

GHOSTS AND WRITERS

E. P. UNNY

SAYAHNA FOUNDATION, TRIVANDRUM

Ghosts and Writers

E. P. Unny
(Graphic story)

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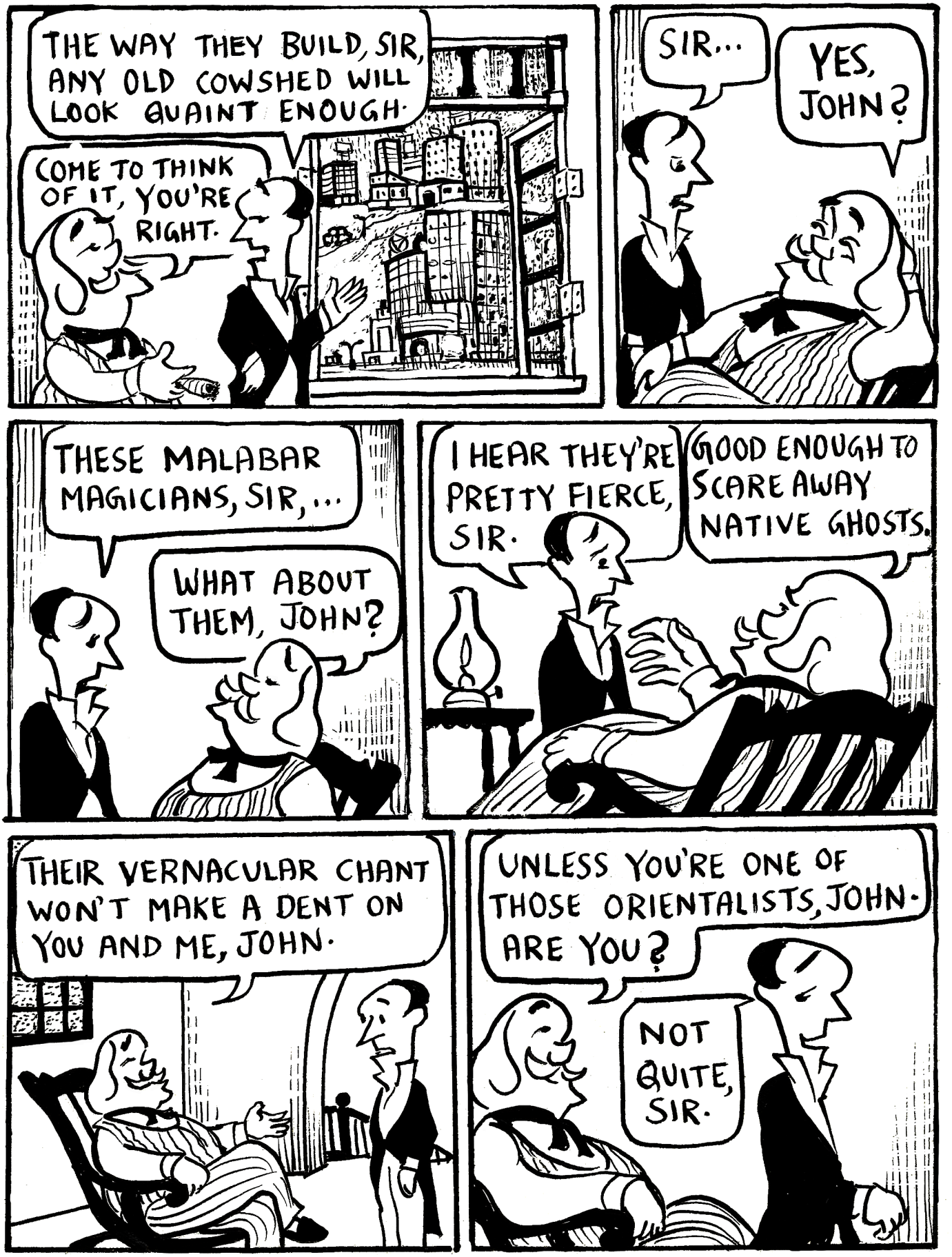
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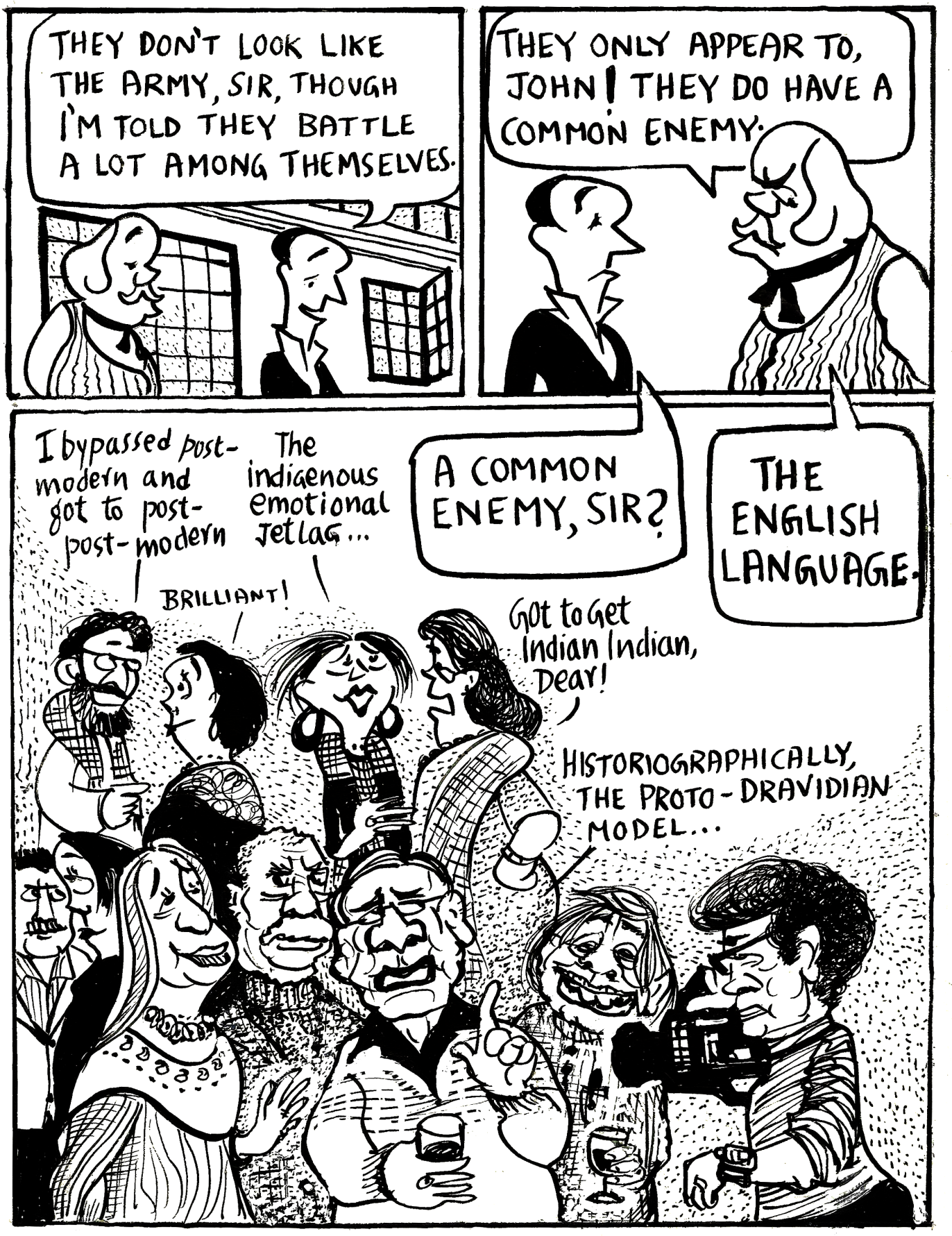
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IN A HAUNTED HOUSE IN A NORTH INDIAN HILL STATION, IT IS TEA TIME FOR THE RESIDENT GHOSTS.
WHAT'S THE COMMOTION ALL ABOUT, JOHN?
SORCERERS, I GATHER, SIR. FROM MALABAR.
HMMMM
BROOOMmmm..
GREEEEmmm..
KROOOOOOmm..
MALABAR! THAT MARSHY, MALARIAL MORASS.
BUT YOU WROTE SO FONDLY ABOUT IT, SIR.
I WAS ALIVE AND FOOLISH THEN, JOHN. BESIDES IT WAS THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR'S JOB...
...TO GIVE THESE FELLOWS SOME DECENT HISTORY.
HASN'T HELPED. SUCH MUMBO-JUMBO'S STILL THERE.
NOT QUITE, SIR. THESE WIZARDS ARE ARMED WITH SOME NEW CONTRAPTIONS.


SUCH AS?
THE LAPTOP COMPUTER, SIR
WHAT'S THE CLAPTRAP IN AID OF?
TO IMPRESS THE CLIENTELE, I'M TOLD, SIR— SALESMEN TO SORCERERS HAVE IT ABOUT THEM.
WHAT'RE THESE NEW BOXWALLAHS HERE FOR?
THE LANDLORD WANTS US OUT, SIR.
THE OLD CHAP NEVER GIVES UP!
HE WANTS TO OPEN A HERITAGE HOTEL HERE
YOU CALL THIS TIN AND TIMBER TINDER BOX HERITAGE?


THE WAY THEY BUILD, SIR, ANY OLD COWSHED WILL LOOK QUAINT ENOUGH.
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU'RE RIGHT.
SIR...
YES, JOHN?
THESE MALABAR MAGICIANS, SIR,...
WHAT ABOUT THEM, JOHN?
I HEAR THEY'RE PRETTY FIERCE, SIR.
GOOD ENOUGH TO SCARE AWAY NATIVE GHOSTS.
THEIR VERNACULAR CHANT WON'T MAKE A DENT ON YOU AND ME, JOHN.
UNLESS YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE ORIENTALISTS, JOHN. ARE YOU?
NOT QUITE, SIR.


THREE MONTHS LATER THE GHOSTS HAVE A NEW SET OF VISITORS.
WRITERS FROM DELHI, SIR.
I THOUGHT THEY WERE ALL IN CALCUTTA. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE WRITERS' BUILDING, JOHN?
NOT THE SCRIBES, SIR. THIS IS THE CULTURAL SORT.
CULTURE? FROM DELHI?
IT TAKES ALL KINDS TO MAKE A CAPITAL, SIR.
A NOISY LOT, I MUST SAY. WHAT BRINGS THEM HERE?
IT'S A WRITERS' RETREAT, SIR.
HI! HUI! HOI!
I THOUGHT ARMIES RETREATED, JOHN.


THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE THE ARMY, SIR, THOUGH I'M TOLD THEY BATTLE A LOT AMONG THEMSELVES.
THEY ONLY APPEAR TO, JOHN! THEY DO HAVE A COMMON ENEMY.
I bypassed post-modern and got to post-post-modern
The indigenous emotional jetlag...
A COMMON ENEMY, SIR?
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.
BRILLIANT!
Got to get Indian Indian, Dear!
HISTORIOGRAPHICALLY, THE PROTO-DRAVIDIAN MODEL...


Feelings! REAL FEELINGS!
Where've I heard that before?
In a TV commercial!
I am trying outa delightfully slipping-brow stuff!
CAN'T IT DIE A DECENT DEATH LIKE YOU AND ME?
IT'S JUST THAT OUR LANGUAGE KEEPS EVOLVING, SIR.
YOUR FEMINISM IS NOTHING BUT INVERTED MALE GAZE
Great science fiction's happening in your Madrasi lingo?


BRILLIANT FRENCH-SOUNDING ITALICS YOU THROW IN, MAN!
Why only French? Why not Sanskrit?
The literary focus is shifting from Latin America to...
ANTARCTICA?
SAVE the Penguin!
HOW LONG WILL THIS ASSAULT LAST?
THREE FULL DAYS AND NIGHTS, SIR.
NIGHTS, TOO?
CULTURE NEVER SLEEPS, SIR.
Blue Saphire! I wear it when I'm working on longish poems
The idea is to be pedestrian without being mediocre
Precisely!
STUCK WITH SOME CREATIVE TYPES! WHERE ARE YOU, SALA?


I CAN'T TAKE ANOTHER MINUTE OF THIS, JOHN!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! GO AND PACK, JOHN.
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, JOHN! HURRY UP!
YOU'RE A REAL DRAG, MAN!
MIND YOUR LANGUAGE, JOHN!
IT'S ALREADY EVOLVING AND IT'S FUN, YAAR!
GOODBYE JOHN!
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