bassa and in the rural areas along the Great North Road. As the taxi driver Braimoh says, "To succeed as small man be no small thing."[36] And indeed the novel abounds in characters who actually succeed as small men, whether in Bassa or in drought-ravaged Abazon. These are characters who have chosen survival above all, and in their choice, not heroic, not earth shattering but simple and quotidian, they are the stuff from which the texture of this text is woven. "The world belongs to the people of this world and not to any caucus, however talented."[37] At different points in the text, each of the three characters who are members of the elite face a reality different from the one that they are used to. For Ikem and Chris, it comes once when they are castigated by Beatrice at different points. In the end, indeed, Beatrice and Elewa survive, as does Ikem's little daughter, named Amichiena. This is a man's name, but the friends who gather around to name her do not care. The meaning of the name, "the path shall not close," is more important than its gender. And the giv ing of a man's name to a woman is only the culmination of what Beatrice had pointed out to both Chris and Ikem in the early stages of the novel: "It is not enough that women should be a court of last resort because the court of last resort is a damned sight too far and too late."[38] This is only part of the issue, however; the delegation from Abazon, the taxi drivers of Bassa, the urchins in the market, are in an unenviable situation, but their primary concern is to survive amidst insurmountable odds. This is where the contrast with Roy's relentless tragedy is even starker. The children who grow up

in Roy's somber world of divisions, exploitation, and domination learn its true colors too soon adding poignance to the tragedy initiated by the Love Laws. There is no way out in Roy's text—hence Estha's literally mute acceptance and the despair in Rahel's eyes that her American husband misunderstands because

> he didn't know that in some places like the country Rahel came from various kinds of despair competed for primacy. And that personal despair could never be desperate enough. That something happened when personal turmoil dropped by at the wayside shrine of the vast violent, circling driving ridiculous insane unfeasible public turmoil of a nation. Then Big God howled like a hot wind and demanded obeisance. Then Small God. . . . came away cauterized, laughing numbly at his own temerity. Inured by the confirmation of his own inconsequence, he became resilient and truly indifferent. . . . Because Worse Things had happened. In the country that she came from, poised between the terror of war and the horror of peace, Worse Things kept happening.[39]

There can be no argument with this because the very tone of these pronouncements will easily translate into the never-to-be-argued-with stuff of myths and legends. The use of capitals—perhaps a satirical ploy, perhaps a conscious effort to actually mythologize—adds to this sense that a final verdict has been uttered and a final explanation given, which will resonate throughout time. Why do Velutha, Ammu, the children misjudge the strategies of survival; why do they fail to see what is engulfing them? Is it Velutha's education, whether in Malayalam or English, that misleads him? Is the episode of marriage enough to turn Ammu into an incurable cynic and thereby render her vulnerable? Neither of them fit into the real world they inhabit, but they do not know it; they trust too much and cannot discern the worse things that are about to befall them.

Yet Kangan is no stranger to Worse Things. One of the two male characters at the center of the novel Ikem is eliminated in state custody, and the other, Chris, dies farcically on the Great North Road. Despair is not in short supply in a country where there is a Life President who can withhold development from people as punishment for not voting for him, a country where the president is "lost," but that does not faze the people, for "We go make another President. That one no hard."[40] What is it then that prompts the riotous naming ceremony at the end, where Elewa's uncle is moved to comment "You young people what you will bring the world to is pregnant and nursing a baby at the same time. . . . In you young people our world has met its match. Yes! You have put the world where it should sit.[41]" And despite the death of her father before she is born in the aftermath of a coup, the little girl mothered by Elewa and named by the whole group is "the daughter of all of us."[42] The despair that darkens Roy's text, the hopelessness in Ammu's unfulfilled dreams and her lonely, wretched death, the uncontrollable onrush of fate like the dark waters of the Meenachal seem a world away from the naming ceremony in which the disease rampant in Kangan is not only acknowledged, but a cure is sought as well:

> We have seen too much trouble in Kangan since the whiteman left because those who make plans make plans only for themselves and their families. . . . I say there is too much fighting in Kangan, too much killing. But fighting will not begin unless there is first a thrusting of fingers into eyes. Anybody who wants to outlaw fights must first outlaw the provocation of fingers thrust into eyes.[43]

This is the qualitative difference between the worlds of the two texts—democracy has survived in India for fifty odd years, but the Indian writer who writes in English cannot see the way forward. Nigeria has had a civil war, secession, oil wars, public executions, exiled writers, assassinated writers and military dictatorships, yet somehow, the writer finds a path to clear.

Whose World? Whose Text? Whose Language?

Elspeth Probyn points out:

> We understand experience from the categories which have emerged from the experience of it. But if we explore how these categories came to be produced how we are constituted through our experience, how we came to be gendered, raced, classed through experience, we may open up space for systemic understanding of process. We can see how our experience and understanding of who we are are always known and interpreted through the discourses and representations available to us. . . . [Our] positions [are] constantly shifting, but limited by structure.[44]

There seems to be some kind of structural limitation that characterizes the work of even a writer as perceptive as Roy, and this limitation has to do with the experience of language and history. For Achebe, the world of the small man is a world to be learned from—it cannot be experienced first hand, but without taking it into account, the society in which the British-educated writer finds himself does not exist.

The English language, or at least the version of it that Indian writers use, consciously highlights the distance between "bad" and "good" English. In the case of Indian writers in English, this translates into the degree of competence the character exhibits in using the English language, which in turn shows her position in the textual hierarchy. Good English users, like Roy's Ammu and her children, are generally focalizers of the story, the positions that the author takes as her own. Others are, quite simply, "others." Therefore there exists no middle space like the pidgin of Achebe, where there is no hierarchy

based on correct and incorrect usage of the colonizer's language. This, I have argued, is the result of generations of English literacy in India, and the role of that literacy in the class hierarchy. The colonizers manipulated this literacy hierarchy with the introduction of their own language and created a difference based on the ability or inability to use the language as they did themselves. The cultural distance of an English-educated writer from the existing oral milieu is therefore comparatively greater in semi-urban India than it is in a society like Achebe's where script culture entered later and did not find an existing hierarchy based on literacy upon which to graft its divisive tactics. These differences are refracted in the worlds that the writers from these regions mediate in their texts. Even when they use the same language, in some cases, as in Roy's, the writer's apprehension of the world of the text is even unintentionally that of a person who understands certain realities but with reference to a world-view different from the one within which these realities exist and have context-specific meanings Perhaps this is why Roy's awareness of the Worse Things does not involve the personal—there is a conflict between the large and the small, indeed an intimidation of the concerns of the latter by the gigantic indifference of the former. Perhaps one hears the echo of the Marabar caves once more, where "pathos piety courage" are all reduced, the "boom, (where) everything exists, nothing has value."[45] In relation to India, that is symptomatic of the uncomprehending mess/muddle/mystery that is the universe. This is the stereotypical India—ancient, mythical, legendary, and above all devoid of people who live, breathe and survive despite the so-called Worse Things.

I have argued that this India of the English writer's experience is quirky, idiosyncratic, even magically real—but it is not the India that inhabits the literatures written in other Indian languages. In contrast, the Nigerian writer in English presents a society that is a living, breathing organism, exercised by small ordinary fears and hopes, vices and virtues. Is this because India is an ancient civilization, because it is rich in (documented) philosophical traditions, because it truly embodies an impersonal historical or mythical force? By this time, the discerning reader will note that all these descriptions are paraphrases of Orientalist or Indologist essentializations, brought into currency in the nineteenth century and still deployed by a certain variety of scholarship. Does the Indian writer in English belong to these schools and accept their formulations? Or is it that her education in the colonizer's language has provided her with a conceptual apparatus that, even against her will, must filter all her experience and its mediation?

Speaking in the Colonizers' Language:
The Postcolonial Muse

To me, as an academic firmly entrenched in a university in the "developing world," in an Indian department of comparative literature, this is the most crucial theoretical and ethical issue in the discourse of postcolonialism in general, and postcolonial literature (in singular) in particular. The language of postcolonial literatures is an issue indeed, but it is not language alone—rather it is what the language taught to us by the colonizers has revealed to its users, and as a result, what it has shielded. In terms of orality, we might say that this language has taught us to hear only certain things and rendered us deaf to others. Are courses in postcolonial literatures, even in the plural, equipped to animate the unheard? Where, within the single language that we use for purely functional purposes, is the space for most of us whose lives are lived in more languages than one? A "third world"/"postcolonial"/"developing world" person inhabits more language-worlds than one, and if the Indian writer in English does not feel comfortable in more than a single one of these, despite her best intentions, she runs the risk of essentializing the unknown or intensely personalizing the intimate. But the personal, whether tragic or farcical, is in the final analysis, written in the fabric of history. Changes in this script can only be authored by history's shifting movement—or these changes can themselves act as deep, tectonic forces that redirect history's flow. As the Old Man from Abazon says,

> When we are young and arrogant we all imagine that the story of the land is easy, that every one of us can get up and tell it. True we all have little scraps of tale bubbling in us. But what we tell is like the middle of a mighty boa which the foolish forester mistakes for a tree trunk and settles on to take his snuff . . . .[46]

The writer, the teller of stories, is chosen by Agwu, the god of diviners and healers, who chalks the writer's eye and dips his tongue in the brew of prophecy. Thus the teller of stories becomes

> . . . the liar who will sit inside his thatch and see the moon hanging in the sky outside. Without stirring from his stool he will tell you how the commodities are selling in the marketplace. His chalked eye will see every blow in a battle he never fought.[47]

Does the writer command the story then? Are we all folds in the imagination of some author or other, does anything exist outside the telling, outside narration?

> The story is our escort. Without it we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, and neither do we the story. Rather it is the story that owns and directs us. It is the thing that makes us different from cattle; it is the mark on the face that sets one people apart from others.[48]

Does the text written in the colonizer's language convey, these marks of difference that sets "one people apart from others"? Does it engage with the indispensable

relationship between the small and the big, the forced divisions of the "personal" and the "public"? If it does, its language matters little. And if the critic who reads these texts and the teacher who teaches them has access to tools and strategies that can unpack this relationship, then by all means the postcolonial literature courses are valid forms of knowledge. However, if the texts themselves do not hear the multilingual resonances in the worlds they purport to inhabit, if they, despite the best intentions of their authors, hear the "other" through the frame of the "self," one language through auto-translation into another, then there is every reason to wonder at their status as national literatures.

I am bemused by the great efforts of the teaching machines of the West to encapsulate, literally, the experience of multicultural societies with the different degrees of implication within various structures of colonial rule and different political agendas, manipulated to fit into artificial models. What is of further and deeper concern is the attempt by single literature departments within universities in my own country to twist themselves into untenable positions where literature is named only by the language in which it is written. I have argued in what has gone before that the language may be indispensable to literature, but it is not the only element of a text. Language is the medium—and in teaching both Roy and Achebe as parts of an English literature course, we do no better than the well-meaning but naïve homogenization that is inherent within the categories of "Third World Literature" or "Postcolonial Literature." Indeed, adding an 's' to those designations does not absolve us or solve anything—it does not even begin to address the issues that a comparative methodology must take as its starting point. The variety of the locations in which the English language is used must be considered in their cultural and historical specificity, even while acknowledging that the language is English. Is it the same English? And is it the same postcoloniality? And most crucially, is it postcoloniality at all? It is only a comparative methodology that can ask and even begin to answer this question, and it is the question I raise with regard to not only English literature as discipline in my country, but also postcolonialism as a discipline in Western universities. How "post" is colonialism if the structures of meaning and the conceptual apparatus that animate it are still wedded to the colonizers' worldview? It is not only a question of language use: even within texts in the colonizers' language there are differences, which I have attempted to explore. The question is one of method and ethics—if postcolonialism as reading strategy can only proceed by way of a comparative methodology, what is the rationale for the separateness of English literature and/or postcolonialism? Why not call it comparative literature instead? The survival of various disciplines is a matter of power and turf—perhaps this matters more than changing realities. Is it possible to ignore the specificities of various "third" world, and by extension various "post"colonial locations, in order to posit some Grand Theories about either? In our attempt to pluralize and allow everyone a voice, are we not subsuming all the voices into the centralized hegemonic Grand Design, which had silenced them in the first place? Any postcolonialism must necessarily be comparative—it cannot and need not be all encompassing, but it must locate its objects of study and then locate itself.

Yet this is a prescriptive stance—as an inhabitant of a postcolonial society it would be more pertinent to ask what ethical and political concerns I bring to my pedagogical practices in dealing with texts written about postcolonial societies in the colonizer's language. What would I point out to my students as the task of the "post"colonial writer in the colonizer's language? Which is the muse that presides over the creation of these texts? Addressing these questions involves ethical implications for the writing and teaching of literatures of "post"colonial societies in locations both metropolitan and peripheral. The Old Man of Abazon tells the story of the leopard that had been stalking the tortoise for a long time.

> Finally he caught up with him and said, "prepare to die". The tortoise asked for some time to prepare himself. The leopard saw no harm in granting this wish. Then the tortoise went into strange action on the road scratching with hands and feet and throwing sand vigorously in all directions. "Why are you doing that?" asked the puzzled leopard. The tortoise replied: Because even after I am dead I would want anyone passing by this spot to say, yes, a fellow and his match.[49]

The struggles of the gods of small things who must survive keep a nation, a people, a society alive. But if the postcolonial writer in the colonizer's language does not have the means or the medium to connect with these personal struggles that sustain the larger world where the god of big things rules, if she cannot discern the relationship between these two worlds and mistakes it for mere domination on the one hand and cowering acceptance on the other, she is left with nothing but despair, nothing more or less than tragedy. This is a romantic, individualized reading of the many divisions, the many differences and the many injustices that make up the fabric of a society where past hierarchies are but overlaid by present, indigenous ones by foreign—a society that one may well describe as postcolonial. How it came to be, how it functions, how it makes and unmakes structures of meaning are questions that postcolonial writers and critics in the colonizers languages have taken it upon themselves to answer. The Kathakali dancers who stopped in the temple at Ayemenen even in the low

season of June did so because despite having to perform for the "imported attention spans" of the foreign tourists at resorts, they felt the need to practice their art in its fullness simply in order to survive. So at the temple there, despite their ragged, tired unglamorous accessories, they performed entire cycles. Ayemenen was not a ritually important temple, but it was adopted by the dancers as they saw it as a survival strategy. Like the tortoise, even as they faced the inexorable power of the Big Things that were choking the life out of them, they did not want history to record that they had given in without a struggle. And outside her text, Roy herself has become identified with at least one such struggle where the postcolonial state's ideology of progress and development seems to have met its match. The small men, in this case, have taken on the god of big things and held it at bay for many years now. Does this struggle not merit a novel? Or shall we accept that English, the language of the colonizers has nothing "post" colonial about it—that it still colonizes the minds of its users, especially those who use it well? Can the postcolonial writer, after all, speak for herself even when she uses the colonizers' language? Or does the latest version of Empire still speak in her voice?

NOTES

Special thanks to the editors, without whose tireless efforts and constant encouragement, this essay, to misquote Roy, would not have been *this* essay.

[1]Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (Delhi: India Ink, 1997). All quotations are from this edition and are cited in the text as *God* with page numbers following.

[2]Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1987). All quotations are from this edition and are cited in the text as *Anthills*, with page numbers following.

[3]Charles Buxton quoted by J. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 185. Besides this, several instances of the India factor can be found in contemporary Nigerian history; for instance Richard Hailey, whose survey of West Africa explored the working of Lugard's concept, is quoted in Coleman, *Nigeria* as saying that in 1937, "one encounters a class which more definitely resembles the Indian politician type than can be seen in the rest of Africa." The West Africans themselves are aware of the similarities. The League of Coloured peoples founded in 1931 records in its proceedings the exhortation by H. O. Davies, "We should follow the example of India—the only way out is for the Africans to cooperate and make sacrifices in the struggle for freedom" quoted in Coleman, *Nigeria*, 203.

[4]Richard Hailey, Native Administration in the British African Territories 1950–53, vol. 4 of A General Survey of the System of Native Administration, 1st ed. (London: His/Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1954).

[5]Hailey, *Native Administration.*

[6]Richard Hailey, "Native Administration and Political Development in British Tropical Africa" (NAPD, chap. 1, submitted as cyclostyle March 1941 C.O. 047/21/47100/1).

[7]See for instance S. N. Balgangadhara, "The Heathen in His Blindness," *Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

[8]This process is described from the Indian point of view in G. Vishwanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); and specifically with reference to Bengal in S. Bandyopadhyay, *Gopal-Rakhal Dwanda Samas Upanibeshbad o Bangla Shishu Sahitya* (Calcutta: Papyrus, 1990).

[9]On the establishment of Christian churches in Igbo land and the reactions to it, see J. E. Flint, "Nigeria: The Colonial Experience From 1880–1914" in *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1914*, vol. 1, ed., P. Gann and H. Duignan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1962), 220–259. See also *Continuity and Change in African Culture* J. Herskovitz and W. Bascom eds. (Chicago: University Press, 1965).

[10]For accounts of the divisive colonial policies in Nigeria and their effects, see H. L. Bretton, *Power and Stability in Nigeria: The Politics of Decolonisation* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger 1962); K. Post and M. L. Vickers *Structure and Conflict in Nigeria 1960–1966* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973).

[11]For the position of English in India, see P. Dasgupta *The Otherness of English* (Delhi: Sage, 1993); for the extent of "integration" of the colonizers' languages in African societies, see V. Klima, K. Legere and P. Zima, eds., *Culture and Integration* Dissertations Orientales, vol. 36 (Prague: Oriental Institute Academia, 1976).

[12]E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* ed. O. Stallybrass (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 48.

[13]Forster, *A Passage to India*, 132, 315-6.

[14]Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 88.

[15]Roy, *The God of Small Things, 66.*

[16]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 19.

[17]Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 52.

[18]Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 71.

[19]Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 229.

[20]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 116.

[21]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 117.

[22]Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *L'aventure ambigue* (Paris: Juillard, 1977).

[23]Kane, *L'aventure ambigue*, 52.

[24]Ngugi wa Thiong'o *Matigari* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1987).

[25]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 25.

[26]M. Strathern, *Reproducing The Future: Essays on Anthropology, Kinsip and the New Reproductive Technologies (*Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

[27]Strathern, *Reproducing The Future*, 85.

[28]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 57.

[29]Chinua Achebe, "The Novelist as Teacher" in *African Literature and the Universities*, ed. G. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1965).

[30]Wole Soyinka, *The Road* in *Collected Plays*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) and *The Beatification of Area Boy* (London: Methuen, 1995).

[31]For the tradition of prose in Nigerian literature, see B. Lindfors, ed., *Critical Perspectives on Nigerian Literature* (London:

Heinemann Educational Books, 1979). See also I. Okpewho, *The Epic in Africa* (New York: Columbia Columbia Press, 1979) and *Myth in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). D. O. Fagunwa, *The Forest of a Thousand Demons*, trans. Wole Soyinka (London: Nelson, 1968). Amos Tutuola, *Palm-Wine Drinkard* (London: Grove Press, 1958).

[32]Roy, *The God of Small Things, 66*.

[33]Roy, *The God of Small Things, 74*.

[34]Nkiru Nzegwu, "Hidden Spaces, Silenced Practices and *Igba N'rira,*" *West Africa Review* (October 2002).

[35]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah, 148*.

[36]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 179.

[37]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 215.

[38]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 84.

[39]Roy, *The God of Small Things,* 19.

[40]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 179.

[41]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 209-10.

[42]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 212.

[43]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 212.

[44]Elspeth Probyn, *Sexing the Self* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 17.

[45]Forster, *A Passage to India*, 160.

[46]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 114.

[47]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 114.

[48]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 114.

[49]Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 116.