

CHAPTER 5

Stylistic Creativity

Having discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 how Maniam uses lexical creativity and grammatical simplification to enhance the ethnolect and sociolect of his characters, this chapter will focus on those *stylistic* devices which authenticate a cultural milieu, providing ‘stylistic effect and local color’¹. To a great extent, this type of creativity consists of *transcreation*, in that speech patterns of an Outer Circle culture are recreated in English, resulting in a nativized discourse style. Such speech patterns include *the transcreation of proverbs and idioms* (5.1), *the use of nativized pronunciation* (5.2), *reduplication* (5.3), and *the use of culturally-dependent speech styles, particularly indirectness* (5.4). In addition, the following constitute stylistic features and will be discussed in this chapter: *the use of local imagery and cultural references* (5.5), and *the use of nativized rhetorical and syntactic devices* (5.6). As in Chapters 3 and 4, the contribution of nativized speech styles to Maniam’s works will be discussed in the conclusion of this study.

5.1 *Transcreation of Proverbs and Idioms*

The transcreation of proverbs and idioms nativizes English in as much as it becomes adapted to the value system of the society in question. According to African writer Chinua Achebe, proverbs enrich the language and are ‘the “palm-oil” with which words are eaten’². In Maniam’s works, proverbs tend to be uttered by the older generation in order to admonish; this is in line with Kachru’s observation that ‘... this device is used to nativize speech functions such as abuses, curses, blessings and flattery.’³ In addition to the transcreation of proverbs and idioms, there are several examples in Maniam’s works of English expressions being uttered with slight differences. This serves to

emphasize basilectal speech. Examples are taken from a wide range of Maniam's works.

In *Mala* (in *Sensuous Horizons*) which describes the life of a young woman who cannot adhere to the oppressive values of rural society, the following proverb is uttered by a neighbor woman, indicating impending trouble:

(Mala) returned home late to an angry mother ...

"Tame the goat or the rams will bristle," the neighbor woman called sagely.

(pp225-226)

This character represents the values of provincial society in general. Mala's parents worry about evil gossip and allow their daughter to marry a 'businessman' and go to the capital, where she leads an empty life.

The following 'un-English' expression, uttered by a potential husband for Mala, is also found in this story. It serves to enhance the mentality of the rural community in that the prospective bridegroom does not *expect* his wife to be educated and is certainly not impressed by this:

"She has been to school," Mala's father said.

"Come, come, even a donkey can be lead by the neck to school," the man said.

(p229)

The curses uttered by Mala's mother, e.g. 'I'll burn your legs!' (p225), 'Pull out your tongue!' (p227) appear extremely dramatic to the Inner Circle reader and probably consist of a transfer of speech style, if not direct translation, from her more dominant code – presumably Tamil.

Often the slightest adaptation of a proverb or expression can betray the ethnolect and/or sociolect of a character, as in the following example:

“He could change at the blink of the eye.” (i.e. ‘in the blinking of an eye’) (*Mala*, p226)

In *The Cord*, the frequent transcreation of proverbs and idioms serves to enhance the Indian ethnolect of the characters. The slight adaptation of some English expressions authenticates the basilectal speech of the characters in general:

Leela: Squeeze a stone and it gives some water, but from him ... nothing!

(Standard English = to get *blood* from a stone) (p10)

Kali: Sugar wouldn’t melt in your mouth. (Standard English = *butter* wouldn’t melt ...) (p69)

Muniandy: You learn as you live. (Standard English = to live and learn) (*The Cord*, p28)

In *Ratnamuni*, proverbs and expressions are used to admonish, as in *Mala*. Here Muniandy punctuates each section of his tale with a conjecture to ‘*ayah*’ - the policeman to whom he tells his tale - which serves to predict impending tragedy and drive home the moral of the story. The frequent occurrence of proverbs and expressions is particularly striking as they are all uttered by the one character:

Ayah, I have looked in to the blackest water and seen. You cannot make what is not in your blood. (p10)

Words-curds, *ayah*. Speak into the wind and after one there is still the wind. (Standard English = words are empty) (p10)

Govindan’s eyes ready to fall out from his face. (Standard English = (his eyes) were popping out) (p10)

There is a big tune that night. (Standard English = there was a real song and dance that night) (p11)

I can't hold up my face to that man. (Standard English = I can't look that man in the eye) (p13)

Ayah, truths you can never give meaning are lies. (p15)

In *The Third Child*, which is narrated almost entirely from the viewpoint of Velu and Vasanthi, there are several proverbs and idiomatic expressions which enhance basilectal speech. The first and fourth examples are excellent illustrations of the bilingual's linguistic creativity. Although they do not involve *direct* speech, Maniam intends the reader to see the situation *through the eyes of Velu*. Therefore, he skillfully adapts Standard English expressions to authenticate the style of Velu's unvoiced thoughts:

"For me, money tells me everything. That's enough," Velu said. (Standard English = money talks) (p175)

Krishnan put a ten-dollar bill on the counter ... Velu did not understand him ... he (Krishnan) threw his hard-earned money for the wind to catch. (Standard English = to throw money to the wind) (p173)

"... Now he's making a drop of water into a sea and you're drowning in it." (Standard English = to make a mountain out of a molehill; this expression is much more appropriate in the context of a story which takes place on an island!) (p175)

"Let's not fight. Husband and wife divided may also divide the child ...," she (Velu's wife) said. (Standard English = A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand) (p176)

Robert laughed a little uncomfortably, as if he had been caught pulling up his underpants. (Standard English = to be caught with your pants down) (p182)

Although the structure and narrative style of *The Return* hardly deviate from those of standard English, the numerous sections of dialogue betray the thought processes of a different culture. The following expression refers to the narrator's Indian grandmother, Periathai:

“... But your grandmother wanted to light her own lamp.” (Standard English = find her own way (in Malayan society)) (p1)

The following examples occur in the basilectal speech of the hospital workers:

“I’ll make you talk on the other side of your face!” Karupi warned ... (Standard English = to *laugh* on the other side of one’s face) (p41)

“... Gold is for wearing,” the young wife said.

“They will slash your neck for it”, Muniandy said ... (Standard English = to slash somebody’s *throat*) (p69)

“... They don’t wash the hospital clothes properly. I close one eye.” (Standard English = to turn a blind eye) (p98)

My grandmother, when I went to her in the evening, promised to see me through secondary school.

“Old bones and skin. Something it can live for now,” she said. (Standard English has different word order, i.e. skin and bones) (p101)

The following expression is found in Sivasurian’s ‘book’ in *In a Far Country*:

The innocent teach more fully than the grown up. (Standard English = out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, *or* the child is the father of the man, *or* the child shall lead them) (p103)

In *The Dream of Vasantha (Sensuous Horizons)*, Vasantha is repeatedly told by the Indian community to ‘tie up her son’s tail’. This sounds much more authentic in the speech of Vasantha than its Standard English equivalent (ie ‘to clip a person’s wings’):

“A boy like that will tear up my new shirt and say its an accident. You must tie up his tail now Vasa ...” (p207)

5.2 Nativized Pronunciation

Pronunciation is an aspect of speech style which "... seems to provide crucial clues toward marking a person as being within a particular group or outside it."⁴ Maniam sometimes alludes to Asianized pronunciation by deliberately spelling words differently, particularly in the case of basilectal speech. The adverbial 'maybe' is spelled – and therefore pronounced - differently by all Maniam's characters, e.g. Sivasurian from *In A Far Country*:

"You've been kind to me. *May be* I should give something back." (emphasis is mine) (p82)

"Then one day I fell sick. *May be* it was all that work. *May be* it was the closed up place with its smoke and dirt that made me sick." (emphasis is mine) (p87)

The following example from *Mala*, suggests Chinese pronunciation:

"Sankah (for Sanker) good man," Lucy said. "Make a lot of money like Chinese himself!" (p232)

In *Ratnamuni*, the reader or audience perceives the immigrant's hesitant pronunciation of 'Malaya' and 'Japan'. This also shows how immigrant Indians stress or break up unfamiliar new words and/or sounds:

'Ma-la-ya' I was hearing all the time. (p1)

From his mouth talk of a motorcycle has been coming. A shiny thing made by Japan. (p15)

5.3 Reduplication

According to Kachru, 'reduplication of items belonging to various word classes is a common feature of South Asian English and is used for emphasis and to indicate continuation of a process'⁵. In addition, reduplication creates 'the effect of colloquial speech and (develops) particular character types'⁶.

While reduplication per se does not occur in Maniam's works, there is frequent *repetition* of various words and phrases in the speech of those characters of lower social standing which produces a similar effect. In *The Dream of Vasantha (Sensuous Horizons)*, repetition occurs in the speech of Mrs Singh, a comic character. Having acquired considerable wealth, she patronizes her servant, Vasantha, and wishes to be held in high regard by the community in general. However, the basilectal traits in her speech, together with her strong Indian ethnolect, betray her more humble origins:

"... Women like us suffer and suffer," Mrs Singh said. Her resonant sigh was closely followed by a ghee-scented burp. (p191)

The following example from *The Third Child* is similar:

"... I called and called at his door." (p172)

In *In A Far Country*, Sivasurian frequently repeats words and phrases:

"The places where I slept and the families that I stayed with kept changing. *Sometimes* I slept out in the verandah with only a thin vesti to protect me from the cold. *Sometimes* I slept in a room crowded with tired and sweating bodies. *There were days when* I fed on rice soaked in water. *There were days when* there was always chicken curry on the plate." (emphasis is mine) (p83)
"*Sometimes* I heard voices in a quarrel; *sometimes* I heard the woman sobbing ..." (emphasis is mine) (p86)

Finally, in *Ratnamuni*, repetition occurs repeatedly in the speech of Muniandy:

He takes and takes from the dhobi. (p9)

From reading for reading he has come to success for success. (p10)

In addition, the basilect of Muniandy's speech is enhanced by the strategy of following up one word with another similar sounding one (often a meaningless conjecture), as in the following examples which echo the rhythmns and speech patterns of Tamil:

Repot-kepot, *ayah*. (p1)

Destination-mastination. (p1)

Family-homily, *ayah*. (p6)

Words-curds, *ayah*. (p10)

Son-sin, *ayah*. (p17)

5.4 *Culturally-Dependent Speech Styles (Indirectness)*

In Outer Circle varieties of English, there is a tendency to be *indirect* by means of hinting, paraphrasing, etc. This indirectness is often transcreated from a speaker's other, more dominant code into English, resulting in an unusual, culturally-dependent speech style. This phenomenon occurs frequently in the speech of Maniam's characters, foregrounding their ethnicity.

The speech of Sivasurian from *In A Far Country* has a great tendency to be indirect. His book, "Not A Story, Not A Chronicle", hints at real political events without naming them precisely. The first example below hints at interracial problems in colonial Malaya, without clearly naming the governors or 'the people who ruled the country'; the second at the imminent threat of the Second World War. Failure to describe these events *precisely*, as well as

viewing them through the simple man's eyes, elevates the horrors and allows Sivasurian to distance himself from the unpleasant:

The people who had come from India, cursing its poverty, now saw in their hunger-filled dreams a motherland flowing with milk and honey ... So they cursed this land (i.e. Malaya), its heat, its rains, its not giving them work to earn the money for their food.

And *the people who ruled the country* too saw them as a burden that must be removed. (emphasis is mine) (p105)

And war was approaching in *the white man's land* and the Japanese were also becoming war-like. (Emphasis is mine; 'the white man's land' sounds more dramatic than 'Europe' and clearly lends the phrase an Asian (or at least non-Western) perspective.) (p105)

The following reference appears to hint at the rise of Communism in post-war Malaya:

I had never seen people become peoples ... the most important thing was that ... (man) make himself grow in the eyes of the people ... The soil of such growth was crowds or gatherings. There were tea parties, feasts and public speaking on platforms. They became festivals for those men who wanted to make something big of themselves. These men talked, scolded, sang, criticised and even danced. They behaved like any other actor on the stage ... *I saw Sulaiman go up on that stage; I saw Ah Chong go up on another stage* ... (emphasis is mine) (pp117-118)

Zulkifli's speech, too, has several examples of indirectness. In the following example he describes his son Mat who is 'in a hospital'. He does not clearly state that his son has been committed to an asylum after murdering three men but refers to the incident as 'that day'; he does not say that his son is under sedation but says '(they) filled his veins with medicine ...' which serves to emphasize the horror:

"The police took Mat away. I saw Mat only once after *that day*. He was *in a hospital*. They had shaved his head and face and *filled his veins with medicine* so

that he looked like a child again. He didn't recognise me." (emphasis is mine)
(p129)

In the following examples, Maniam makes Zulkifli use a paraphrase or circumlocution rather than the precise English term. Here Maniam is rendering Malay speech in English⁷ and Zulkifli's simple nature is suggested in this way:

"Though he didn't talk to me, he treated his mother with respect when she visited him ... Mak Millah always returned with wet eyes (i.e. 'in tears'). (p126)

"He (Mat) threw stones and soil on the wall of the hut. Many times he hurt himself. We had to clean his cuts and *put medicine* on them. (i.e. 'medicate' or 'disinfect'; emphasis is mine as this is a literal translation from the Malay: bubuh ubat = put medicine). (p127)

In *The Return*, the speech of Karupi illustrates indirectness. Here she is seen trying to persuade her husband to send his son Ravi to English school as she believes it will benefit both the boy and his family. Her subordinate position as second wife does not allow her to state her opinions directly. Hence she invents a dream, thinking that her Tamil husband may believe it. For the reader, this of course has a comic effect:

Karupi related a dream to us one morning:

"You might have heard me shouting in my sleep last night. I had a terrible dream. Its afternoon and we're taking a nap ... A white man, wearing a coat and tie, rushes at us. There's an axe in his hand. He says terrible things in a language we don't understand. Then he starts hacking away at the things we've just acquired. But he shakes his head and the axe splinters the beds ... Out of this mist, the white man's face appears.

"He says, 'Send the boy to English school!'

"He points at Ravi."

I remember my father's laughter. Still chuckling, he returned to sorting the dirty clothes before going to the laundry. (p16).

She continues to pursue her goal indirectly, by constantly finding fault with Ravi's Tamil teacher. (This is reminiscent of the example given by Asmah in *Indirectness as a Rule of Speaking among the Malays*⁸: a Malay wife succeeds in getting her husband to purchase new curtains by repeatedly commenting on the shabbiness of the old ones rather than asking for new ones directly):

"Your teacher friend thinks we're unclean," she remarked to my father.

"Leave him alone," my father said.

"He insults our dignity and you turn your face away," Karupi said.

My father laughed ...

"You take a stranger's side against your own wife," Karupi said. "How's this boy going to learn the right virtues?" (*The Return*, p19)

Another noteworthy aspect of the speech of Maniam's characters is an occasional tendency to use elaborate, almost antiquated language. Like indirectness, this tendency is culturally dependent and appears to constitute 'bookishness'⁹. The following examples are taken from the speech of a middle-class Indian family in *The Rock Melon* and its later adaptation, *The Loved Flaw* (both in *Sensuous Horizons*):

... (Viji) shouted and stamped out of the kitchen.

My wife looked at me and shook her head.

"That temper must be bridled," she said. (*The Rock Melon*, p146)

This sounds more authentic, and indeed more dramatic, in the speech of the narrator's wife (an Indian schoolteacher) than a Standard English expression, such as 'we'll have to curb that temper'.

When bathing time was over, the young men drifted away ... (*The Rock Melon*, p149)

Again, this sounds more authentic than the expression 'bath time', which pertains to an English household.

“... don't bring shame to that man whose house has welcomed you.” (*The Loved Flaw*, p176)

The concept of ‘shame’, particularly as used in this expression, is not common in Western societies.

5.5 *Local Imagery and Cultural References*

According to Lindfors, quoted in Kachru¹⁰, the bilingual uses this strategy ‘to evoke the cultural milieu in which the action takes place’. It makes a text context-specific and “de-Englishizes”¹¹ it, perhaps creating interpretative difficulties for the reader who is only familiar with the cultural and literary conventions of Inner Circle nations. To some extent in Maniam’s works footnotes and/or embedding ease interpretative difficulties.

Textual analysis in this area has revealed that Maniam uses Hindu imagery and references to strengthen the Tamil context, as well as local Malaysian imagery, e.g. based on plants and animals, to support the general Malaysian context.

Religious imagery is found in *In A Far Country*, particularly in the speech of the Indian Sivasurian when describing his youth spent as a vagrant. In both examples, embedding explains the religious reference; in the second example, the metaphor ‘god’ adds a touch of humor to Sivasurian’s speech:

“... I didn’t remember anything of the place I had left behind ... So when they – the shop people – asked my name, I said Sivasurian, meaning the lord of the sun ...” (p84)

“The proprietor of the shop was a kind but strict man. He sat there at the cash-box like a God, almost like Ganesha, the remover of obstacles ...

‘Who’s that boy?’ He demanded.

‘A lost, dazed fellow,’ one of his workers said ...

‘Give him a cup of tea,’ the god behind the counter said ...” (p85)

In *Ratnamuni*, Hindu imagery and Indian references are used with little or no embedding. This is in line with the speech style of Muniandy, who tells a confused, rambling tale, leaving the reader or audience to make inferences about the moral(s) implied. Note that the first two examples are found in the first page of the story and contribute, therefore, to setting the scene:

That man in Madras wearing the uniform asks me, “What is this, man? Everybody carrying big boxes and things, you only a beggar’s bundle?” I said, “The lord Siva danced and made the world.” The man was laughing in the corner of his mouth.

(The Indian police officer obviously understands this reference to Siva). (p1)

I am Hanuman, the rowing monkey for them. (p1)

They (society in general) are making speech like Shivaji Ganesan. They go to see pictures like they are going to temples. These new gods speak another type of truth through their mouths. (p16)

The unfamiliar reader probably perceives Shivaji Ganesan to be a politician (he is, in fact, a well-known Indian actor); one notices again the use of the metaphor ‘gods’.

In *The Cord* Hindu imagery enhances the Indianness of the characters and strengthens the theme of traditional values versus modernization. Again, the following excerpt is taken from Mundiandy’s speech. (It should be noted that the characters of the younger generation use far fewer religious images or references):

Muniandy: What about all the other stories it (the *uduku*) told? ... Of Rama and Sita. Love that goes through the fire that purifies. (p41).

The chanting off-stage at the beginning of scenes gives the play a strong Indian flavor:

Chanting off stage:
Son of the three-eyed Lord Siva
Born before Lord Kantha
Five-armed Lord Vinayaga
Save us your children, Gananatha.

Mother Maha Mariamma
Half of Almighty Siva ... (p38)

In a Far Country, which relies to some extent on symbolism to enforce the theme of alienation in a modern world, provides excellent examples of local Malaysian imagery. One important image in this novel is that of the tiger hunt, which symbolizes both the individual's need to find himself, and the destruction of the land of Malaysia through economic speculation. Halfway through the novel, the narrator is taken on a tiger hunt by the *Malay*, Zulkifli. The Indian narrator has to venture into the heartland and hunt for the tiger in order to really belong in Malaysia like the Malays. Interpretation of this event is probably equally demanding for the Malaysian and Western reader:

"The tiger is watching us," Zulkifli says, "But we are not ready to see it yet ... we've to take on the character of the tiger first. We must see through its eyes. Feel through its body. We must become the tiger."

"You seem to know everything about it," I say.

"Through the instinct that has travelled to me through the blood of my ancestors," he says.

"Are you saying I don't have such an instinct?"

"You don't have ancestors here," he says. (pp98-101)

The symbol of the tiger hunt is also found in the short story *Haunting the Tiger* (*Haunting the Tiger, Contemporary Stories from Malaysia*). Here the protagonist, Muthu, lies on his deathbed and thinks back over his attempts to belong in Malaysian society. He, too, ventures into the heartland with a *Malay* guide, Zulkifli:

“You’ve found the things you want to hunt,” Zulkifli says at last.

“You know?”

“My forefathers had the same look in their eyes,” Zulkifli says, “My father told me.”

“But you?” Muthu says.

“Deep inside. No need to show it so loudly to the world ...”

“You know so much,” Muthu says.

“Centuries of living here ...” Zulkifli says. (p42)

In *Mala*, there is a humorous local image, in which a nosy neighbor delights in likening Mala’s breasts to mangoes:

“Mangoes are ripening,” she said, referring to Mala’s breasts. “Keep them covered with sacking. Hands may reach out.” (p225)

“O! O! The mangoes want to fall into some man’s hands!” the neighbor woman remarked loudly. (p228)

In *Ratnamuni*, the sap of a rubber-tree symbolizes life or vitality; in *In A Far Country* water has this function¹²:

It is the sap of young blood, *ayah*. You must learn to control it rightly.

(*Ratnamuni*, p9)

The river had joined us together, run like a hidden current through all our hearts.

During those dark, quiet evenings, it was another voice behind all our voices.

When we came to its bank, angry and hot, it cooled us down and soothed us. When we came happy and jubilant it cradled our lighted hearts. Now all that was left was

a murkiness and as I found out some days later, very few people came to its banks.
(*In a Far Country*, p112)

In *The Cord*, the spilling of water comes to symbolize rape and the taking of life:

Muthiah: Let me take water from that pot.

Kali/Lakshmi: Straight from the hips?

Muthiah: And with my bare hands!

Kali/Lakshmi: No! No! Alone! I'm alone!

(*The stylized rape begins ...*) ...

The pot is broken! The water runs! ... (*The Cord*, p55)

To end this section, in Maniam's works 'rice' symbolizes both need and plenty (in Standard English, 'bread' would be used in this context):

Muniandy: They have their rice-bowls to keep filled. (*The Cord*, p44)

There were days when I fed on rice soaked in water, munching on a green chillie for spice. There were days when there was always chicken curry on the plate. (*In a Far Country*, p83)

5.6 *Nativized Rhetorical and Syntactic Devices*

According to Kachru¹³ rhetorical devices are transferred from the dominant code into English in order to anchor a piece of creative writing within a particular culture, giving it 'cultural roots' or 'ancestral sanction'. Rhetorical devices consist of 'speech initiators', e.g. 'our people have a saying' or 'as our people say', which signal to the reader or audience that the action is taking place in a society with different cultural values. Syntactic devices constitute the enhancement of a nativized speech style by allowing part of a story to be

narrated by a character associated with oral tradition, such as a village storyteller.

In *In A Far Country*, Maniam employs nativized rhetorical devices *within* a syntactic device through the creation of the characters Sivasurian and Zulkifli. The former is a harmless vagrant of Indian origin, the latter a Malay from a *kampung* in the North. Both characters appear out of the blue when the narrator is at the height of economic success and appear to function as the voice of his conscience. They take turns at handling the narrative, relating moralistic anecdotes which make the narrator reflect on his meaningless, materialistic lifestyle. Their speech is not remarkable for the extent of lexical creativity or grammatical simplification – although these do occur - as in the basilect of Muniandy in *Ratnamuni*, rather it stands out as culturally-dependent and contrasts sharply with the more neutral speech style of the narrator which does not stand out as different from Standard English. This is seen in the opening paragraph of the novel:

There has hardly been a time in my life when I've stayed in a room, looking outside, doing nothing. Here I am, writing, for which I see no immediate value, and watching the light come into the room and mix with the brightness inside and become indistinguishable. (p1)

Sivasurian contributes two anecdotes to the narrative: the story of his childhood and youth, during which he abandons the search for direction in life in order to wait for the meaning of life to reveal itself to him ('the day of understanding', (p88)); and his book 'Not A Story, Not A Chronicle' (p103), an almost biblical tale which infers that a society of multi-cultural harmony could be achieved in Malaysia. He seems to fit Kachru's description of 'a

traditional native village storyteller ... occasionally putting questions to the audience for participation ... (ensuring) a reader's involvement'¹⁴. He introduces himself to the narrator in such a way that the reader feels his role in the novel is to impart an important message:

"I come from a long way of *thambi* (brother)," he said, "and sometimes I don't know from where." (p78)

He has a humble way of speaking which appeals to the narrator, as in the following example in which he gives him his book:

"Years later, *thambi*, I began to collect my thoughts and put them in a book. You must have the book. There is something about you that says you'll need it one day. Please forgive me for presuming so much." (p88)

His speech is punctuated with philosophical questions addressed to the narrator, but which appeal to a wider audience at the same time:

"Many say that birth isn't a choice. It just happens. What do you do after you're born? Shouldn't people give some thought to that? ..." (p82)

"... it (life) was given to me and hoarding will only wear it away. Have you seen how a saw rusts if it isn't oiled or used? ..." (p82)

The next example is taken from his book and embodies one of the major themes of this novel, i.e. retracing one's steps in order to achieve a meaningful existence:

When man is not himself, he can't run to anyone. He has to go back the way he came to understand what he is. But has he the courage to go back over his own steps? (p104)

Zulkifli, too, is involved in two episodes in the novel: the tiger hunt (see *native imagery* above), and the narrator's visit to his *kampung*, in which he explains how his son has been driven to madness through the materialism of modern Malaysia. Zulkifli's speech in particular, is loaded with speech initiators, which indicate the customs and beliefs of his *kampung* community. The

following two examples show Zulkifli deliberating the problem of his mentally disturbed son:

“... I told Mak Millah that we had to send him away.

“‘He’s of our blood,’ she said.

“*In our culture* no man loses his mind. Something may trouble him but he would soon return to his senses. I consulted the elders in this place and I built this hut for him.” (Emphasis is mine; ‘in our culture’ is the speech initiator which marks Zulkifli’s actions as culturally appropriate.) (p124)

“The kampung people shared my troubles. They were always on the lookout for new ways to bring back my son’s mind. Nothing brought results. There was only one thing to do: send him to a hospital. We disliked that. *Only God can cure the ills of the mind and spirit.*” (Again, emphasis is mine. This is not just Zulkifli’s personal opinion but that of the ‘kampung people’ with whom he lives.) (p126)

When Zulkifli reaches the point in his narrative, at which he discovers his son may have killed innocent people, he states that he in turn would be prepared to kill his son. This remark heightens the drama and emphasizes Zulkifli’s disgust – and that of the community which he represents – at what ‘modern’, urban life has made his son become:

“The first wave of men ... gathered at the steps of my house.

“‘Your son is wild, Pak Zul!’ they called.

“If he had killed, I decided at that moment that I would kill him.” (p127)

As in Chapters 3 and 4, the overall contribution of stylistic creativity to Maniam’s works will be assessed in Chapter 6.

NOTES

¹ *The Alchemy of English, The spread, functions and models of non-native Englishes*, Braj B. Kachru, Pergamon Press, 1986.

² Quoted in Kachru, source *ibid*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ When interviewed for this study on 20 January 1999, K. S. Maniam stated that 'Zulkfli represents the Malay point of view and would be speaking Malay'.

⁸ In *Rules of Speaking*, Pelanduk Publications, Kuala Lumpur, 1995.

⁹ 'This arises' from attaching primary importance to written sources, especially those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.' Braj B. Kachru, source as note 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Water is a universal symbol for life and is not a meaning for this culture alone. For example, it is frequently seen in the works of Spanish poet and playwright Federico Garcia Lorca.

¹³ Ibid (all quotations in this paragraph).

¹⁴ Ibid.