

2010

Anne Wette Finderup  
Agnete Fog



# Worlds of English

SYSTEME >

## The man who fell to earth

By Esther Addley and Rory McCarthy, 2001

Esther Addley is a senior reporter on the Guardian.

Rory McCarthy is currently the Guardian's correspondent in Jerusalem.

The Guardian, Wednesday July 18, 2001

**A** month after he died, police have finally managed to piece together the skeletal details of Mohammed Ayaz's long journey from a remote village in North West Pakistan to his final, sorry end in the car park of a DIY superstore in Richmond west London.

The police didn't know how long the body had been there, but it was clear the man was dead. Tucked under a tree, just inside the railings of Homebase carpark, the prone figure was spotted by one of the store's staff as she arrived just before 7am. She assumed he was a drunk who had tumbled over the railings and fallen asleep while staggering home along Manor Road. It was only as she edged over for a closer look that she noticed that his limbs were grotesquely misshapen, and the pool of lumpy liquid in which he was lying was not vomit, but the man's split brains. The area was hastily screened off and police launched an immediate murder investigation. But it soon emerged that a witness had seen the dead man a few minutes before his body was found. A workman at nearby Heathrow airport had glanced upwards to see him plummeting from the sky like a stone, his black jeans and T-shirt picked out against the washed blue early morning sky. A month after he died, police have finally managed to piece together the skeletal details of Mohammed Ayaz's long journey from a remote village in North West Pakistan to his final, sorry end in the car park of a DIY superstore in Richmond, west London. It is a story of breathtaking courage fired by a fierce hope that a decent life might lie in a distant country where he knew no one. It seems all the more tragic that this heroic odyssey should have ended in desperate bathos on a sunny Thursday morning, in the sort of quiet, affluent suburb in which the young man probably hoped he would one day raise a family.

At Bahrain airport the night before, at about 1am local time, the 21-year-old Ayaz somehow broke through a security cordon and sprinted through the dark towards a British Airways Boeing 777 that was preparing for takeoff. As the ground crew backed away and the enormous aircraft dragged itself round in an arc towards the runway, he ran under the wings and hauled himself into the cavernous opening above the wheels.

At takeoff, a number of passengers noticed that the man in black had not emerged from under the plane. Local Bahrain news reports claimed

re'mote adj fjern, afsidesliggende  
DIY = Do It Yourself (gør-det-selv)  
tuck vb gemme væk  
railing sb rækværk  
prone adj liggende på maven, fladt  
as same vb antage  
limb sb legensdel  
misshapen adj misformet  
lumpy adj klumpet  
launch vb iværksætte  
émerge vb komme frem, vise sig  
plummet vb falde brat  
pick out vb her: fremheve  
fierce adj voldsom  
decent adj ordentlig  
distant adj fjern  
he'roic adj heltmodig  
odyssey sb meget lang rejse  
bathos sb dybt fald fra stor højde; antiklimaks  
affluent adj velhavende  
cordon sb afspærring  
arc sb bue  
haul vb hale, trække  
cavernous adj hulelignende; stor og rummelig

that by the time it was lumbering into the air, the captain had been told there might be a stowaway. But for some reason, perhaps because the sighting was unconfirmed or because schedules were tight, or because runway security was not his responsibility, he did not turn back. This was put to BA and its response was that a captain would never take off if he believed security had been breached. Tim Goodyear, a spokesman for the International Air Transport Association in Geneva, describes the apparent decision to proceed with the flight as 'somewhat unusual'. 'On the other hand, one cannot say that any captain should have behaved in a certain way.' Hindsight, he says, is a terrible thing.

Ayaz's family have had little time to grieve. They have spent the past week in the fields harvesting this year's onion crop. The harvest is good; mountains of red onions are piled by the roadside, but market prices are bad again. They make barely one pence a kilo. Since Ayaz's death the family of five brothers and four sisters face a mountain of debt. The small village of Dadahara sits in the broad, green valley of the Swat river in northern Pakistan, close to the Afghan border. The Queen visited in the 60s to see the beautiful, once forested mountains. But there is little work now, little opportunity for education and only one telephone between 3,000 villagers.

Ayaz, a keen cricketer and footballer, left school at 16 and went to work in the family's fields, farming wheat, barley, corn and onions. 'He always spoke about going to work in America or England. But they don't give visas to poor people like us,' says his brother, Gul Bihar, 26.

Seven months ago, Ayaz finally decided to join the thousands of young Pakistanis who travel to the Gulf states every year to work in construction, hoping to save enough money to send home to their families. He found an agent who promised him work as a labourer in Dubai. It would cost 120,000 rupees (£1,300) to arrange the flight, the visa and, the heaviest cost, to meet the agent's exorbitant fees. The family borrowed heavily from their relatives and Ayaz, who spoke little Arabic, flew out to Dubai with a promise of a salary of 400 Dirhams (£77) a month. It was more than many earn in Pakistan but even if he saved most of his salary it would still take at least two years just to pay back his relatives.

It soon became clear it would take Ayaz a lot longer to earn back his money. His employer in Dubai kept his passport and paid him just 100 Dirhams (£19) a month, barely enough to buy food. 'He was a very strong man, very brave and very good at working. He just wanted to earn money for the family so his brothers and sisters could be educated and have a better life,' says Gul Bihar. 'He phoned us a few weeks before he died. He was very upset. He said: 'I've been here for six months but I haven't been able to send you any money because I haven't been paid. What should I do?'

Days later, without telling his family, he crossed to Bahrain and climbed on board the flight to London. Getting into the wheelbay of a

lumber vb bevæge sig tungt og larmende  
stowaway sb blind passager  
BA = British Airways  
breach vb bryde  
ap'parent adj tilsyneladende  
hindsight sb bagklogskab  
grieve vb sørge  
harvest sb/vb høst/høste  
crop sb afgrøde  
pile vb bunke op, lægge i bunke  
barely adv knap og næp  
debt sb gæld  
forested adj skovklædt  
keen adj ivrig  
con'struction sb byggebranchen  
ex'orbitant adj overdriven  
fee sb salær

crouch *vb* krybe sammen  
 clinging *vb* henge fast  
 con'fort *vb* vride, sno sig  
 articulated *adj*; her:  
 Tarmac *sb* start-/landingsbane  
 re'tract *vb* trække sig tilbage  
 hatch *sb* luge  
 cargo bay *sb* lastrum  
 dungeon *sb* fangekælder  
 undercarriage *sb* landingsstel  
 pressure *sb* tryk  
 a scent *sb* opstigning  
 altitude *sb* højde  
 de'scend *vb* stige ned  
 dis'tressed *adj* ulykkelig  
 dis'figured *adj* skamferet  
 suggest *vb* antyde  
 harrowing *adj* oprivende, rystende  
 con'trive *vb* klare, opnå  
 B 353 B = betegnelse for mindre vej i UK  
 primary school *sb*  
 skole for 4-11-årige

Boeing 777 is not easy. It involves climbing 14ft up one of the aircraft's 12 enormous wheels, then finding somewhere to crouch or cling as the plane makes its way to the end of the runway and starts its deafening engine. Ayaz had to contort himself around the huge pieces of articulated steel while the Tarmac slipped by only feet beneath, the engine accelerating to 180mph. But it was probably only when the wheels left the ground and began to retract into the bay that he realized how much trouble he was in. 'There certainly used to be a belief that there was a secret hatch from the wheelbay into the cargo bay, and then into the passenger cabin, as if it were a castle with a dungeon and a series of secret passageways,' says Goodyear.

In fact, the undercarriage compartment has no oxygen, no heating and no pressure, and there is certainly no way out. By about 10 minutes into the ascent, the temperature in the wheelbay would have been freezing. At 18,000ft, minutes later while passengers only a few feet away were being served gin and tonic and settling down to watch in-flight movies, Ayaz would have begun to hallucinate from lack of oxygen. At 30,000ft the temperature is minus 56 degrees. Even if the young man managed to escape being crushed by the retracting wheel mechanism, he was as good as dead from the moment his feet left the runway.

'He didn't have a chance,' says Paul Jackson, editor of the specialist magazine *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*. 'At that temperature you're a block of ice – there's no way you're going to get away with it, unless the plane is forced for some reason to fly at an unusually low altitude.'

By the time the plane reached British airspace, he was almost certainly long dead. Shortly after 6am, somewhere between 12 and 20 miles from Heathrow, the plane locked on to its approach path and began to descend over Barnes in south west London. Between 2,000 and 3,000ft, the captain opened the undercarriage and lowered the wheels; the young man was tipped out into the early morning sky.

The moment Ayaz's body struck the Tarmac in the car park at the Richmond branch of Homebase, he became the problem of Detective Chief Inspector Sue Hill. She had a distressed supermarket worker and the badly disfigured body of a 'suntanned man, of Mediterranean or Middle Eastern appearance', but not much else to go on. The man was carrying a book with a few phone numbers in it, which suggested he was Pakistani, but no identification. 'It was harrowing,' says Hill. 'I sat in the Homebase car park and thought, this is someone's son. What a bloody awful way to go.'

What struck Hill and her team immediately was how lucky they had been. It is difficult, in fact, to imagine how a body slamming into the ground could have contrived to avoid the B353 only feet away, the railway line at the end of the car park beside which is a primary school, or the tightly packed red-brick houses of Manor Grove just across the road. The police have cause to worry. Across the road from Homebase, a few

yards to the left, is an enormous Sainsbury's supermarket, completed a year ago on the site of a derelict gasworks. It was here, in October 1996, that 19-year-old Vijay Saini's own journey ended. He had stowed away in a jet from Delhi in the same way as Ayaz did, and fell out at almost exactly the same spot. His body lay undiscovered for three days. In August 1998 a couple drinking in the nearby Marlborough pub saw another body tumble from a plane, and land on what they thought was the building site of the new Sainsbury's. Despite a widespread police search, that body was never found, and police think it may have landed in a reservoir. There were reports of a fourth body being discovered while the Sainsbury's complex was being built.

'The undercarriage is always lowered at the same point, that is why they are failing at the same place,' says John Stewart, of the airport noise pollution lobby group Hacan Clear Skies. 'But it's an almost uncanny coincidence – these people fly right across the world in this way from different places, and they all end up in a car park in Richmond. If there are any more bodies to fall, that's where they will fall.'

Only one man is known to have survived such a journey. Vijay Saini's brother, Pardeep, was found at Heathrow in a disorientated state shortly after a flight from Delhi landed – he was thought to have entered a state of suspended animation in the freezing temperatures. It took Interpol, Pakistani community workers in the UK and a number of fortuitous coincidences to track down Ayaz's parents. A committee member from the Pakistan Centre, a community organization in Newcastle, happened to be holidaying in the Swat area, and came across a small village, the talk of which was the young man's death; he went to Dadahara. 'All the conversations that I had with his father, he was trying to plead for the body to be sent back,' says Shabbir Ahmed Kataria, who works at the centre. Kataria organized a collection to send the body home, with anything left over to go to the family.

On July 5, three weeks after Ayaz died, his body began the final leg of his journey. The coffin was taken to Heathrow, and loaded into the hold of another British Airways plane, this time bound for Islamabad. Ayaz's father, Gul Diar, is a deeply religious man who has struggled to rationalize the death of his son. His wife suffered a minor heart attack after hearing the news and is in hospital recovering.

'Allah gives and Allah takes away. He was meant to die at this time,' said the old man, wearing a cotton prayer cap and stroking his long white beard. He greets guests and then walks out to the graveyard at the edge of his land. His son was buried here two weeks ago under a large mound of brown earth ringed by stones and covered in a dirty plastic sheet. Two large, plain slabs of slate stand up out of the top of the unmarked grave. 'My son was as strong as four men but he died in search of bread,' his father says.

derelict *adj* ubeboet og forladt; forsømt  
 uncanny *adj* uhyggelig  
 co'incidence *sb* tilfælde  
 sus'pended ani'mation  
*sb* skinkod tilstand  
 leg, *sb* etape  
 hold *sb* varetægt  
 slab *sb* plade, flise  
 slate *sb* skifer

### Comprehension

Take turns assuming the role of one of the different characters from this text. Live it, be it – use the text and your imagination. The first student names a square, e.g. B2, and the second student has to perform the task contained in that square. When you are given a task, you must talk for at least 2 minutes. Your group members can ask additional questions if you cannot use up your two minutes.

	A	B	C
1	You are <i>Detective Chief Inspector Sue Hill</i> . Tell us about the police investigation from when you received the phone call.	You are <i>Mohammed Ayaz's mother</i> from the remote village in Northwest Pakistan. Mohammed called you one last time before he left Dubai – what did he say? What did you talk about?	You work at <i>Heathrow airport</i> . There have been cases like this before, and there will probably be more in the future – tell us about your experiences and predictions.
2	You are <i>the couple</i> having a drink near Marlborough Club. Tell us about that night – what were you doing, what did you see?	You are <i>Mohammed Ayaz's father</i> . Tell us about the harvest, the prices and what you meant when you told the journalists, 'My son was as strong as four men but he died in search of bread'.	You are <i>the Queen</i> who visited Mohammed Ayaz's village in the 1960s. What did you see? (speak the Queen's English)
3	You are <i>Mohammed Ayaz</i> (in the skies). Why did you leave Dadahara and later on Dubai? And how did you get onto the plane?	You are <i>the agent</i> who arranged for Mohammed Ayaz to work in the Gulf States (oil industry). How do you run your business?	You are <i>Paul Jackson</i> , editor of the specialist magazine 'Jane's All the World's Aircraft'. Give a technical explanation of what happens if you sit in the wheelbay when the plane takes off.

task *sb* opgave  
 harvest *sb* host  
 prediction *sb* forudsigelse

### Analysis of non-fiction

- Study the order in which the elements of the story are organized: Does the article follow the typical so-called *journalistic triangle*, giving the conclusion first, and then the other pieces of information according to how important they are thought to be? What is given first priority? And what is considered of least importance?
- Is it possible to trace the journalists' opinion anywhere in the text – in its organization, its choice of words, its selection of sources and interviewees, or is it completely objective, do you think?
- The article was published in the British newspaper the *Guardian*, which is counted among the serious newspapers with a slight left-wing orientation (roughly equivalent to the Danish *Politiken*). How would the same story have been told (if at all) in a serious right-wing newspaper like e.g. *the Sunday Times* (*Berlingske Tidende*)? Or in a tabloid like e.g. *The Sun* (*Ekstra-Bladet*)?

### Post-reading

Discuss: There are many stories of refugees taking desperate measures to get a better life in e.g. the West. Have you heard some? What are their reasons for leaving their homes? What are their chances of success, do you think? 1 in 10? Or 1 in 1,000,000?

source *sb* kilde  
 e'quivalent *adj* som svarer til  
 tabloid *sb* formiddagsavis  
 measure *sb* foranstaltning

Anne Mette Finderup & Agnete Fog

# Worlds of English



## Aabenraa Statskole

Denne bog forbliver skolens ejendom. Eleven er økonomisk ansvarlig for den, og den vil blive forlangt erstattet, dersom den lider overlast, eller ikke igen afleveres, når skolen ønsker det.

Bogen skal forsynes med omslag, og elevens navn og klasse skal anføres både på dette og på denne seddel.

Der må ikke i bogen anføres notater eller gøres tilføjelser, der ikke direkte dikteres af læreren.

Bogen er udlånt:

20	til	klasse:
20	til	klasse:
20	til	klasse:
20	til	klasse:
20	til	klasse: