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English as a proselytizing tool in Keralite schools: A period-over-period analysis of Anglophilic elitism in O. Chandhu Menon's *Indulekha* (1889) and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997)

El inglés como herramienta evangelizadora en las escuelas de Kerala: un análisis diacrónico sobre el elitismo anglófono a través de *Indulekha* (1889) de O. Chandu Menon y *The God of Small Things* (1997) de Arundhati Roy

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Abstract: This manuscript investigates the factors contributing to Kerala's superior educational performance, particularly in English language instruction, compared to the rest of India. It examines two distinct educational models: the colonial governmental approach articulated in Macaulay's Minute on Education (1835) and the missionary pedagogy exemplified in the works of Rev. Samuel Mateer. A period-over-period analysis explores the lasting cultural implications of these British-centered models, highlighting their impact on Kerala's educational framework. To illustrate these effects, a comparative analysis of literary works, *Indulekha* (1889) and *The God of Small Things* (1997), is undertaken, emphasizing themes of cultural accommodation and colonial legacy.
Keywords: colonial education; English acquisition; Kerala; missionary Schools; postcolonial literature.

Resumen: El siguiente manuscrito analiza algunos de los factores que apuntan al desempeño educativo de Kerala, que resalta del resto de la India, especialmente en lo relativo a la enseñanza del inglés. Se examinan dos modelos educativos diferenciados: el enfoque gubernamental, o colonial, a través de *Minute on Education* (1835) y la pedagogía misionera, recogida en las obras del Reverendo Samuel Mateer. Llevando a cabo un análisis diacrónico, se exploran las implicaciones culturales de estos dos modelos, destacando su impacto en la sociedad indígena. Para ilustrar estos efectos, que se prolongarán durante siglos, se compararán las obras *Idulekha* (1889) y *The God of Small Things* (1997), haciendo hincapié en el legado colonial y la aculturación educativa.
Palabras clave: Adquisición del inglés; educación colonial; escuelas misioneras; Kerala; literatura poscolonial.

INTRODUCTION

There is a controversial maxim circulating around India that seems to claim that the language of Shakespeare unified such a diverse country as it is India, both ethnically and linguistically (N. Krishnaswamy & L. Krishnaswamy 2006). Statistical evidence suggests otherwise and, even today, only ten percent of India speaks English, either as a secondary or tertiary language (Census 2011). English language acquisition is skewed toward urban elites from privileged backgrounds, often from higher castes. The exigency for a lingua franca during the colonial period stemmed from the vexing task of communicating within the myriad languages and dialects spoken by indigenous populations. British officials, who would normally tour around the country, traversed the Indian subcontinent encountering diverse accents and tongues, thus finding such linguistic diversity burdensome. Therefore, introducing the Empire's language in the colony catapulted and accelerated the expansion of the British mission in every corner of the Indian map. While the Empire may have initially aimed at universalizing English as lingua franca for practical governance, English was also wielded as an instrument of education and domestication, as articulated by the secretary to the Board Control, Lord Macaulay "The languages of Western Europe civilized Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the Tartar" (1835, p. 110). In this line, missionaries in India also "believed that, as well as saving souls, they might be useful in a more worldly sense in spreading the arts and comforts of their superior civilisation" (Oddie 1994, p. 35).

As other academics (Rajeswari 1986; Baldick 1983; Kopf 1980) have argued, the adoption of English as a medium for educational instruction in India was intricately linked to Macaulay's seminal speech. This section

examines how the English language and the introduction of the often-misnamed English literary canon into Keralite schools[1] functioned as an indoctrinating mechanism that facilitated the conversion of Hindus—not just religiously but also in terms of identity conflict. Identity conflict as the divide generated after the collision between Indian knowledge systems and Western modernity. To this end, Macaulay's "Minute on Education" serves as a foundational source, as his profound fascination towards English and British literature permeated his entire discourse on the Westernization of India's educational system. To contextualize education in nineteenth-century Kerala, the works of Rev. Samuel Mateer, specifically *Native Life in Travancore* (1883) and *The Land of Charity* (1871), henceforth referred to as NTL and TLC, are drawn upon. To substantiate this discussion, a period-over-period analysis is later undertaken, juxtaposing two literary works: *Indulekha* (1889), written in the nineteenth century, follows the story of Indulekha, an educated Nair woman, who ultimately marries her equally Westernized lover, Madhavan. The novel explores themes such as modernity in opposition to tradition, women's agency, and colonial education. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), written over a century later, centers on fraternal twins whose lives are irrevocably altered by the tragic consequences of their mother's affair with a lower-caste man. This period-over-period analysis, meaning the comparative study of two parallelly diachronic works, aims at elucidating the long-term consequences of this educational episode.

Additionally, the study seeks to explore the reasons behind Kerala's distinct educational paradigm, particularly its divergence from the rest of the country in terms of English acquisition. A comparative analysis is presented, aligning with the primary focus of this study, while also examining the role of public and missionary schools, especially given the

[1] In the 19th century, Kerala did not exist as a single political entity. Instead, the region comprised the princely states of Travancore and Cochin, along with the British-administered Malabar district. Travancore was a semi-independent princely state under British suzerainty, known for its economic prosperity and administrative reforms, while Malabar was directly governed by the British as part of the Madras Presidency. While Travancore was a significant part of colonial Kerala, the broader region encompassed multiple distinct political units that shared linguistic and cultural ties. However, for the reader's understanding, I have chosen to use the term *colonial Kerala*, as the texts at hand primarily focus on the territory known today as Kerala. The modern state of Kerala was officially formed in 1956.

latter's significant presence in southern India. This subsidiary investigation uses the didactics of English language instruction as a lens through which to explore the interpellation between these two educational systems.

Colonial educationists regarded English as a symbol of Enlightenment and cultural refinement, a perspective deeply embedded in the rhetoric of "Minute on Education". While some showed a more moderate position, others exhibited an eccentric fascination, elevating English (a comparatively modern language) to the echelons of ancient literary traditions such as those of the Greeks. They aimed at precipitating a fictional episode wherein English assumed a preeminent position within European literary circles, notwithstanding the fact that English literature lagged traditions such as the French or the Italian. It was only after the rise of the British Empire, that the dissemination and circulation of great British novels catapulted, marking a transformative juncture in the trajectory of the English novel.

> it [English] stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West; it abounds with works of imagination not inferior to the noblest which Greece has bequeathed to us; with models of every species of eloquence; with historical compositions which, considered merely as narratives have seldom been surpassed, and which, considered as vehicles of ethical and political instruction, have never been equalled; with just and lively representations of human life and human nature; with the most profound speculations on metaphysics, morals, government, jurisprudence, trade; with full and correct information respecting every experimental science which tends to preserve the health, to increase the comfort, or to expand the intellect of man (Trevelyan 1838, 86).

For missionaries operating across diverse regions and chapels of India, the adoption of English as a universal instrument was pivotal to their proselytizing mission. However, a notable divergence emerges between their approach and that of British educators. While colonial administrators, following Macaulay's directives, adopted a more rigid and conventional approach to English education through the reading of orthodox literature, the Protestant and Anglican Church took a markedly different stance. The Church, in contrast, emphasized on a more expansive program of editorial and translation work, aiming not only to teach English but also to tailor it to local contexts and needs. This distinction reflects the contrasting educational agendas that shaped Kerala's colonial experience: colonial

public education adhered to a standardized imperial model, whereas missionary institutions pursued a more localized approach. Thus, texts such as gospels, psalms, bibles, and other pamphlets were translated into simplified English, with deliberate "mistranslations" incorporating Sanskrit grammatical conventions to accommodate Indian audiences (Sugirtharajah 1999, p 101). Such translating journey was however bidirectionally perverted. In other words, missionaries like Reverend Caldwell spent years studying indigenous languages and producing works on grammar and lexica so other fellow missionaries could learn how to mistranslate them too. Despite the apparent effort to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, the missionary translations were often imbued with biases, misconceptions, and ulterior motives. In essence, the missionaries' study of indigenous languages facilitated not just communication but also a subtle form of manipulation.

Songs, proverbs, and local folklore were translated from vernacular languages into English, yet the process was not immune to deliberate intervention by philologists and orientalists, who often interfered the transcriptions with imperialist or missionary propaganda (NLT, 1883, p. 317). While these efforts aimed to disseminate Christianity alongside Western knowledge, they also fostered an epistemological dependency that extended beyond educational objectives. Missionaries integrated the Christian doctrine with the teaching of English, promoting Western ideologies under the guise of linguistic and cultural accommodation. This is better illustrated in the following quotation by Father John's Tranquebar:

> The principal method of teaching them the English language would be by giving them English phrases and sentences, with a translation for them to commit to memory. These sentences might be so arranged as to teach them whatever sentiments the instructor should choose. They would become, in short, attached to the Mission; and though first put into the school from worldly motives alone, should any of them be converted, accustomed as they are to the language, manners and climate of the country, they might soon be prepared for a great usefulness in the cause of religion…In this way the Heathens themselves might be made the instruments of pulling down their own religion, and of erecting in its ruins the standards of the Cross (187 in Bhabha 1994, 106).

Missionaries were then delighted upon learning that native poets were composing their literary pieces in English, unintentionally disseminating

nationalist ideals alongside the colonial language. Initially incidental, this phenomenon became deliberate through the institutionalization of English as the technology for colonial communication. The animosity of British educators towards indigenous languages was not arbitrary, but it stemmed from a more obscure agenda. That is, the English language is inferred with multifaceted significations such as Christianity, Imperialism, Enlightenment, the Crown, or Occidentalism; it was, in words of Nguni wa Thiong'o: "language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world". He continues "language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world" (Nguni wa Thiong'o 1986, 16). The use of English extended beyond mere administrative or communicative purposes; it entailed the assimilation of British culture through the internalization of a specific set of values inherently embedded within the language:

> In the West India islands we have given our language to a population collected from various parts of Africa, and by this circumstance alone they have been brought many centuries nearer to civilization than their countrymen in Africa., who may for ages grope about in the dark, destitute of any means of acquiring true religion and science […] in the east, have adopted the English language as their language of education, by means of which they are becoming animated by a new spirit, and are entering at once upon the improved knowledge of Europe, the fruit of the labour and invention of successive ages (Trevelyan 1838, 88-89).

Macaulay's assertion that Indian languages contained "neither literary nor scientific information" (1835, 107) highlights the intention to marginalize vernacular languages and elevate English as the sole medium for higher education. However, it seems pertinent to acknowledge the voices of other academics and their studies on the educational landscape of South India when they say that no reference to Macaulay's minute in government records is to be found. This has led them into the conclusion that this act had "virtually no impact" in Kerala (Frykenberg 2003). Instead, Kerala's case stands as an exception, where missionary efforts closely aligned with public education to facilitate the introduction of English, as documented in *Native Life in Travancore*:

> The marvellous advance which has already been made among the higher classes in India, and the moral and social revolution which has begun, through the introduction and diffusion of Western knowledge and the English language, fully repay all the [missionary] labour that has, so far, been expended for the elevation of the country. The education which the Hindus are gaining fits them for the exercise of rational thought, and for wise and manly action. It is no small thing that men of liberal education are raised up and prepared (if they will but divest themselves of caste prejudice and moral vacillation) to occupy positions of influence and responsibility (NLT, 1883, p. 412).

Malayalam, that is the language native to Kerala, culture obscured at the presence of such monolithic narrative (that is English) or, borrowing from Fanon, "to speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (1952, 17). Building upon Fanon's assertion, it could be argued that language is transmitted culturally as much as its culture is transmitted linguistically. It should be emphasized that language reflects a nation's ethno-cultural and even mythological experiences through narratorial heritage, or, in words of Nguni wa Thiong'o, "thus a specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality but its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history" (1986, 15).

Language conforms itself as "a collective memory bank" (Nguni wa Thiong'o 1986, 59). In this context, British culture is then transmitted not solely through the dialectical correspondence between the two parties, but also through simulated episodes such as colonial education, that is the teaching of Anglophilic paraphernalia. This dynamic proved particularly beneficial for the Mission, as students in these schools were expected to embrace the cultural genetics inherent to the English language and, by extension, those of Anglicanism and Protestantism: "Such a thing as a man educated in English, and at the same time a devout idolater, is quite a rarity" (NLT, 1883, p. 399). Steve Bishop further reinforces this argument and confirms that "Orientalists were concerned that if English was adopted as the language of education many students would remain ignorant of their national language which would help to denationalize them" (1997, p. 250). It is not unreasonable to suggest that indigenous populations may have faced an inescapable paradox resulting from the introduction of English into their schools, or as articulated by Viswanathan "the more successfully

English education turned the Indians against their own religion through the exercise of right reason and judgment, the more insidiously it induced a violent rejection of the premises of all religion" (2015, p. 52).

If one reads Rev. Mateer's pamphlets it is evident that education was perceived by some natives as a means of emancipation from the oppression of casteism, often pursued without abandoning Hinduism. As a matter of fact, missionary educators refrained from catechizing in other school subjects other than Religion, primarily due to the concern that using the Bible for the instruction of grammar and syntax would degrade the status of the Holy Book to a level of an ordinary classbook (Viswanathan 2015). Meanwhile, in public schools under colonial administration, English was normally practiced through the reading of the Bible and other Christian pieces. In both cases, these methods present themselves problematic since religious literature in the South was predominantly expressed in either Tamil or Sanskrit, and then most literate Keralites were already bilingual. The introduction of English in this context created an even more complex linguistic dilemma. It pushed natives into a polyglottal space, relegating Malayalam —their native language— to a secondary status.

Moreover, such translations and instructions were often poorly executed or intentionally modified to incorporate Western propaganda. This propagandistic strategy aligned with Macaulay's somewhat eccentric approach to the English language. Eccentric because, unlike some people from the missionary society, he lacked formal training in education. The baron got an education in Cambridge, where he pursued studies in history and classical literature. His passion for European culture culminated in the publication of *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (1848), an ode to the allegedly superiority of European civilizations. His enthusiasm found expression in his educational proposals of 1835, 18836 and 1837, and it was at this point that the Church in colonial Kerala decided to deviate from the Empire's rigid educational model. Macaulay vehemently opposed teaching English through grammar, instead advocating for Indian students to be exposed to the language through Britain's greatest books:

> Grammars of Rhetoric and Grammars of Logic are among the most useless furniture of a shelf. Give a boy Robinson Crusoe, that is worth all the grammars of rhetoric and logic in the world. Gold smith's histories of Greece and Rome are miserable performances, and I do not at all like to lay out £50 on. Them […] As to books, we ought to procure such as are likely

> to attract and delight children, such as are likely to give them a taste for the literature of the West; not books filled with idle distinctions and definitions, which every man who has learned them, makes haste to forget. Whoever reasoned better for having been taught the difference between a syllogism and an enthymeme? Whoever composed, with greater spirit and elegance because he could define an oxymoron or an aposiopesis? I am not joking, but…writing quite seriously when I say that I would much rather order a hundred copies of Jack the Giant Killer for our schools than a hundred copies of any grammar of Rhetoric or Logic that ever was written (75).

The underlying motivations of Macaulay reflect a broader strategy aimed at captivating the native population through British literature, very much like Orientalists reproduced scenes and folklore from the East in order to entertain the Victorian audience. He believed that if Indians were exposed to the marvels of British civilizations through literature, they would embrace the imperial rule willingly. Literature, says Nguni wa Thiong'o, was after all "the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (1986, 9). This analysis has so far tried to explore how the methodologies of missionary schools divorced from the intentions of the Empire in relation to the teaching of English and its literatures. Yet, this separation between colonial administrative bodies —that is the Government and the Crown— and the church extended beyond educational paradigms; but it was rather commonplace in India, particularly evident in discussions around humanitarian or moral imperatives:

> So long as the missionaries and the British Indian government could benefit from the association there was generally harmonious co-operation. However, because aims and agendas were different there were periods of conflict and tension, for example, over the possible unsettling effect of missionary preaching, the government's association with Hinduism and failure to suppress 'certain dreadful practices', the government's involvement in the liquor and opium trade, its condoning or even encouragement of European planter and Indian landlord oppression and the failure of officials to address the problems of poverty and discrimination against untouchables (Oddie 1994, 32).

One of Macaulay's most oft-cited statements circulating around postcolonial scholarly circles is his following assertion "I have never found one among them [Orientalist] who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (1835, 107). This statement stands as a testament to the epistemological "supremacy" of, or better said propagated by, the British Empire. While the accuracy of this declaration is not endorsed, it is worth noting that finding influential literature in nineteenth century Kerala is between impossible and improbable since Malayalam literature during this period was limited, primarily consisting in proverbs and oral folklore (TLC, 1871, p. 141). By contrast, its neighboring state, Tamil Nadu, demonstrated greater literary productivity, which a notable emphasis on writing, editing, and publication in the south. Consequently, teenagers were often educated into poems, plays, philosophy, fables, and other treatises in both Tamil and Sanskrit (TLC, 1871, p. 141). This lack of textual tradition, along with its cultural dependency, provided British chroniclers with an opportunity to construct a narrative of literary inferiority —and by extension, cultural— in the region.

Despite this shared imperial agenda, colonial administrators and missionaries held differing perspectives on the teaching of literature. Missionary educators tended to adopt a more pedagogical approach, considering English a practical linguistic instrument. In contrast, instructors following Macaulay's directives emphasized on the acquisition of English through the study of the Classics, precisely because of this aura of superiority that will be later explored in the two novels at hand. Macaulay's intentions were far from neutral; it sought to indoctrinate native populations into the norms of the Empire. However, a much modern synthesis emerged in missionary schools: the provision of grammatical instruments, on the one hand, and the introduction of adapted literary materials, on the other. Considering that an unusually high number of English schools in colonial Kerala were managed by missionaries rather than by the public administration, it is unsurprising that Kerala remains one of the most proficient English-speaking states in India today.

Viswanathan (2015) confirms that the presence of missionaries in India catalyzed a reevaluation of English education. Clergymen recognized that teaching literature through a secular lens would only result into distrust and confusion, and that relying merely on a text as for the introduction of moral codes amongst the native population was, at least, disconcerting. They contended that for English to be studied, one is

required with a "high degree of mental and moral cultivation" and, as per to the missionary argument, "to a man in a state of ignorance of moral law literature was patently indifferent to virtue" (Viswanathan 2015, 47). This approach rather than fostering moral enlightenment, explains Viswanathan (2015), might have caused the native to question divine laws and thus deviate from their conventions. Evangelicals, continues Viswanathan, denounced poetic language for its perceived corruption and distortion of reality. They instead preferred to elaborate self-authored material that were deemed more accessible and authentic than these overly ornamented British poems. Literary devices such as metaphor, sibilance, or irony, were normally omitted in missionary pamphlets due to fears that these embellishments would obscure textual meaning and hinder earnest observation.

The following section aims to clarify one of the most immediate consequences of British education: the replication of Macaulay's elitist applications concerning the English language. To achieve this, two novels are examined: O. Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* (1889), set during the implementation of these educational mechanisms, and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), which takes place a century later. Surprisingly, the chronological consequentiality of these events appears beyond dispute.

BRITISH SCHOOLS AND COLONIAL NARCISSISM: A PERIOD-OVER-PERIOD ANALYSIS

Such literary and linguistic elitism, endorsed by Macaulay and contested by missionaries, ultimately culminated in a promotion of Indians educated in English schools and with a predilection for British literature. The following analysis aims to provide practical rationale for such thesis through a period-over-period interpretation of the novels earlier introduced, namely O. Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* (firstly published in 1889) and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997). The first novel follows the story of Indulekha, an educated Nair woman, who resists tradition and marries her equally Westernized and allegedly progressive lover. The latter, on the contrary, centers on two twins whose lives are irremediably altered by the consequences of her mother's affair with a low-caste man.

Indulekha could be interpreted as one of the earliest counter-narratives —borrowing from Foucault— in southern India. It is particularly

intriguing that this contestation does not emerge after India's emancipation from the British Empire, as is characteristic of most postcolonial discourses —hence the prefix—but unfolds *in situ* during the colonial rule. While some consider the novel as a testament to the benefits of modernizing Kerala's educational system, it must be acknowledged that certain characters feel that, due to English and the British model, local literature is being neglected.

> Panchu Menon: That's what I'm also saying. How many good, ancient books are there in our family collection at Poovally! No body is interested even to touch those manuscripts. Most of them are getting damaged. Once, I asked Madhavan to take care of those old manuscripts, he hasn't done it so far! They won't touch books not made of paper.
> Govinda Panikker: It's the power of Kaliyuga! Nothing else!
> Panchu Menon: Studying all this English, I'm afraid if they'd even decide to accept their religion! (2005, pp. 26-27)

The invocation of *Kaliyuga* (or the age of Kālī) here is not arbitrary; it is symbolically introduced to add to their discomfort. Unlike the linear conception of time prevalent in the West, wherein time progresses from a primitive past toward a more advanced future, in India time is cyclical, fluctuating between period of advancement and regression. These seasonal epochs, referred to as the cycle of four *yugas*, are categorized from the most evolved to the least as follows: Satya Yuga (the era of spirituality), Treta Yuga (the era of intellect), Dwapara Yuga (the era of vigor), and Kali Yuga (the era of materialism). Kali yuga is characterized as a period of primitive reasoning, both intellectual and spiritual. A time in which material concerns eclipse spiritual growth. These characters subtly imply that the consequence of receiving English education manifests into moral and educational backwardness, as in times of Kaliyuga. At the end of this intervention, Panchu Menon concurs that the English language was indeed an evangelizing mechanism in South India. English functioned as an acculturating instrument aimed at distancing locals from their mythologies and knowledges: "taking us further and further from ourselves to otherselves, from our world to other worlds" (Nguni wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 12). This is corroborated by Reverend Mateer, who affirms the following:

> Persons not intimately acquainted with the present state of Indian society of this class, might be surprised at the tone of the lectures, essays, and

> correspondence of Hindus educated in English, and would ask, "Are the writers not Christians?" They write freely, often very accurately in the English language. I have known them to republish English lectures on science and morals. They correspond with Europeans quite in the style and tone of Englishmen, though with, perhaps, a little more attention to politeness and form. I have heard some of them lecture admirably on the electric telegraph, on astronomy, on art and science, on female education, and similar topics (NLT, 1883, p. 400).

Despite the aforesaid, these public contestations were relatively rare. Instead, the acquisition of English often became associated with educational elitism among specific segments of the population. This dynamic is critically examined in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. "Anglophilia," as stated in the novel itself, and the fascination towards the English language epitomize in the character of Chacko. He is clearly modeled after Macaulay's precepts, particularly in his unrelenting devotion to everything British. As the Oxford-educated son of Mammachi and Pappachi, Chacko is intellectually inclined and deeply influenced by Western ideology, yet he remains entrenched in patriarchal and classist structures. Much like the politician, Chacko takes pride in Oxford education and his familiarity with the English canon, frequently quoting passages from British literature. Just like Macaulay in his oft-cited work "Minute on Education," he cannot help himself from praising the glory of the Classics: "Chacko's room was stacked from floor to ceiling with books. He had read them all and quoted long passages from them for no apparent reason. Or at least none that anyone else could fathom." (A. Roy, 1997, p. 18). This ostentatious display of Western credentials does not serve to foster literary discussion —otherwise the author would not have insisted on adding the "at least none that anyone else could fathom" phrasing— but rather to assert his superiority over his Indian relatives, positioning himself hierarchically above their perceived backwardness and illiteracy. Roy uses humor and irony to underscore the absurdity of Chacko's elitism. His eccentricities, akin to Macaulay's, are illustrated in the novel: "had been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and was permitted excesses and eccentricities nobody else was" (Roy, 1997, p. 18).

This Anglophilic sentiment, embodied by Chacko, is depicted as a generational legacy inherited from Pappachi and permeating the family dynamic: "we are a family of Anglophiles" (A. Roy, 1997, p. 24). Through her masterful use of dialogue and linguistic nuance, Roy creates a narrative

that oscillates between sarcasm and a meticulously elaborated critique, leaving room for interpretation regarding the extent of her ironic undertones. In a particularly illustrative moment, the children not only dissociate from Chacko's Anglophilic worldview by conversing in Malayalam, but their lack of familiarity with the term "Anglophile" prompts them to consult a dictionary, which offers three definitions, being the second one "bring mind into certain state" (Roy, 1997, p. 24), which most aptly aligns with Chacko's ideological stance. This lexical exploration underscores the lingering effects of colonial education, as observed in the following appreciation: "Pappachi's mind had been brought into a state which made him like the English" (Roy, 1997, p. 24). Roy is here criticizing the internalized colonial attitudes that manifest across generations, illustrating thus the profound and enduring impact of imperial ideologies on identity formation.

Delving deeper into this manifestation of educational elitism, there is a scene that reveals a significant exchange between Chacko and his sister, Ammu, the twins' mother, who pronounces that watching *The Sound of Music* is "an extended exercise in Anglophilia." (Roy, 1997, p. 26). His sister responds by suggesting that the movie transcends academic and national boundaries due to its universal appeal, to which Chacko responds: "Nevertheless my dear […] Never. The. Less." (Roy, 1997, p. 26). Even if the author's intentions with this morphological dissection cannot be definitively testified, the text invites an interpretation that underscores a subtle yet palpable elitist condescension. It is implied that only individuals of a certain academic and social standing would find interest in viewing such an audiovisual piece, a sentiment reserved for those considered to possess the intellectual pedigree often associated with institutions such as Oxford. Furthermore, the symbolism inherent in the movie warrants mention. It portrays an English governess, played by a quintessentially British actress, who ventures into the countryside to educate "uncivilized" children despite their privileged backgrounds. From a postcolonial perspective, this imaginary aligns with imperialist rhetoric, evoking the portrayal of colonized subjects, as metaphorical children in need of instruction.

Identity in Roy's fiction takes place in private spheres, yet it is shaped after broader social confrontations. In this context, identity is in this novel closely connected with educational technologies that contributed to the expectations of the modern Hindu, expectations predominantly filtered through colonial lenses. An identity that is expected to be conveniently

hybrid, meaning an education grounded in British norms while simultaneously acknowledging racialized positions and its associated cultural standards. This nuanced oscillation between cultures, the British and the indigenous, remains accessible to colonizers and affluent native elites who derived benefits from the colonial enterprise, exemplified by characters like Chacko. However, Chacko's participation in this contrived process of hybridization is far from accidental; but rather a failed attempt to emulate and translate ethnographic and discursive categories. These dialectical responses contribute to the perpetuation and legitimization of the imperial legacy, as it will eventually evolve into an elitist monologue that addresses the supremacy of Western over subaltern cultures.

This discourse has been extensively examined by postcolonial critics, yet it is pertinent to invoke Fanon, as he was amongst the first thinkers to report on this syndrome. Syndrome because Fanon draws from psychoanalysis to elucidate the colonial inferiority complex, which he aptly describes as "epidermalization" (Fanon, 1952, p. 16). This term encapsulates the internalization of inferiority among the colonized, resulting in the erosion of ego and self-esteem and thus leading to cyclical alienation. Fanon emphasizes that the inferiority complex "is particularly intensified among the most educated" (1952, p. 26), observing that the self-esteem of the subaltern is systematically undermined through colonial education and then reformulated or, better said, reeducated. He goes further and asserts that the colonized "must struggle with it unceasingly" (Fanon, 1952, p. 26). Even if the analysis of colonial elitism as a direct consequence of missionary and British education remains speculative, Fanon's insights suggest that one avenue for achieving parity with Europeans is "through adorning the Native language with European expressions, using bombastic phrases in speaking or writing a European language" (Fanon, 1952, p. 26). In this context, Roy's engagement with postcolonial educational dynamics becomes evident, particularly in her portrayal of some characters.

In that sense, Baby Kochama epitomizes the colonial subject who dreams of being English and so she behaves and speaks accordingly. Assuming the role of a governess —just like Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*, — she reprimands the twins whenever they converse in the local tongue. For her, English is a refined and cultivated language, while Malayalam is relegated to the status of a primitive and unsophisticated vernacular. This trauma stemming from the imposition of English since early colonial education echoes Fanon's seminar work when he states that

language operates as a humanizing mechanism: "[the Negro will turn] proportionately whiter in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (Fanon, 1952, p. 18). Baby Kochama affirms her perceived cultural superiority. She assumes herself to be whiter because not only she narrates her own story from the colonizers' language, but she positions herself as an authority capable of dictating linguistic norms within her social sphere. In this erroneous assumption, she believes herself to be momentarily in charge of the imperial apparatus: "a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language. What we are getting at becomes plain: mastery of language affords remarkable power" (Fanon, 1952, p. 18).

Indian literature was neglected by colonial educationists, as evidenced by characters like Panchu Menon in the quote above. However, the installation of a British canon interrupted the already delayed trajectory of Mayalam literature. The modest presence of endemic literature facilitated the distribution of English novels in both local and colonial schools, either public or missionary. This eventually translated into the colonial categorization of two distinct types of Keralites: those trained in Hindu traditions, and associated with a grotesque, almost Gothic, literary heritage, and those educated in Christian or British traditions, perceived as refined and sophisticated. The gradual acceptance of British education by Indian elites, despite its colonial underpinnings, reflects what has been termed by poststructuralists as the "the colonial hangover", or the enduring influence of European imperialism on postcolonial societies. Even during early stages of this colonial episode, the arrogance associated with English education seems to have troubled natives. In *Indulekha*, Govinda Panniker succinctly addresses this issue: "He has become arrogant these days. Just getting an English education makes the young people somewhat haughty" (2005, p. 26). Bellenoit (2007) sheds some light on this mystery and confirms that Indians attended Missionary schools not solely for religious instruction but because these institutions were assumed in higher moral grounds:

> Indians sought general moral benefits and supplements to their existing moralities, rather than opportunities to review these afresh; they sought humanistic and ethical education and not the religious type missionaries propagated. Even though they were an explicitly proselytising agency, these schools were strikingly popular with Indian families. This was so not merely because religious instruction was absent in Government schools, but because

> the general moral tone was perceived to be higher in mission schools (p. 372).

This generational struggle is central to the narrative, with younger characters embracing Western education, portraying them as reformist and progressive, the elders, however, cling to tradition and are characterized with a series of conservative attributes. Although British education promised social ascendancy and economic liberation for some natives subjugated to the nepotism of the caste system, the author fails in creating sympathetic characters. Instead, they come across as snobbish and condescending toward those who do not speak English or have not received an English education and the following is only one of many instances. The protagonist, Indulekha, early in the novel, hesitates about accepting Madhavan's marriage proposal, and the author makes her skepticism abundantly clear. It is only after she learns that her suitor has graduated in Law at a British university that her attitude shifts dramatically: "By this time, Indulekha could not control herself. Her heart overflowing with the passion for Madhavan […]" (2005, p. 19). The transition is inserted so abruptly at this point that it feels the author is intentionally associating Madhavan's academic entitlement with her precipitous decision. Later in the novel, Indulekha is to be married and this is how the community thinks of her "She knows English very well and it really adds to her charms. She will never fall for an ordinary person" (2005, p. 32). In other words, her proficiency in the dominant language positions her at the apex of the social hierarchy.

This snobbery persists in postcolonial Kerala. Arundhati Roy condemns this in *The God of Small Things* through the character of Baby Kochama, who references various literary works merely because they symbolize Englishness and refinement. She goes onto arbitrarily mention a number of English novels, some of which may have been even probably overlooked in England at this point. Even if this may seem speculative, Baby Kochama's discourse mirrors that of Indulekha, and these two characters, in turn, reflect Macaulay's educational agenda. In his numerous writings on the state of India's educational development, the Whig politician demonstrates a hyperbolic philological sympathy, frequently recommending British novels even when discussing educational matters unrelated to literature. This tendency borders on the schizophrenic, as Macaulay often inserts literary recommendations into his discussions without much justification. Similarly, in *The God of Small Things*, novels

are also inserted in a manner that seems intended to reinforce Baby Kochama's colonial narcissism. Roy skillfully creates a character who is proudly raised in British schools and educated in the classics. She embodies what was referred to in Kerala and other parts of India as a "Macaulay's child."

Despite being racially and demographically outcasted, the colonial subject seeks comfort in the arms of, as stated by Bhabha in the following quote, the Western concept of civitas which ironically enough conforms itself in terms of Orientalized mythology:

> The Western, metropolitan histories of progress and civitas cannot be conceived without evoking the savage colonial antecedents of the ideals of civility and the mythology of "civilisation". […] In other words, that cultural and political identity is constructed through a process of othering [emphasis on purpose] (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 216-217).

Baby Kochama constantly alludes to her Western civility, earned no doubt by her English education, and therefore she thinks this cannot be found among locals schooled in endemic languages. This dichotomy between vernacular natives and anglicized locals is also explored in *Indulekha*. Coming back to Roy's novel, when the family is at the airport, Baby Kochama refers to Sophie Mol as a "wood-sprite of Ariel" (1997, p. 69) employing a Shakespearean reference to ensure her anglicized relatives identify her as an equal, a cultivated woman who has read the Classics. The narrator immediately exposes Baby Kochama's underlying intentions: "All of this was of course primarily to announce her credentials to Margaret Kochamma, Chacko's English ex-wife. To set herself apart from the Sweeper class" (Roy, 1997, p. 69). It is clear from this preceding quote she only aims to delimit the boundaries of class and power and, of course, the "Englisher" the better or, in or in Newman's words "not just as a means for exercising cultural literacy but also for exercising cultural power" (Newman, 1995, p. 1 in Chatterjee-Padmanabhan, 2002, p. 97). She needs to articulate and fabricate traditions as a metaphorical wall to avoid other threatening alterities infiltrating her cultural container. In this regard, Oddie supports the argument and asserts that such attitudes are cultivated through missionary education, stating that "they [missionaries] were partly responsible for the Western-educated élites adopting certain European views, especially towards popular religion and culture" (Oddie, 1994, p. 39).

Building upon Fanon's previous hypothesis (1952), Bhabha deepens the term of mimicry, also described earlier in this manuscript, portraying it as a strategy to destabilize the colonizer by replicating his codes, as exemplified by Baby Kochama, "mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power" (p. 86) [sic]. The adoption of hegemonic mechanisms by the colonized renders them speechless and static, compelling them to emulate these strategies to surpass the subjugated state. In essence, the colonized reproduces hegemony in a way that "permits diversity [but, paradoxically] masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 208). Although this imitation is the resulting effect of a colonial domination and, consequently, an artificial phenomenon, it becomes more convoluted. She mimics this Englishness in such way that it ultimately becomes something ridiculous in an attempt to be "more English than the English" (Boehmer, 2005, p. 111). Therefore, mimicry is intrinsically inserted in this episode as a parodic monologue. Some postcolonial scholars have highlighted the satirical nature of mimicry: "it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values —that is, 'mimic' the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery" (Ashcroft et al., 2002, p.10). It is fascinating to note that while Arundhati Roy presents late-twentieth-century characters who are deeply alienated by colonial standards, *Indulekha*, written over a century earlier, introduces a challenging narrative against British education. As an experimental novel, the author does not refrain from indiscriminately inserting personal appreciations within dialogues and elaborated situations. In one such observation, O. Chandumenon questions one of the archetypes that is so endemic to English poetry:

> According to Indian concept of beauty, black, cascading tresses and deep, black eyes make a striking combination, while the English poets fall for the blonde hair and blue eyes. As far as I am concerned, both combinations are perfect. Whereas black hair offers the perfect match for the skin tone of Indian women, the golden locks complement the pale skin of the European beauties. Same is the case with eyes. Finally, it is the mind that creates beauty out of the combinations of the different features of women. So, I believe that it is difficult to take any preconceived stand on this (2005, p. 11).

Although initially this evaluation may be dismissed as frivolous and superficial, a closer examination of both novels' figures reveals a deeper critique of the state of English education in former Travancore, now Kerala. Chandumenon and Roy's choice of characters is far from coincidental. The deliberate selection of these characters, characters that come to represent the offspring of colonialism, underscores their intents to denounce the enduring legacy of English education in South India. Some postcolonial critics have reported a similar conclusion when they say that "I read this scene [Baby Kochama prohibiting the children to speak Malayalam] both as an allegory for the Anglicization of the Indian upper class and a critique of the epistemic violence inflicted in order to establish English as their dominant idiom" (M. Nandi, 2010, p. 178). Yet, while Roy's characters fantasize over the artifacts of British literature in an almost satirist way, O. Chandumenon articulates the urgent necessity of representing indigenous narratives in Malayalam literature.

CONCLUSIONS

This article corroborates previous findings and provides additional evidence indicating that missionary schools played a role in the formation of colonial subjects as polyvalent and plural entities, reconfigured through the adoption of certain metonymic strategies. The analysis suggests that hybridity results from a dynamic process related more to becoming than to being. This article seeks to address the epistemological and identity challenges arising from the introduction of a Western curriculum in Travancore schools. The role of English in colonial Kerala fostered a polyglottal environment, while simultaneously contributing to deeper cultural obscurantism. As a result, the Southwest of the continent became subject to three major linguistic traditions: Tamil, Sanskrit, and English. It is important to note that this manuscript not only demonstrates that imperial education was poorly substantiated and that Macaulay's proposal lacked pedagogical substance, but also highlights how missionaries, likely influenced by their educational background, adopted a more comprehensive and holistic approach to English instruction. This may explain one of the reasons behind the success of Kerala's educational model. However, this success is not without its issues. As illustrated through the period-over-period analysis comparing *Indulekha* and *The God of Small Things*, English education exacerbated the complexities of class and caste in colonial Kerala. It functioned as a vehicle for expressing

educational elitism and for creating cultural barriers that distinguished English cultivation from the perceived primitive backwardness of indigenous people.

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