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# **THE MAD DOG AND THE ENGLISHMAN**

## **A critical history of the running amok as spontaneous naked savage**

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requirements for the degree of

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I would like to take this opportunity to state that this work from its conceptualisation to its realisation is indubitably of my making. While it is as indubitable that I am new to the field of critical theory, many ideas that pertain to this work seem novel to me if no one else. These include the derivation of a secular-ethical critique based on a methodological fragment comprising a small 'sample of critical moments'; writing/ writhing from the body; the text (discourse) as antagonistic (rather than 'gnostic') and its fragmentation of the (textual) body of the adiscursive ahistorical subject/ object; genealogical descent as descending on the body in search of our lowly or impure origins (e.g. of disease, disorder, and our anthropological or biological/ racial origins); and the link between Foucault's functionalist thesis on power with the Enlightenment doctrine of the universal struggle for existence/ survival. I am more than obligated to the likes of Foucault or Edward Said for the great insights offered me when surveying the 'discursive formations' of the Western or disciplinary tradition. I however also do not believe in merely paying blind obeisance and have instead fashioned a work that I consider to be significantly different in approach and content to, for example, a *Madness and civilisation* or *Orientalism*. I hope of course to publish much of this work elsewhere and assert my 'moral right' over this work in its entirety.

Rajeendernath Panikkar

## PREFACE

I began this work with the intention of writing a genealogy of amok, the Malay malaise, not long now incorporated into the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), as a culture-bound syndrome. A reading of Foucault's genealogy, and especially of its innumerable critiques, convinced me of the incompatibility of matching an approach steeped in the Western tradition with a 'syndrome' of a people who were long colonised by this West. Foucault's conceptualization, and attributions, of power were also instrumental in my rejection of his incitement to 'write genealogies' (Sawicki, 1991; p. 15), as a method of resisting the 'often oppressive rationalities of discourse in the human sciences' (Lash, 1991; p. 259).

In departing from the genealogical approach I have also gravitated to a postcolonial critique of the writing of the Malay and his amok, which I consider to be far more compatible, given his/ her colonisation by a succession of European imperial powers. Not coincidentally, as he is one of Foucault's most vehement critics, I have refracted this critical history of amok through Edward Said's secular-ethical working of the postcolonial thesis. This is my attempt to avoid what Said views to be the 'retreat of intellectual work' from the 'actual society in which it works' (Ashcroft, 2003; p. 264), and into 'the 'labyrinth of textuality' constructed out of 'the mystical and disinfected matter of literary theory' where a 'precious jargon has advanced' (Said, 1983; p. 4). I have then very deliberately attempted to minimise this 'precious jargon' to make this work more accessible.

I have not included a literature review in this work and instead furnish the excuse that it is (this work) a literature review of sorts. It is a literary critique of the historical writing of the Malay and his malaise. A final word concerns the likely controversial use of the term, the 'White Man', which reprises a longstanding, and antagonistic, racial dichotomy which I and many others believe to be fundamental to 'modern' history. Though I explain my use of this term in my work, I make my sincere apologies to those who feel aggrieved with my continual reference to the 'White Man'. At times I have felt as aggrieved but, in considering various alternatives, could not in all honesty disregard the only too apparent authority this self-proclaimed 'White Man' has exerted on history, and more particularly, in the context of this thesis, on the Malay World.

R. Panikkar

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*Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun,  
The Japanese don't care to, the Chinese wouldn't dare to,  
Hindus and Argentines sleep firmly from twelve to one  
But Englishmen detest-a siesta. . . .*

*. . . In the Malay States, there are hats like plates which the Britishers won't wear.  
At twelve noon the natives swoon and no further work is done,  
But mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.*

*It's such a surprise for the Eastern eyes to see,  
that though the English are effete, they're quite impervious to heat,  
When the white man rides every native hides in glee,  
Because the simple creatures hope he will impale his solar topee. . . .*

*Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun. . . .  
. . . In a jungle town where the sun beats down to the rage of man and beast  
The English garb of the English sahib merely gets a bit more creased.  
In Bangkok at twelve o'clock they foam at the mouth and run,  
But mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.*

*Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.  
The smallest Malay rabbit deploras this foolish habit. . . .  
. . . In Bengal to move at all is seldom ever done,  
But mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.*

[Abbreviated from *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*; Noel Coward, 1932]