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Title: R. K. Narayan's *The World of Nagaraj*: A Case-Study on Fictionalized Indian English Speech

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In this paper, I focus on the use of Indian English (IndE) by R. K. Narayan, the prolific Tamilian author of fifteen English novels and five volumes of short stories, in addition to non-fiction collections, travelogues, English translations of Indian epics, and a memoir. By concentrating my inquiry on Narayan's *The World of Nagaraj* (1990), his last long novel, I employ a case-study approach in investigating the author's use of IndE in spoken dialogue.

Some scholars praise Narayan's writing for being "genuinely Indian" (Mukherjee 1971: 199), for containing a "strange degree of translucence" (Walsh 1978: 33), or for being devoid of "emphasizing," "caricaturing," or "passing [of] moral or aesthetic judgments" (Mukherjee 1971: 197). My investigation shows, on the other hand, that Narayan does use IndE in characters' spoken dialogue to emphasize, caricaturize, and pass moral judgments.

My examination of Narayan's use of IndE draws upon two primary studies: first, Chelliah, in her analysis of IndE features in two novels, Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* (1991) and Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1998), discovers—by grouping the characters in both novels into sympathetic, nonsympathetic, and buffoon-like characters—that "the very features that make Indian English an 'Indian' language are the features authors denigrate through repeated association with villains, buffoons, and losers" (2006: 8). Lippi-Green's study of twenty-four Walt Disney films also supports my analysis in terms of methods and findings. Lippi-Green groups her Disney characters based on positive, negative, and a mix of positive and negative motivations and actions and exposes a direct correlation between negative characters and foreign accents.

My inquiry first reveals that Narayan appropriates IndE features, either to a greater or lesser degree, to almost all the thirty-five characters in *The World of Nagaraj*, allowing the phantasmal Malgudi town to take on a local Indian flavor and suggesting that IndE functions as the mainstream variety in the novel. But within this dialect range, the appropriation of higher percentages of IndE features to specific characters or groups of characters exposes Narayan's

palpable manipulation of IndE to alienate the intoxicated, blundering ex-engineer as Malgudi's social outcaste and to caricaturize the buffoonish Anglophile stationary shop owner.

A subsequent more nuanced investigation of the type of IndE features Narayan appropriates to these two characters yields interesting results: Narayan's allocation of solely lexical features to the inebriated, ex-engineer portrays him as an essentially educated eccentric, while the Anglophile stationary shop owner's predominantly syntactic features exposes him as an uneducated simpleton. Consequently, the two characters caricaturized as either bizarre or buffoonish remain subtly distinct even in their type of alienation from the other characters in the novel.

But in both cases, by appropriating a higher percentage of IndE features to portray a drunken oddball or a comic Anglophile, Narayan subordinates IndE to mainstream varieties of English. This subordination of IndE secures and signals norms of overt prestige and ideologically reifies and tightens the bond between variety of English and social status, morality, and intelligence.

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