Chapter Four: Reimagining English Studies in India: A Postscript

The past three chapters located the trajectory of English Studies in the Gujarat region to study the changing dimensions of reform as a discourse and conceptual category, followed by its function as an episteme observed in the persistence of certain 'paradigmatic' changes, which however, continued to be structured by the overriding paradigm. This chapter examines whether shifts occur in the post-independence period with respect to the practice of English Studies. It therefore reflects on the implications of these structural epistemes to examine the possibilities of the discipline to work outside its colonial framework.

English Studies in Post-independence Gujarat

The Ahmedabad Education Society (AES) played a key role in establishing private educational institutions in the Gujarat region 1930s onwards.[98] It was established in 1935 and emerged out of the need to offer non-governmental alternatives for education to the people of Ahmedabad, in light of the Gujarat College students' protest, under the leadership of Anandshankar Dhruv (1869-1942), Kasturbhai Lalbhai (1894-1980), Bhaskarrao Medh, Ambalal Sakarlal Desai (1844-1914), and Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar (1888-1956) among others. It was shaped by previous bodies such as the Gujarat Education Society established in 1913.

This institution also played a key role in the establishment of Gujarat University in 1949. One can tract the rise of AES to Lord Ripon's approval of the idea of regional universities, and the growing tide of nationalism. It can be situated in movements that were underway to offer native populace education that would be controlled and guided by the natives. However, these stood apart from the similar anti-colonial drive of Gujarat Vidyapith in not being able to enforce a value-based education as radical as that proposed by Gandhi. Further, these institutions aimed at functioning under the sanction of the government. Thus, while in in its earlier trajectory, the AES was allied with Gandhi in supporting the protest of the students at Gujarat College who were asked to pay a fine following their non-cooperation with examinations, later AES' critical outlook towards the Gujarat College and radical political edge diminished (Brahmbhatt 129). In fact, AES institutions began to supplement the subjects which were unavailable for study at the Gujarat College (Brahmbhatt 130). However, it

[98] For more on the AES, see Brahmbhatt.

continued to help the Congress movement in every way, and therein lay its national inclinations (Brahmbhatt 129).

The L.D. Arts College was the second institution to emerge out of the AES in higher education in 1937. It was built based on the vision of Anandshankar Dhruv and G V Mavlankar that an 'arts' education is important to balance the sciences and commerce with noble humanitarian values, in service of the enrichment of national life (Brahmbhatt 127). The ideological continuities in the institutions can be viewed in figures such as Anandshankar Dhruv who played pivotal roles in Gujarat Vidyapith, AES, and also guided the initial plan for the Gujarat University. Importantly, the L.D. Arts College had a section of professors drawn from all regions of India which often became a cause for criticism (Brahmbhatt 133). However, this decision was inspired by the need to maintain national unity. The Arts College was envisioned as a prelude to a regional university for Gujarat (Brahmbhatt 133).

The AES established a committee presided by Vallabhbhai Patel for the establishment of a university which received a positive response from the people of Ahmedabad in terms of financial endowments. However, one of the chief donors Kasturbhai lamented that the constitution of the university displayed, right from the beginning, a propensity to be shaped as per political concerns rather than educational principles (Brahmbhatt 167). Gujarat Vidyasabha was its allied institution which espoused causes such as encouragement of regional languages [99](Brahmbhatt 168).

The new university aspired to be different from Mumbai University which was now dubbed 'old' and 'traditional' (Brahmbhatt 170). The government instituted a committee in May 1947 to establish a regional university in Gujarat. The committee agreed on the adoption of Gujarati for as the medium of instruction and administration. The university, importantly, also had a social orientation in the adoption of functions such as spread of knowledge, science, and culture; and training people in all walks of life (Brahmbhatt 175). Interestingly, the institution established on 11 January 1951, adopted three compulsory languages—Gujarati, Hindustani, and English (Brahmbhatt 175). The university officially proclaimed its nationalist affiliations in the regulations regarding registered graduates, by making those graduates eligible who had Gujarati as their mother-tongue and belonged to any one of the nationalist institutions established during the twentieth century including "Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Maharashtra Tilak Vidyapeeth, Bihar Vidyapeeth, Vishwa Bharati, Jamia Milia,

[99] The first Congress government that came to power in Bombay in 1938, made an annual grant of twelve thousand rupees for the promotion of vernacular languages, and Anandshankar Dhruv identified Gujarat Vidyasabha as the body to implement action on this programme (Brahmbhatt 168).

Kashi Vidyapeeth, and Gurukul Vishwa Vidyalaya" besides two other institutions (*The Gujarat University Hand-book* 91). Further, following the medium of instructon debate of the period of high nationalism, English was not given a distinct status but subsumed under "Modern and Ancient Indian and Foreign Languages" (*The Gujarat University Hand-book* 176).

On the other hand, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda instituted in 1949 adopted English as the medium of instruction. It also adopted "the courses of studies leading to the different examinations as laid down by the University of Bombay for the examinations to be held by the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in the years 1951 and 1952"[100] (*The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda* 145).

Besides, in post-independence India, English was a central concern to be negotiated in the creation of an independent identity. Policies and discussions regarding education became more centralised and thus, it would be more useful to locate the shifts in the discipline post-independence at the national level and evaluate whether the nationalist aspirations of such regional institutions take concrete shape.

English Studies in Post-independence India

Alok K. Mukherjee reviews the policy shifts and resultant impact on the discipline of English studies in post-independence India. Reviewing "developments between the late 1940s and the late 1960s", he observes that "English has been the beneficiary of the language wars that took place in post-independence India" (272). He takes into account the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission (The University Education Commission 1948-9) and the Kothari Commission (National Education Commission 1964-6). He observes that the Radhakrishnan Commission possessed a more "nationalistic stance" for designating "English as a foreign language" which he finds to be "an early display of a postcolonial consciousness" (A. Mukherjee 267-8).

However, soon after, the Official Languages Commission recommended in 1956 "the unrestricted use of English for all official purposes", also identifying the value of English as "a "pipeline" within the country and a "window" to the rest of the world" (A. Mukherjee 267). The Kunzru Committee (1955) was appointed in the background of growing unrest in the 1950s between the Hindi-speaking and non-Hindi speaking regions, and the approach of both towards English. The approach of the Committee to the language problem reflected an

[100] Documentary evidence for subsequent changes in curriculum is unavailable.

attempt to balance "between English and Indian languages was reflective of a consensus that was beginning to evolve in India's ruling circles…balancing, that is, the interests of the different regions, on one hand, and the interests of the English-speaking elite versus the non-English-speaking public, on the other", thereby, reflecting "the growing consolidation of the power of the English-speaking minority over national affairs" (A. Mukherjee 268). This is the consensus reflected, according to Alok K. Mukherjee, in the "three-language formula proposed in 1961" (268).

However, the germ of the three-language formula, as well as the perception of English as a window to the world, could be traced back to the comments and recommendations of the Radhakrishnan commission on language: "(i) pupils at the higher secondary and University stages be made conversant, with *three languages,-the regional language, the Federal language and English (the last one in order to acquire the ability to read books in English)*" (*The Report of the University Education Commission*[101] 284; emphasis added). This 'ability to read books in English' was required "in order that we may keep in touch with the living stream of *ever-growing knowledge*" (*RUEC* 285; emphasis added), cautioning elsewhere that "English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world" (*RUEC* 283).

Further, the observations of the commission caution against the adoption of a nationalist stance that was either "sentimental" (*RUEC* 283) or "revivalist" (*RUEC* 272). Rather, it acknowledges that "the concept of nationality and the sentiment of nationalism are largely the gift of the English language and literature to India" (*RUEC* 276).

The Kothari commission brought about "a distinction between the teaching of English language and English literature", separating language skill from the "liberal humanistic principles" that its literature propagated (A. Mukherjee 270). However, this distinction did not hold in practice as "in 1967, a study group on the study of English in India set up by the Indian Ministry of Education emphasized the principle of using canonical literary texts to develop language skills at the college level" (A. Mukherjee 272).

This study group also recommended the study of "Compulsory English" in all three years of undergraduate study to allow students "to equip themselves with enough competence in English to acquire advanced knowledge" (Dash, *English Education* 140-1). Dash views this as an attempt by the nation-state to democratise English by making it available "to the greatest number of Indian people" (*English Education* 141). Shifting marginally from Alok K. Mukherjee's reading of the study group's recommendations regarding using canonical

[101] Hereafter referred to as *RUEC*.

tests, Dash views the Compulsory English course as "driven by nationalist critiques of English language and literature" (*English Education* 142). Surveying various anthologies produced in the 1960s for "the first year level" students of Compulsory English, Dash notes the persistence of certain common assumptions and biases (*English Education* 142). These include "a universalist notion of literature" reflected in the tendency to group together authors and works from diverse national and cultural contexts (Dash, *English Education* 143), inclusion of Indian or modern authors to remedy the disconnect between the students' lived realities and prescribed texts (Dash, *English Education* 145), and a belief that ""literary" education is the best possible education" (Dash, *English Education* 146).

While these shifts were being undertaken at the policy and textual/curricular levels, there were barely any theoretical frameworks to review the discipline from within—from its various stakeholders (A. Mukherjee 273). Alok Mukherjee identifies a shift in interrogation of the field with the publication of D J Palmer's *Rise of English Studies* (1965). While it did not question the "colonial agenda underlying the introduction of English education in India", it opened up the field for scrutiny (A. Mukherjee 273). The second important publication which would dominate theoretical examinations of the field was Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) which, extending an "interrogation" that was gradually built by "Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950), Albert Memmi's *Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965), and Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; English translation, 1967) as well as *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; English translation, 1968)" allowed "critical formulation of the problematic *vis-à-vis* the Western colonial discourse", and was further supplemented by the Marxist theory of the 1970s (A. Mukherjee 274). He surveys three initial works emerging out of the space opened by these theoretical frameworks—S Nagarajan's "The Decline of English in India: Some Historical Notes" (1978), Sisirkumar Ghose's "The Future of English Studies in India: A Note" (1978), and Meenakshi Mukherjee's "Teaching Literature to a Sub-Culture" (1978).

Nagarajan echoes some of the 'liberal' values implicated in the creation of a justification for English in the colony, in describing the "aims of English education" (A. Mukherjee 277). Nagarajan criticises the gap between the study of English literature and the "cultural context…of the Indian student" (qtd. in A. Mukherjee 277). Sisirkumar Ghose proposes a focus on "comparative literature" to discontinue study of the discipline in "the same old way" (qtd. in A. Mukherjee 278). However, Mukherjee argues that the alternative curriculum Ghose proposes continues to endorse "a Brahmanical framework that emphasizes Indian and Western classics" which would "restrict English Studies in post-independence

India to a particular segment of the student body with a certain kind of knowledge, background and preparation" (A. Mukherjee 279). Meenakshi Mukherjee also addresses the alienation that a larger section of students experience in the study of English literature, and suggests remedying it through making the "knowledge of at least one Indian language and literature" a requirement for study of English literature in India (qtd. in A. Mukherjee 280). Susie Tharu, editing a critical volume that emerged out of the crisis of English in India debates, identifies "alienation" to be the common factor amongst all the essays on the practice of English literature in the nineties, even when it is not a "primary concern" of an essay (3). She finds alienation emerged as a significant question against which the Orientalist and secular vernacularist frameworks justified themselves as opposed to the Anglicist, as the three contested the question of the content and linguistic medium of education in India early nineteenth century (9). Alienation represented the possible source of delinking from western institutions that an English education could generate. Paradoxically, in the post-independence context, alienation marks the de-linking from native culture. She recommends the use of alienation to interrogate the power relations instituted in the practice of English Studies (Tharu 28).

Alok K. Mukherjee argues that all the three subscribe to the idea of the inherent value of English literature, fail to question the constitution of "elitism" in the discipline (280), and focus more on "how best to teach English literature and language to Indian students, rather than with why do Indian institutions of higher education teach what they do in the name of English, to whom, and out of what interest" (276).

The interrogation of the discipline took a more radical turn in the 1980s and the 1990s. In the subsequent section, I discuss the diverse critical analyses of English Studies in India in the post-independence period to examine the strategies explored, and whether successful questioning of fundamental epistemes of the discipline can be observed.

Rethinking Curriculum and Pedagogy: Reviewing the Past

The 'Crisis' Studies

Suman Gupta finds the studies of the 1970s that attempted to historicise English studies as leading to scholarly interventions in the crisis of English in India. He terms these the "crisis debates" (Gupta 4) and traces them to the moment when "Literary Theory and the politics of identity came to be debated and embedded in North American and British academia, from the 1970s to the end of the 1990s" (Gupta 3). The pressure of theory led to the impulse to historicise producing many institutional histories of the discipline of English Studies. Among

the British histories, Gupta includes, besides D J Palmer, "Baldick 1983, Eagleton 1983, Doyle 1989, Dixon 1991, Crawford 1992, Court 1992, Miller 1997", and among the North American histories, "from Ohmann 1976 onwards, including Graff 1987, Mailloux 1989, Scholes 1998" (3). While the North American histories focused on "the mediatory role of the academic institution", the British histories "have generally assumed a direct relationship between socio-political developments, intellectual Zeitgeist and the contents and institutional practices of the discipline" (Gupta 3). Owing to the history of institutionalisation of English Studies in India, the debates here remained closer to the British approach (Gupta 4).

Besides, the influence of Said's postcolonial theory, Gupta traces the theoretical influence of the Subaltern Studies project in these debates, that "sought to counter the assumptions of elite colonial and nationalist histories" (8). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's first contribution the Subaltern Studies project "performed a bridging of Literary Theory and Subaltern Studies" (Gupta 8). The first important work that emerged out of collocation of Said[102] and Subaltern Studies was Gauri Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquest* (1989), though Rajeswari Sunder Rajan attempted an initial critique of dominant Western discourses in "After "Orientalism"" (1986) (Gupta 10). Gupta compares Viswanathan's book with the earlier historicist work by Kalyan Chatterjee in *English Education in India* (1976).

He states that Chatterjee's work focused on the contrary impulses of Orientalism and Anglicism that "leading to contrary ends…amidst a progressively established and increasingly coherent power structure", while Viswanathan focuses on the complicity of seemingly contrary impulses serving "a common imperialist end" (Gupta 11). While Chatterjee's account is "schismatic", Viswanathan's is an "of-a-piece conceptualization of colonialism; while Chatterjee considers native responses cursorily, Viswanathan ignores them altogether deeming them "irrelevant"; while Chatterjee considered the implication of this history for "the current practice of ES in India", Viswanathan put it out of the scope of her study (Gupta 12). Owing to the growing influence of the theoretical underpinnings of Viswanathan's project, it was her history that prevailed and influenced subsequent work in the crisis debates (Gupta 12).

Under the significant works to emerge out of "the questioning of English studies in India that began in the late 1980s", Mukherjee includes "*Rethinking English: Essays in Literature, Language, History* (1991), edited by Svati Joshi, and *The Lie of the Land: English*

[102] Benita Parry's *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination, 1880-1930* (1972) was also an important work emerging out of this theoretical turn, laying out India in the imaginary of the British.

Literary Studies in India (1992), edited by Rajeswari Sunder Rajan…dealing with historical, institutional, curricular, pedagogical and theoretical issues related to English in India" (281-2). He discusses how these volumes were unable to offer a "coherent" or "theoretically uniform" formulation owing to the heterogeneity of cultural, institutional, and developmental aspects of education (A. Mukherjee 282). What they "brought to the fore [were] critical issues *vis-à-vis* the constitution of a postcolonial and feminist field of English Studies" (A. Mukherjee 283).

Two more contributions adding to the debate were Harish Trivedi's *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India* (1993) and Susie Tharu's *Subject to Change: Teaching Literature in the Nineties* (1998)[103]. Harish Trivedi recommends the inclusion of literatures other than British, such as American, African, Australian, Canadian, etc. While Alok K. Mukherjee acknowledges that Trivedi was trying to "find a practical alternative to the received curriculum" he finds his recommendations "to be a distillation and an extension of…Narsimhaiah, Ghose and Meenakshi Mukherjee" (284). Tharu, on the other hand, "engage[d] with "actual issues—political, curricular, administrative, personal—that have arisen on our campuses in the past five years" and, importantly, raises questions by "feminists, Dalits, and other subaltern subjects of postindependence [*sic*] India" (A. Mukherjee 284-5). Thus, it significantly sharpens the critical and social concerns of the crisis.

Yet, Alok K. Mukherjee levels two criticisms against the studies centred on the crisis: "[f]irst, the debates do not address the issue of the power of English locally and globally. Second, most of the proposals implemented require a level of sophistication and access to resources that may not be available in the universities and colleges in the small towns of India" (A. Mukherjee 285).

Supriya Chaudhuri observes that "the last significant pronouncements regarding language policy at university level are to be found in the *Programme of Action* (1992) which reiterated the Congress government's commitment to the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986" (22). This document observed the persistence of English as a medium of instruction in university courses in spite of the stand of the Radhakrishnan Commission on the matter, focused on building linguistic competence for Hindi and English, and reiterated "the government's commitment to regional languages as the medium of instruction at the university stage" (Chaudhuri 24).

[103] An earlier version of this was published in 1997 by the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages.

She argues that official policy regarding "English Studies (ES) at college and university" has been largely silent except an important document which was the *UGC Model Curriculum for English and Other Western Languages*, published in December 2001 (Chaudhuri 26). It was the outcome of the "Panel for English and Western Languages" appointed by the University Grants Commission in 1991 to advise on higher education (Chaudhuri 26). The panel convened for three terms: 1991-3, 1994-6, and 1997-2000, proposing "a full revision of university curricula in English and other Western languages" following which "a new Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) for English and other Western languages was constituted in September 2000" (Chaudhuri 26).

The shift from earlier policy documents was that both the report of the panel (*Report of the UGC Panel for English and Western Languages*, 1993) and the *UGC Model Curriculum for English and Other Western Languages*, did not deal with the question of medium of instruction but with "literature and language teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, reviewing the current situation and suggesting ways to modernize and improve literature departments and set global standards in research" (Chaudhuri 26).

Certain significant recommendations of both documents taken together, include, the proposal for "Indian Council for Literary Research… envisaged [as a] shared ground for researchers in all fields of literature, and importantly, in all languages", creation of "programmes of 'Literary Studies' using more than one language, instead of literatures in English or of even of literatures translated into English", "creation of a Resource Centre for World Literatures in English" and "an Information Centre for English Studies" (Chaudhuri 28). Further, the 2001 model curriculum even offered an option at the MA level between "a 'straight' degree in English Language and Literature, and a comparativist degree in English and Literary Studies" (Chaudhuri 29).

The Decolonisation Turn

I view the critical interventions in English post 2001, in the 'aftermath' of the crisis studies. As viewed above, the impact of the crisis studies had begun to shape policy-level decisions. Thus, it is important to analyse the impact on critical interventions in English Studies—or interrogations and recommendations from within the discipline.

I subsume these under the umbrella term of 'decolonisation' for two reasons. The first reason is the continued struggle of the nation-state to negotiate the colonial legacy of English reflected in emerging social issues as well as policy decisions. Secondly, the crisis debates formed the initial moment of historicising English Studies and laying bare its colonial legacies in the postcolonial world, besides the direct and obvious consequence of the

postcolonial project which entailed re-viewing colonial discourses critically, or to attempt to override them.

Thus, whether the authors or editors of the subsequent works consciously espoused the objective of decolonisation, I argue that this could be viewed as an explicit goal, or implied assumption in the rationale of the scholarly work.

The section of works I look at are dominated by regional treatments of the crisis. This allows one to understand the uneven nature of the adoption and adaptation of the crisis debates.

Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period (2005) edited by Avadhesh Kumar Singh took a different direction from the crisis debates. This work draws heavily re-reading texts and authors from colonial Gujarat. While the crisis debates generally focused on the 'intentions' of the coloniser, or the 'complicity' of the colonised, this anthology focused on forms of resistance during the colonial period. While, traditionally, it may not directly impinge on a discussion of English Studies, it has crucial implications for it, especially for a study like this, as it focuses on articulations in the vernacular sphere during the colonial period, and in the *transactions* between English and the vernacular, the coloniser and the colonised. Namvar Singh makes an important contribution to the volume in questioning the persistence of a technical-conceptual vocabulary drawn from English in theoretical-academic discussions which would constitute an initial step in challenging "intellectual colonisation" (Singh 80). Similar complexity and awareness of conceptual interconnections are negotiated using a different approach by Deeptha Achar in her analysis of Brahminhood as a "weapon with which to displace racist colonial hierarchies" in a late nineteenth century Christian text (164). Rajnath questions a lack of rigorous historicization from the Indian perspective in postcolonial theorisation[104] that fails to locate points of origin of actions in Indian actors in the nineteenth century like Rammohun Roy. Balaji Ranganathan, on the other hand, re-views Roy's role in the colonial period in terms of "a participatory form of resistance" (117). Nilufer Bharucha finds lessons for dealing with postmodern multiplicities in colonial figures who had to negotiate multiple identities such as Cornelia Sorabji. Important contributions that intentionally or unintentionally trace the implication of western literary forms in vernacular literature are by Suman Shah, Naresh Ved, Santosh Dash—the latter two raising the question of caste. Other contributors examine the strains of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in political, intellectual, and literary writings by Indian authors in the colonial period. It is

[104] The two texts specifically mentioned are Leela Gandhi's *Postcolonial theory: An Introduction*, and Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Post-colonialism* (Rajnath 96).

important to note that the references of a large number of essays in this volume are populated by contributors the crisis debate or the theorists who offered a framework for the crisis, such as, Homi Bhabha, Ranajit Guha, David Kopf, and Gauri Viswanathan.

A more recent study, Sahdev Luhar's[105] *"Whose Curriculum is this Anyway?": Interpretations of Intentions* (2014) comprehensively analyses "the syllabi of colonial, postcolonial and contemporary times", in order "to identify the centrality of curriculum", that is, examine "*which group the syllabus addresses; what are the hidden goals of the syllabus; and, how hegemony is maintained through the syllabus*" (9). The survey of colonial syllabi draws on previous histories of English Studies to identify English literature as a hegemonic tool to perpetuate domination, to generate consent for empire in the colonised, and propagate Christianity instantiated through how texts rejected in England for religious inelasticity were on the syllabi for Indian students (10-20). He depends on S. Nagarajan's essay on the decline of English in India in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries and concludes that English Studies in the colonial period also effected the "embourgeoisement" of the natives (Luhar 28).

In the post-independence period, he focuses on the growing demand for English that overcame the reactionary nationalism that sought to reject English and adds that three challenges for Indian universities generated by "increasing demand for English education" included: "(a) decolonisation of English studies; (b) preparation of large cadre of English teachers; and (c) introduction of curricular changes in teaching-learning of English" (Luhar 28). His discussion of the postcolonial period largely hinges on policies and recommendations of various committees previously discussed. He does acknowledge the change brought about by "the establishment of the American Studies Research Center (ASRC), Hyderabad in 1963" and institutionalisation of "Indian English literature…in Indian universities as an independent subject at postgraduate level in 1970s", followed by " Commonwealth literature (also known as Postcolonial literature)…in late 1970s-80s" parallelly with Translation Studies (Luhar 34). He identifies the 1990s with "the shifting of the emphasis from English Literature to Literatures in English University" as "some of the English Departments of Indian universities extended the field of English studies at MA level by introducing papers like 'Canadian Literature' and 'Australian Literature'" and "'World Literature in English'" (Luhar 35).

For the contemporary scenario, Luhar attempts "to interpret the intentions of MA

[105] The writer is a teaching practitioner of English Studies in higher education institutions of Gujarat.

(English) syllabi and to (re)view the present scenario of English studies in India. A review of the syllabi for MA (English) of fourteen Indian universities (re)accredited as "A" Grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Banglore [*sic*] between April 01, 2007 to September 16, 2011" (38-9). Luhar points out the asymmetry in number of papers offered for fictions of different national origins, for considerations such as higher success ratio of these students in competitive examinations (44). He also observes that in spite of the higher proportion of non-British literatures in the syllabi of certain universities, British literature continued to be "the core of the literary syllabi of MA (English)" (Luhar 44). He points out that "Indian universities has [*sic*] realised the necessity of decolonisation and renamed departments of English as "Department(s) of English Studies", yet the universities have failed to understand whether they should teach 'literature of England' or 'english literature – literature written in English language irrespective of the country of their origin'" (Luhar 45).

He criticises the approach of the UGC Model Curriculum of offering a choice to universities to apply the guidelines as per their discretion (Luhar 45). He argues that "differences in the syllabi should lie in the selection of texts, their quality, teaching methods, etc. and not in the numbers of the papers offered and their marks weight" (Luhar 46). He recommends the introduction of a paper on Comparative Literature as "this paper has the ability of providing a compendium view of regional literary offspring of India. It would bring all the Indian literatures together and would enhance the knowledge of the students" (Luhar 50). With respect to an allied concern/consequence of Comparative Literature, Luhar notes the inclusion of "regional works in English translation" (48). A review of thematic papers offered by different universities reveals the influence of three objectives—"study of literature, language teaching and linguistics" (Luhar 49). He also views the inclusion of Indian aesthetics in the literary criticism curriculum to be an attempt at decanonisation but finds this trend on the decline in contemporary universities (Luhar 50). He also notes the emergence of radical areas of study like Dalit studies since the 1980s, but a conspicuous absence of this course from the syllabi of all fourteen universities considered (Luhar 50).

Luhar seems to use titles like "'Indian English Literature'" and "'Indian writing [*sic*] in English'" quite uncritically, especially in light of the insights such as those of the scholars in the 2005 volume discussed above (37). Yet, his analysis of the canon of post-1980s Indian English fiction is perceptive in raising the question of representation. Surveying the religion, caste, and domicile status of the authors that appear on the syllabi, he notes that "majority of the Hindu writers (around 50%) who are taught in MA (English) classroom are Brahmins. Remaining 50 per cent are occupied by those non-Brahmin writers who are upper-caste

westernised Indians. Salman Rushdie, the hero of 1980s, is the only Muslim writer introduced in MA (English). Bapsi Sidhwa and Rohinton Mistry are the Parsi writers, the first lives in the USA and the other in Canada. Apart from these three writers, all are Hindus, Hindu upper caste" (Luhar 57), and the status of six out of twelve writers being "non-resident Indians" (Luhar 64). Albeit simply focusing on the community affiliations of the author without considering whether his/her work reflects the ensuing biases may be a reductive exercise. However, it does raise important questions similar to Alok K. Mukherjee's footnote on the major theorists and scholars contributing to the crisis debates. Luhar also connects this bias with a possible defect in the practice of appointing members on the Boards of Studies of universities (59-60). He, further, highlights the bias towards "award-winning fictions [*sic*] or writers" and the affiliation (by education and/or professional practice) of almost all the authors represented on the syllabi with elite institutions in India or the West—specifically England and North America, and thus questions whether "their literary sensibilities have been shaped in the west or by the west" (Luhar 61). He, further, locates the practice of awards and the publishing industry with its various stakeholders influenced by the political affiliations of the authors, the nature of the jury "are often the teachers of the university whose literary taste is formed through the English education system and are influenced by the western tradition", as well as the industry's attempt to drive literary taste to propel the economic domination of the West (with 67% publishing houses outside India) (62-4).

He concludes his discussion with a criticism of the elitist bias (in terms of geopolitical, class, and caste affiliations) of the syllabus of Indian English fiction as well as the practice whereby "artistic and aesthetic strength of literary texts is determined not by indigenous practices but by the imitation of the western criterions" (Luhar 65).

While what Luhar offers is largely a survey of the developments in English Studies in light of the developments post-independence, another volume—*Reconsidering English Studies in Indian Higher Education* by Suman Gupta et al—published in 2015 but based on workshops conducted in two Indian universities during 2012-3, brings together various stakeholders of the discipline to critically analyse key issues and domains.

Harriet Raghunathan's questionnaire-based survey "addressed to two groups of Jesus and Mary College students of English Honours and Pass", and on the question of the usefulness of the English course generated a "strongly favourable response to the challenge and wide-ranging nature of ES, which made them critically aware of many factors in culture and society" (Gupta and Allen 45). The workshop participants also discussed the unresolved problem of language and literature with diverse responses. While some, like G. J. V. Prasad

"charted a shift towards more literary content in the curriculum, emphasizing New Literatures in English and translation and cultural studies, though alongside a strong linguistics base" Poonam Trivedi rallies against "[t]he normative weight put on literature at the expense of language" (Gupta and Allen 47). A major difference can be viewed in the view of Harish Trivedi who continues to view English as a colonial legacy and "argued for a debate around ES which would consider decolonizing HE, and public and corporate sectors of employment, by putting English within a more equitable perspective of Indian languages", Suman Gupta averred that "the idea of decolonizing education was now a narrow and out-dated view. The growth and demand for English is now an international phenomenon, and powerfully evident in contexts with no colonial pasts (such as China and Japan)" (Gupta and Allen 48).

Rohini Mokashi-Punekar advocates the use of the comparative approach to literature based on her experience in IITs and argues "for a similar approach in research", besides focusing on how non-mainstream approaches like Dalit literature can bring new ways of treating a subject matter (Gupta and Allen 51). Harish Trivedi, on the other hand, finds research becoming a narrower concern "the majority of PhDs were focused now on regional identity and literature in an Indian language" (Gupta and Allen 52).

Summing up the discussions, Makarand Paranjape notes "how the area of ES in India is discussed is very largely dependent on the kind of pre-conceived frame that is assumed. To think of English as an imperialist imposition, an instrument of emancipation, a global lingua franca, an area of social activism or resistance, an Indian or not an Indian language, etc. all bring their particular limitations, and that's what makes the area worth discussing in forums such as this" (Gupta and Allen 53). It is concluded that, following any investigations, "curriculum and programme reform is, however, complex and would need further discussion. There is indubitably a need to be responsive to student aims and ambitions generally; helping students towards a good career in the shifting economic and business environment in India is an important aim. But at the beginning of their studies students may not be fully cognisant of the possibilities that their fields of study present. In this context it is the responsibility of those designing curricula and programmes to provide opportunities for students to reflect on the full long-term possibilities offered by ES" (Gupta and Allen 55).

These developments in the field of English Studies in Higher Education were/are framed within theoretical shifts occurring at the broader level, that were questioning the idea of decolonisation. The theoretical interventions from 1970s to the 1980s questioned the idea of knowledge as homogenous, its intricate connections with power, and implicit hierarchisation, informed by various strands such as "the growing importance of

phenomenological and hermeneutic forms of social inquiry (Gadamer, 1981; Habermas, 1978; Thompson, 1981), the growing influence of non-Western (Kothari, 1987; Nandy, 1981) and feminist epistemological thought (Belenky et al., 1986; Farganis, 1986, Harding, 1986), and the commotions of post-structuralist and post-modernist debates (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Foucault, 1971, 1972; Lyotard, 1984)" (Weiler 207).

Scholars like Said, Bhabha, and Spivak critiqued the universality of knowledge (as authorised by the West) mired in its project of modernity (Bhambra 116-7). They not only posit it as a historical entity generated by the west, but also reveal the pre-emption of the subject position in this history by the west. Such hierarchisation entailed that even the so-called critiques of western modernity in post-structuralist theory continued to be implicated in a Eurocentric imagination whether with respect to Foucault's temporal and spatial location of modernity criticised by Bhabha (Bhambra 116), or the "silence of scholars such as Deleuze and Foucault on the (epistemic) violence of imperialism" (Bhambra 117). Perhaps the difference postcolonial scholars and the project of decolonisation and the project of decoloniality that emerged from Latin America at the turn of the century, was that decolonisation imagines a colonial modernity and a western modernity separately, dating the former to somewhere around the nineteenth century, decolonial thought does not make a distinction between types of modernity and dates it back to the fifteenth century and "European incursions upon the lands that came to be known as the Americas" (Bhambra 115).

Thus, from the decolonial perspective, the origin of coloniality is the moment of the origin of modernity, and the "coloniality of power" is inextricably linked to the "coloniality of knowledge" (Bhambra 117). I take up this developing theoretical field that came into global view largely in the second decade of the twenty-first century following its English translations and compilations and understand its implications for a critical inquiry on English Studies.

Rethinking Curriculum and Pedagogy: Thoughts to the Future

From Decolonisation to Decoloniality

Walter D. Mignolo avers that "[c]oloniality is a decolonial concept. Its main thrust is to illuminate the darker side of modernity. By so doing, coloniality emerges as a constitutive, rather than as a derivative dimension of modernity" (111). This concept, further, "mutated decolonization into decoloniality and decolonial thinking" (Mignolo 112). As an entry-point into his discussion on the colonial matrix of power (CMP) (of which 'coloniality' is a short

hand), Mignolo discusses the implication of language and terminology in the project of knowledge. He observes that "most of the words/concepts you are using belong to European modern/imperial and vernacular languages and they have been derived from Greek and Latin", adding that these words "were translated and redefined around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe" (113). He identifies decolonization with movements for political independence and taking hold of the state, but "[t]he task of decoloniality" as "redefined and focused on epistemology and knowledge rather than the state" (Mignolo 121).

While this may seem initial aligned to the project of liberating knowledge practices from its western foundations, he clarifies that decoloniality does not imply dewesternization, thought the latter "is part of the analytic of decoloniality" (Mignolo 129). The difference between the two is that "decoloniality focuses on *changing the terms of the conversation*. Dewesternization, instead, *disputes the content of the conversation* and leaves the terms intact" (Mignolo 130). A significant part of this epistemic domination were the institutions created to consolidate it, such as the "*university*" which was created by "Medieval Christendom…but maintained during the Renaissance", and "transplanted" to "the New World" with colonization (Mignolo 137-8). "The colonial matrix of power (the CMP) is a complex structure of management and control composed of domains, levels, and flows" (Mignolo 142). The role played by actors and institutions is to "create, pronounce, and transform the designs that drive the idea of modernity", "(intentionally or not) keep all the domains interrelated and also keep these interrelations invisible" (Mignolo 143). This level of the domains and their interrelations is "the *content* of the conversation, or that which is *enunciated*" (Mignolo 143). Outside this "is a broader level where the domains themselves are defined, their interrelations legislated and authorized…[which] relates to the *terms* of the conversation, or "enunciation" proper" (Mignolo 143). This level is what Mignolo identifies as "also the level of knowledge in the deep sense of the word. It is composed of actors, languages, and institutions. The institutions involved are mainly colleges, universities, museums, research centers (think tanks), institutes, foundations, and religious organizations" (143). Further, knowledge actually has a dual position—"it occupies the level of the enunciated, where the content of the conversation is established, and it occupies the level of enunciation, which regulates the terms of the conversation" (144)

This definition of knowledge when read in the context of the institutional practice of English Studies finds an instance in the curriculum—which both prescribes that which will be read/studied, which in turn depicts the broader level of what are the epistemological assumptions underlying what will be studied, to what ends, what constitutes legitimate

knowledge, and so on. Reform, then, functions as an episteme in the present study by embodying the concept of representation. Mignolo argues that "*representation* is a crucial concept of the rhetoric of modernity: makes us believe that there is a world out there that can be described independently of the enunciation that describes it" (Mignolo 151). 'Reform' as a term/concept is one of the "narratives sustaining the imaginary of modernity [that] make us believe that ontology is *represented* by epistemology" (Mignolo 147). In other words, the term generates an imagination that there is some ontological *lack* existing independent of it being so designated by the term and masks the constitution of that lack in the very moment of its naming. Further, it equally tries to control the response to that perceived lack in the context of colonisation.

Aditya Nigam problematises the decolonial framework constituted by theorists like Anibal Quijano and Mignolo for the Indian context and employs it to attempt a decolonial treatment of theory, that broadly includes political theory and philosophy. Nigam continues to use the term "'decolonization'" over "'decoloniality'" to mark the origins and specific trajectories of his project distinct from the "discrete history" of decoloniality in the "South American project" (1). He further clarifies that his approach should not be viewed as "*a particular*, privileged mode of approaching the problem of knowledge or doing theory in the postcolonial world but rather, as referring to a range of possible strategies that might allow us to think our present *independently*—as a necessary preliminary step towards epistemic reconstitution (2-3).

It is important to consider whether and how these new theoretical directions have impinged on discussion in English Studies. *English Studies in India: Contemporary and Evolving Paradigms* (2019), edited by Banibrata Mahanta and Rajesh Babu Sharma, focuses on the study of English and language and literature in the colleges and universities of India. The polyphony of voices it represents are reminiscent of the anthologies emerging from the crisis debates, but with a sizeable number of contributors from non-metropolitan regions and institutions (Mahanta and Sharma 13). Certain contributors continue to take up questions raised since the early debates. Mahasweta Sengupta and Somdev Banik focus on the problem of alienation or "disaffection" among students with respect to their courses of study (Mahanta and Sharma 18). Santanu Niyogi deals with the question of hegemony through the example of Shakespeare. Bharti Arora offer English an enabling role or women's writing via translations "to solidarise their asymmetrical subject-positions" (Mahanta and Sharma 16). Richa, on the other hand, laments that English education has not fulfilled the promise it had for marginalised groups like Dalits and Adivasis. Paratha Sarathi Nandi, Asima Ranjan Parhi,

Amritjit Singh, Ravindra Tasildar, and Pinak Sankar Bhattacharya focus on the question of English language. Nandini Sahu and Srideep Mukherjee deal with contemporary developments like online distance learning.

I focus, here, on papers that deal with the questions raised by this study such as the political-epistemological bases of English Studies and the complexities it engenders in curriculum and pedagogy. Sonjoy Dutta-Roy focuses on the challenge presented to English Studies by nativist discourse, and avers that the discipline must address the problem of "language and identity" (Mahanta and Sharma 14). However, rather than casting nativism as oppositional to English Studies, he recommends "a more eclectic and pragmatic approach to the discipline that incorporates translations, adaptations, and the acceptance of the problems of performance in English language" (Mahanta and Sharma 15). Kamalakar Bhat also draws on adaptations in performance to moot the idea of displacement of canonical texts. He takes up Dipesh Chakrabarty's idea of *Provincialising Europe*, and remarks on "the inadequacy of the application of European intellectual paradigms in post-colonial practices" (Bhat 103). He recommends "two approaches: one is to read an English literary text…within the context of Indian literary traditions, and another is to refuse according to these texts universal relevance by viewing them as products only of specific contexts" (Bhat 104). An example he offers is of contextualising Wordsworth's poem "Daffodils" in the *vacana* poetry tradition (Bhat 106-7). However, he does not problematise the context of the readers in the process, albeit Europe is rejected as representing a monolith. Secondly, his scheme is also contingent upon the individual agency of the facilitator or professor in each instance.

An abiding concern and recommendation that persists in the reimagined space of English Studies is the role of Comparative Literature. Sonjoy Dutta-Roy, Santanu Biswas, and Prabhat K. Singh offer a cultural comparatist approach to reviewing the discipline. Santanu Biswas identifies the positive role played by Comparative Literature in its manifestation in the Indian context. For him, it offers a dimension of "plurality" to literary studies (Biswas 77), and is marked by "the true democratic value of equal representation of each without compromising the individual characteristics" (Biswas 85). He surveys the effects of institutions to open the first comparative literature departments in India and their positive impact, while also conceding that "it is neither possible nor would it be judicious or practical to completely abolish English from formal academia" (Biswas 85). Comparative Literature, for him, overrides the "exclusiveness" of existing literary studies (Biswas 86).

While Biswas' recommendations to use comparative literature as a mode of re-doing English are significant and promising, it is important to remain mindful of the politics involved in the process of comparison as viewed in the context of the structural impulses of reform.

To sum up, Mahanta and Sharma raise questions regarding developments in the domain of English Studies such as:

(i) The belief in British literature as the "'core' of…undergraduate and postgraduate courses", so that "a strange kind of fear and ambiguity grips the members of English curriculum council when it comes to the questioning of the teaching of British literature" (Mahanta and Sharma 9)

(ii) The idea of "a 'comprehensive' English studies programme" that includes a baffling number of authors, texts, literatures from diverse countries, besides courses on criticism, linguistics, language teaching, and so on (Mahanta and Sharma 11).

(iii) The call for conversion of departments of literature into "departments of cultural studies" (Mahanta and Sharma 12).

(iv) The "availability of competent English teachers at school and college level" and ability of an objective test like the UGC NET examination in evaluating their competence (Mahanta and Sharma 12).

In the subsequent discussion, I build on the recommendations and drawbacks of the discussions on English Studies by various stakeholders and consider their feasibility for a curriculum that gestures towards decoloniality.

Curricular Experiments

I do not purport, in this section, to effect a decolonial shift to 'changing the terms of the conversation' of English Studies but hope to propose a direction that would begin to engage with the theoretical questions that it raises. This initial step is couched in Mignolo's insight: "To delink requires to know from what and how to delink. That is the power struggle within the colonial matrix of power" (115).

Thus, I propose constitution of a curriculum that focuses attention, in its design, makes the learner aware of the common epistemic foundations of texts that are traditionally not viewed or imagined together in the curriculum. As discussed above, the divisions between scholars of postcolonialism, decolonisation, and decoloniality are not absolute, and many concerns and strategies have their antecedents in previous theorising. Relatedly, adopting the decolonial approach would not involve a rejection of previous work by scholars who had already made significant interventions, perceived important historical connections,

and epistemological structures in uncovering the political-ideological terrain of the discipline. The way forward can begin by re-locating, and re-contextualising their contributions using a different strategy.

I propose a curriculum built on co-texts—whereby I mean a collocation of texts from the canonical (or non-canonical) English/British literature, and those from Indian literatures, in the same paper, to enable a shared reading of the two. To connect with the current study, I offer examples drawn from the region of Gujarat, without implying that the curriculum should be restricted to the regional location of the institution.

Examples of this would be a study of Greek classics through a simultaneous reading of Aristophanes' *Wealth* and Dalpatram's *Lakshmi Natak*, or the study of Romantic poetry by a simultaneous reading of the English canon of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley alongside Gujarati lyric poets like Narsinhrao Divetia, understanding the growth of modern prose through a simultaneous reading of Bacon with Dalpatram's and Narmad's prose writings. Similarly, John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* could be collocated with M.K. Gandhi's *Sarvodaya*, and Victorian literature could be studied alongside classical poetry in translation in India.

Such a course could be developed under a paper titled 'Decolonial English Studies', could be reshaped under 'Postcolonial Studies' to suit the conventional nomenclature, or a paper on 'British Literature' could be reimagined thus, in a radical move.

Such a course would allow a critical study of the 'core' of British curriculum in the following ways:

(i) An earlier comment of Manu Bhagavan valorised the idea of space in helping to impose and imagine boundaries. Mignolo also offers the concept of border thinking as a form of resistance to coloniality. While English Studies courses have diversified in the past, it is important to note that literatures continue to be identified by their political identity (either in terms of nationality or geographical location)—American literature, Australian literature, etc. Such nomenclature continues to perpetuate an idea of the 'origin' of the said literature, and continues to perpetuate the ideation of the literature in terms of the 'empty homogenous time' of (European) modernity, as well as in master-slave, leader-follower, adult-child binaries. Nigam remarks that, "the academic answer to every question I had was that we were 'not quite there' yet (not-yet modern, not-yet secular, not-yet democratic and so on) was extremely dissatisfying" (23). Further, while papers on the history of English studies, Indian literature, or the ideology of English may be

offered, the physical separation in the curriculum of these papers as different, often results in the students' inability to understand the two in relation with each other. Thus locating colonial texts by Indian writers and translators next to the canonical British texts would, firstly, challenge the 'sacred' position of the British curriculum and pre-empt any value biases that it generates.

(ii) Collocation of the texts would direct attention to shared and contested characteristics of the two, and push towards a recognition of the underlying epistemes.

(iii) Physical co-existence in the curriculum would entail that pedagogy could not discuss a text without accounting for the imperial bases and biased of English literature.

(iv) It would equally stimulate a critical inquiry of ideas of a monolithic or authentic 'Indian-ness' or 'originality' in Indian literature.

(v) It would draw attention to the politics of translation, while also giving an impetus to critical translations from Indian literatures, with wider adoption of such practices.

(vi) It would expand not only the presence but also the significance of regional literatures, delegitimising their placement as 'additional' or 'supplemental'.

(vii) It would make learners critical readers of both English and Indian literatures and encourage critiques of western literature enriched by their located-ness in Global South.

In terms of practical considerations, a course design such as this would ensure that students continue to be acquainted with the canonical texts and authors that dominate the syllabi of competitive examinations. Thereby, they would not occasion a disadvantage for students until a revision of the curricula and testing patters by such bodies. In a way, this course could be viewed as mimicking, to draw on Bhabha's idea of resistance, the political-epistemological process that was attempting to re-structure and redefine fundamental ways of knowing and being in the colony through a violent equalization of difference in the discourse of 'reform'.

Another important dimension of the curriculum is indicated in Nigam's framework when he clarifies that what he means by "the term *independently*…has to do with our ability to confront our current challenges without looking up to philosophers and theorists from the West to provide us with framing concepts" (3). This has important implications for the curricula of English studies on literary theory and criticism, which continues to have a firmly EuroAmerican grounding. While I do not offer any philosophers or theorists, so to say, it is

important to note Nigam's remarks on the matter of theory in social sciences, to reflect on the drawbacks of and possible future directions of curricula on criticism and theory in English Studies.

He avers that "[t]heoretical decolonization is not simply about producing concepts and categories in Sanskrit, Arabic or Chines instead of English, German, or French" (Nigam 3). While he cautions against a search for some "pure, unspoilt indigenous knowledge tradition", he equally disagrees with the "converse [which would entail] to legitimize the practice of judging our own societies by conceptual categories that emerged from the specific historical experience of Europe" (4). He acknowledges the underlying reformist impulse of these conceptual categories when he says, "we too have long been led by it into believing that the problem lies with 'us' and our societies; that they need the massive intervention of the modern state, armed with Western theory and knowledge to set them right" (Nigam 4). Nigam is dealing with the social and political philosophy.

However, the implications this would have for a discipline like English Studies where the subject matter can be only problematically tagged us 'our', would be to either problematise the conceptual categories, to look at the transactions between the Global North and Global South occurring in a category, or to consider how conceptual categories from both cultural-philosophical traditions impinge upon the text being studied.

A possible direction could be for future research to proceed in the direction of works such as Dhara Kantibhai Chotai's analysis of history-writing in nineteenth century Gujarat that problematises the received notions of history and historiography and studies the imbrication of pre-colonial understandings of the past in colonial history writing by natives.

Conclusion

In spite of nearly two decades that have passed after the crisis debates, Alok K. Mukherjee laments that "the conventional curriculum of English literary studies has not changed significantly, and continues to be reflected in such critical institutional practices as the national eligibility test, the civil service examinations and the curriculum guidelines of the UGC, raises important questions about power and dominance" (285). Mahanta and Sharma writing in 2019 raise similar concerns. It is evident that the discussion of English Studies in India is not over, and demands continued critical inquiry. However, the proposed directions hope to respond to a "counter thesis" that:

> English remains an imperialist and neo-imperialist imposition. In India as in other geopolitical contexts, English is an elite language which exacerbates socio-economic

> differences; the emphasis on English has the effect of diluting attention to Indian languages which are more closely connected to Indian everyday lives, traditions and histories, and sense of identity…Such discussions would need to take into account the fact that, for many, English seems necessary as cultural and social capital, and that there is a significant ground-level demand for English competence amongst traditionally dispossessed constituencies. Equally important are two contrasting issues: (a) *the relationship of ES to studies in other Indian languages*; and (b) *the role that translation plays* in Indian literary studies in all its languages, and the place of English therein. The issue of translation is, in fact, a distinct and significant one: its place within English Studies – in pedagogy and scholarship – also demands further attention. (Gupta and Allen 54)

While critical debates in English Studies have made important interventions over the years in re-imagining the role, function and content of the discipline, this research attempts to explore how the framework of coloniality can help shape a keener historical reading of the epistemological biases of English Studies, and allow forays into fundamentally restructuring it.

Different critical interventions have their own reasons and rationale for the recommendations they offer, yet many seem to be mired in the inside-outside paradigm with respect to the canon. That is, they attempt to 'mimic' the exclusivity of the coloniser's epistemological space in the physical layout of the curriculum which is either inside the canon or outside the canon but does not attempt critically re-viewing it from lateral perspectives. It is this idea that the recommendation in this chapter attempts to contribute to.