CHAPTER X

NATIONAL CULTURE

Culture is a multi-generation heritage, the sum-total of the way of life moulded in the course of thousands of years in the history of a nation, a people. Culture means, in the words of Sardar K. M. Panikkar, "a community of thought, a similarity of conduct and behaviour, a common general approach to fundamental problems, which arise from shared traditions and ideals." Culture is the quint-essence of noble living. It is an ideal that has to be reached, like the summit of the Himalayas, by some sometime.

Indian culture is one of the richest ancient world-cultures. Its roots are deep and well spread out and its traits are clearly demarcated. Spirit of tolerance, sacrifice and restraint, desire for synthesis, universal, philosophical and charitable outlook, catholic and compassionate sensitivity, harmony and kinship with nature, religion-oriented, (as seen in the systems of Purusharthas - Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha - and Ashramas - Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanprastha, Sanyasa - ) love for truth, beauty, goodness and non-violence - these are some of the outstanding features of our culture. There are some mistaken notions about Indian culture: the criticism is that it is unsocial, anti-science, otherwordly, fatalistic and pessimistic, caste-ridden, village-based, unjust to women and
the untouchables.

Post-Independence India is faced with political, economic, technological, religious and cultural challenges. The prolonged slavery of and contact with the Englishman filled India with new opportunities and conflicts. The East-West confrontation has created a new cycle of attitudes, approaches and complexes. With the advent of the long-awaited Independence has come the spirit of self-assertion, re-instatement of old ideals and, above all, self-confidence and self-respect. This would naturally furnish Indo-Anglian novelists with unexplored vistas of harmony and clash of cultural back-grounds.

The Indo-Anglian novelist brings out the peculiar, distinctive and ancient character of Indian culture. He also shows how even prolonged slavery and repeated assaults on the nation could not subjugate Indian culture, because Indian's body could be chained but not her spirit. A great culture should be magnanimous and all-absorbing. Respect for religion and scriptures is also a cementing force in the formation of the culture of a nation. Indian is particularly fortunate in this regard and, therefore, the bonds of culture are - honoured and lasting ones in India. Raja Rao indicates that the distinctive and peculiar character of Indian culture lends greatness to India and Indians. Rama, in *The Serpent and the Rope*, says that like Indian Ragas, which includ all that is musical, India is
also all-enveloping, universal. "India is spart, that is why, she has no history. India is everybody's; India is in everybody. It is in that sense, I think, that Mahatma Gandhi said, 'When we are free, all will be free!'

History means apportioning a specific, limited period of time to a country, a people. India has no history, because India is timeless, eternal. India is, therefore, universal and vast, never circumscribed in itself, but always magnanimously opening out, stretching out to the outer world beyond itself. Lambert Mascarenhas points out how advanced and ancient Goan-India culture had been when other countries were groping in ignorance and barbarity. Tab, in Sorrowing Lies My Land, tells his children that their forefathers had been far more cultured than Europeans and he traces before them the ancient Goan history starting from Asoka down to Albuquerque's ominous entry in 1510.

Bhabani Bhattacharya quotes Gandhiji on culture to stress that culture should not be exclusive and prison-like. Satyajit, in Shadow from Ladakh, says that Gandhigram must accept the Steeltown challenge of Meadow House and remain Gandhigram. He does not like merely to feed on the ancient national culture. They should enrich their traditions with the experience of the new age. The aliens must imbibe the spirit of the soil. These Gandhian words envisage a self-respecting, aggression-defying culture.

Raja Rao boldly and confidently declares that India
could be conquered politically, but never culturally. In *The Serpent and the Hope*, Rama suggests that politicians and professors of Political Science cannot become the fit vehicles of culture. It is reserved for other Indian thinkers and a few sympathetic foreigners to interpret Indian culture. Rama is fascinated by Coomaraswamy, that Boston Brahmin, who, like William Jones and John Woodroffe, is more Brahmin than any Brahmin. "Anybody can have the geographic— even the political— India; it matters little. But this India of Coomaraswamy, who will take it away, I ask you, who? Not Tamurlane or even Joseph Stalin."

Rome conquered Greece, but could not conquer it culturally, because Rome worshipped lust, whereas Greece adored culture. India has sacrificed a great deal for the attainment and preservation of her culture and now stands fortified against any aggression in that behalf. Nayantara Sahgal brings out the spiritual prowess of India even when she was in chains. In *A Time to be Happy*, Savitri tells the narrator how the British rulers had spread the reign of injustice in India by taking away lands, naming roads after their people, reserving places and jobs for themselves, but still they had not been able to crush the Indian spirit, "The realm of the spirit continues inviolate, soaring above the crushed hopes and the unborn dreams. That still belongs to Bharat Mata alone, and no one can deprive her of it." Though Rome conquered Greece militarily, it was Greece that really conquered Rome culturally. Similarly, the conquered India
was only materially conquered, but never her spirit. K. S. Nayak also shows how Indian culture has remained invincible despite many attempts made for its destruction in the course of slavery for centuries. Prof. Vidyasagar, in *Campus on Fire*, tells the American visiting student: "They did not know that our boundaries were guarded by invisible spirits of our religion. As a nation we were easily conquered, but not our spirit. That is the invincible character of our thought."  

Anita Desai suggests that life in India is shaped by religious attitudes formed by scriptural guidance. People quote from the scriptures as readily as the socialists who swear by *Das Kapital*. The verses from the Gita are the most quotable quotes. While analysing Nirode's failure in life, Monisha, in *Voices in the City*, comments on his detachment in life but also on his involvement with his mother and the past. She is tempted to advise him to cast away involvement and be totally empty, alone. Only a sage or savage can bear solitude, sorrow and silence; but sometimes, a man with sharpened sensibility also tries to realise the ideal. Bhabani Bhattacharya points out that the bonds of one's culture are more lasting than one imagines them to be. In *Shadow from Ladakh*, Bhashkar becomes a thoroughgoing American in habits. He drinks and dates a lot. Though now in India, he feels he is far from India because his people refuse to change and welcome the machine.
However, the pull of the culture might be latently persisting, as his twelve years' stay in the States could not extinguish his Indianness. "Yet it could well be that within him India remained as real as ever before." Culture, like a mother, does not abandon us. Its assertion may be slow, but it is never altogether absent.

The Indo-Anglian novel illustrates the salient and peculiar characteristics of Indian culture. Its outstanding feature is the stress on the internal and the neglect of the external. Kamala Markandaya shows that what matters is to remain spiritually unchanged, undistorted, in spite of physical change or disfiguration. Ravi, in *A Handful of Rice*, refuses to be cowed down by others' estimate of him. Externally, he looks an abject little tailor, but internally he feels unchanged, strong and that only is important. This is typical Indian thinking. Time and misfortune might work ravages on a man's face and figure, but so long as he does not lose his inner identity, it does not much matter. Raja Rao indicates how a mystic bred up in culture might wish to discover India, the land of magnanimity and sublimity, of wonderment and ennoblement. As Rama, the hero of *The Serpent and the Rope*, observes that he does not want to discover India materially or externally, but—just like *antara-kasi*, 'the inner Benares', internally, 'something other, more centred, widespread, humble'. "The India of Brahma and Prajapathi; of Varuna,
Mithra and Aryaman of India, of Krishna, Shiva and Parvathi; of Rama, Harishchandra and Yagnavalkya; this India was a continuity, I felt, not in time but space;..." To yearn to see one's India as something invisible that one has seen, something unknowable one has known - to poetise the concrete, to invest the concrete with its abstract identity - is the triumph of Indian Culture. Bhabani Bhattacharya shows how people would die for a moral principle but not for a selfish purpose. Rahoul, in So Many Hungers, notes how the peasants revolt against the tyrants who had imprisoned their leaders, but they do not fight for satisfying their stomachs." Bhattacharya has nicely distinguished the Indian attitude to moral and material problems. Indian culture stresses the spiritual aspect more than the material one. Veena Paintal brings out how moral considerations, instilled into Indian minds by their ancient culture, render them peculiarly invulnerable to material, amorous and such other onslaughts. In Serenity in Storm, the multiplying cruelty of Ashok drives Roshni onto the cross roads of her life. She is tempted to give in to Sanjay by breaking away from Ashok. She hovers between duty and love, sacrifice and happiness. Her moral conflict is born of her cultural awareness and pride. "She felt like a bird caught in a cage and the cage was her own conscience..." Culture often demands sacrifice from the loyal initiates. Happiness and unhappiness are out of context, because sometimes they themselves have to elect the path to unhappiness.
Indian culture regards asceticism, self-control and self-sacrifice as essential. R. K. Narayan, in a serio-comic strain, points out that Indian sages always advise us to conquer self. Jagan, in *The Vendor of Sweets*, says that the conquest of taste means the conquest of the Self. This shows that self-control is a must for spiritual progress. Bhabani Bhattacharya indicates that self-sacrifice for a true cause is the noblest virtue. It is, however, ironical that Rajni, whose job it is to hunt out saleable young women, advocates self-sacrifice. In *He Who Rides a Tiger*, Rajni tries to trap B-10, by arguing that there is no virtue greater than self-giving and so he should persuade the five destitute women to sell their bodies and save their kinsfolk and themselves from inevitable death.

The devilish are dexterous and they twist and pervert the ancient scriptural wisdom and cultural values to their nefarious ends. Zeenuth futilely deals with supreme self-sacrifice as part of Indian culture. The heroine of *Zohra* donates a son to Safia, but is crushed by the painful, early separation from the flesh of her flesh. Everyone is considerate to her, because she herself has been so magnanimous! She feels resigned but the sacrifice has given her a new spiritual lustre, strength, depth. Losing is one of the ways of gaining. Self-sacrifice is the best form of devotion. Indian culture always aims at it for making others happy.

Indian culture accords a very important place to the
ideal of simple living and high thinking. It is catholic and deep; tender and sweet. R. P. Jhabvala shows how simple living reflects a sense of true dignity and arouses reverence even in the hearts of the affluent. Mrs. Bhatnagar and Mrs. Das, in *Get Ready for Battle*, appreciate Sarala Devi's room as simple and charming and say that simplicity is the aim of Indians in life. Mrs. Bhatnagar feels that there is no place for pomp and show in India. The author's irony is very clear and brings out the contrast between simple and hypocritical living. Simplicity is the first step in the direction of self-control and asceticism which would lead to self-realisation. Bhabani Bhattacharya shows how Indian culture is catholic and profound. It is not restricted to personal happiness. Satyajit, in *Shadow from Ladakh*, blesses his daughter Sumita on her eighteenth birthday in a magnanimous manner. He prays for the honey of bliss to envelop all created objects. "His daughter was not entitled to a private happiness of her own, but she could have a share in what was to be universal and cosmic." Only an Indian mind steeped in Indian culture could draw a large circle of cosmic happiness to include private happiness. Hilda Raj shows how Indians are, by nature, large-hearted and sympathetic. They cannot bear to see the suffering even of Christian Missionaries. Of course, fanatics are also there but they are comparatively few. In *The House of Ramiah*, during the early days of their activity in India, the Christian Missionaries have to suffer. Ramiah's mother's heart is filled with pity for
them. "We shall have to pay for their blood some day. We shall suffer for our wickedness in harming the innocent that come to our door."

Hospitality and protection to guests and those who come for shelter are remarkable traits of Indian culture. Even the worst enemy cannot be injured. The blood of the innocent cannot be washed. Bhabani Bhattacharya brings out how Indian culture is against revengefulness and maliciousness. It is full of natural goodness, compassion and pardon. In *A Goddess Named Gold*, Meera's grandfather says that it is not possible to right one wrong with another or fight malice with malice. He is sure the Seth would regret his refusing the women admission to the picture play. When Meera objects that she will be ridiculed if she gives up the fight, he says: "Those who mock at goodness mock themselves; for there is a secret goodness in them also." Unfortunately, this philosophic background of Indian life which has made Indians catholic and magnanimous has also made them passive and submissive. Bhattacharya also shows that Indian culture is full of tenderness and sensitivity. Tyrants go to hell—people hold on to this belief. Meera, in *A Goddess Named Gold*, clarifies that when she says the Seth would suffer she means that those who thrust suffering on others go to hell and their happiness is only outward. This desire to find poetic justice in the world is indicative of unflinching faith in the spiritual values of life.

Zeenuth Futehally refers to the Indian predilection
for tranquillity and equanimity forming the basis of contemplation. In Zohra, Hamid tells Zohra that man is a solitary being whose real companions are his thoughts. Zohra enquires whether the Indian climate also is conducive to philosophic pursuits. Hamid states that the present day bustle is 'alien to the Indian temperament' and that they should 'once more cultivate the habit of contemplation'. He stresses the study of Yoga in the education system for both mental and physical poise.

The voyaging for truth has always been the unquenchable thirst of all true Indians. Bhabani Bhattacharya indicates how man starts his quest for truth in his old age. In A Goddess Named Gold, the minstrel keeps on returning to his wanderings, not because he is devoid of feeling and concern for the family as Meera believes. He cares much for them but there is no stopping the urgent, inner spiritual behest - as Meera's Grandmother knew. He has to be true to himself. This is based on the four Ashramas of life. Whatever his worldly status, an Indian has to be in search of self-realization. Truth and non-Violence go together hand in hand in Indian philosophy and culture, according to which people believe that no one has the power to take away life. S. P. Dhanda brings out the compassionate nature of Indians who could not bear any life being taken. In Surgeon Goes to War, Col. Diwan courageously treats a case beyond all hope. He remembers that some aborigines of Africa mercifully killed the old and infirm.
But Indian culture has inculcated into us a different attitude, 'for the One who gives life alone has the power to take it away'. Life is sacred: one has to try one's uttermost to preserve it, even under the shadow of peril. Khushwant Singh shows how the terrorists had to fight against the sentiment of kindness and pity injected into them by their ancient culture. Sher Singh, in *I shall not hear the nightingale*, has to have his baptism in blood. He is reluctant to kill an innocent, inedible bird. Madan taunts him with softness which will hamper him in shooting Englishmen. "Steel your heart against sentiments of kindness and pity. They have been the undoing of our nation. We are too soft." Nergis Dalal refers to a paradox of Indian behaviour: people would not take a life but also would be indifferent to the suffering of any living animal. Rula, in *Minari*, observes how half-starved, diseased stray dogs roam the streets of Minari, but people do not destroy them or put an end to their suffering. Destroying any life is against all Indian religious teaching, Rula comments a little ironically. This sort of non-violence may be termed a mixed virtue. One may criticise Indians for their indifference to the suffering of animals, but not for their reluctance to take a life deliberately.

Bhabani Bhattacharya, in *Shadow from Ladakh*, refers to Tagore's life-long quest for cultural integration of India. Suruchi explains that simple folk-music is as important as classical melodies. She relates how Tagore
stresses the value of integration. "...integration of the simple and the sophisticated; the ancient and the modern; city and village; East and West." India is 'unity in diversity'. Harmony is the apex of cultural achievement. R. Prawer Jhabvala shows how the unity in diversity could well be observed on an Indian train in assorted passengers. Indian passengers are talkative and have a habit of asking and answering questions of quite a personal nature. Sudhir, in A Backward Place, is made to relate his personal circumstances. Even a morose money-lender reveals his yearning to go to Tiruvannamalai. A barren woman, eager to be blessed with a child, goes on from one place of pilgrimage to another. This panorama of Indian life is a matter of admiration and awe. It is typical of Indian culture to feel concerned with what happened even to strangers - a sort of philosophical sense of tolerance, synthesis, respect for the individual and universal outlook.

Mulk Raj Anand illustrates how the philosophy of Karma has made a deep impression on the Indian mind. Thakur Singh, in The Road, feels, after the defection of his son, that perhaps he should revise his opinion about the Chamars, but the traditional belief cannot be easily overthrown. "So how could he admit that the low caste chamars were the same as the twice-reborn? He clutched at his truth from the deepest eternity and replied to his conscience that, from generations, his ancestors had believed in Karma, which determined birth according to the rewards for the
deeds of the past life." The belief regarding *Karma* and transmigration, as pointed out by Rajaji, forms the core of Indian culture. The caste structure is also intertwined in it and its occupational nature is also a peculiarity of our culture.

Fatalism is almost an inseparable characteristic of Indian life and culture. At one extreme is faith in God's will and at the other is blind faith resulting in criminal inertia. If this enables Indians to endure adversities in life, this also renders them incapable of improving their lot. R. K. Narayan illustrates how people reconcile themselves to ugly turns of events in life with the help of philosophic faith and spirit of resignation about the inevitability of fate. In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Sriram, eager to meet Bharati, asks the bully why they do not escape from that hell. The bully tells him that such a feeling of uneasiness can be washed out by *Bhajan*. He has tried to get out of prison, but is caught because whatever is to happen, happens. Anita Desai indicates that Indian culture teaches us to accept our life as shaped by fate. Maya's father, in *Cry, the Peacock*, asks her to accept and not to fret, because he is a fatalist. The disintegration of personality is due to the conflict resulting from the East-West confrontation and disharmony. The Western theory of life aims at destroying one's limitations, but not so the Eastern one. Acceptance annuls the conflict and its agony and makes misery endurable. R. Prawer Jhabvala shows
that the fatalistic trait of Indian culture has adversely influenced Indians. In *Get Ready for Battle*, Sarala Devi finds it difficult to persuade the dwellers of Bundi Busti to take some action to save themselves. The author says: "They were too used to the role of victims to be convinced that they had any power to act against an aggressor."  

Man gets used to anything - so great is his desire to live. This produces a sort of Lotos-eaters' brand listlessness which renders man unequal to his worldly task. Not to know this unrelenting hold of fatalism on Indians is to be unfamiliar with the way of life of a large section of humanity.

Kamala Markandaya points out how most Indians are worried about the next world so much that they spoil the present life. Their faith and fatalism are fear-crammed, sorrow-laden. Ravi, in *A Handful of Rice*, notes that Apu has been a failure in his of it by boldly grabbing anything he can lay his hands on and then he imagines he will prosper in the next life.  

R. Prawer Jhabvala also exploits the Indian trait of other worldliness by exposing its other side of idolatry. Hari, in *To Whom She Will*, is never punctual, but Amrita likes him for it. She traces it to Indian aptitude for other-worldliness - the supreme disdain for the mundane!  

Excess is always to be eschewed. We have soiled some good cultural customs and principles by overdoing things and then a humorist's eye might hold it to ridicule.
India is a land of the Millers of the Dee - they rest content to be Indians, if others do not disturb them. This inaction - sometimes mistaken for detachment - is an Indian trait. Kamala Markandaya brings out how a dejected, resigned acceptance of one's course of life is imbibed by Indians. Ravi, in *A Handful of Rice*, observes how starving people go on dreaming of getting the elementary necessities of life. They know they would not get anything out of life, that they have to be content with their lot, if things are not worse than what they are. This sort of hopeless resignation infuriates Ravi, a modern youth, who rebels against the grooves of thought. Markandaya also suggests that Indians are listlessly large-hearted. They have no malice against foreigners but they do not also feel much involved. Ravi, in *A Handful of Rice*, informs Nalini how the Portuguese had come and gone, leaving the church at Luz as their memory. Nalini's attitude is peculiarly Indian: 'But who cared?' said Nalini, 'Who comes and goes? We remain, we Indians and that is all that matters.' Nayantara Sahgal brings out the passive character of most Indians. In *Storm in Chandigarh*, Dubey thinks how scenes of violence have now become a common occurrence in big cities. There are many who do not have much to lose by violence but there are also many others who, passively and indifferently, wait for the mountainous surge to swallow them. "Passively waiting, as they waited for the rains, for the harvest, for the births of unwanted
children, for death." To be philosophically unruffled and to be lifelessly inert - these are the two extremes of the spirit of resignation tempered by the concepts of 
Karma and transmigration. Mrs. Sahgal points out the inconsist­ency of Indian attitude - either we headlong plunge into action or we sit gaping at events, unresistingly. In Storm in Chandigarh, Dubey contemplates on Gyan's craze for action and perhaps recalls, in contrast, Harpal's philoso­phic reflectiveness. Shakespeare has wisely illustrated two types of tragedies in the life of man - action unaided by reason and reflection (Othello) and reason and reflection unaccompanied by action (Hamlet). Indian culture often inspires in us an air of listlessly floating down the current. 

An average Indian naturally imbibes the practical implications of the four Ashremas of Hindu life and sincerely endeavours to approximate to its well-defined stages and standards. Even when at the helm of affairs and Indian retires from active worldly life and starts his quest for spiritual attainment. This is so usual a scene in Indian that Indians do not think it out of ordinary if an Indian casts off his worldly riches and fame as readily as he does a pair of old clothes. Most Indo-Anglian novelists have referred to this peculiar trait of Indian life. S. Y. Krishnaswamy indicates how the aged wish to retire after the round of worldly duties is over. The Mahabharat has to end in Shanti Parva. And so with Indian life too. In Kalyani's Husband, Shekhar's mother retires to Benares as
soon as the last worldly wish of seeing Shekhar well married is realised. She wants to contemplate, in seclusion, on God and religion on the banks of the Holy Ganges, the river of rivers. Anand Lall also points out that retirement from the world is a must for old people who seek spiritual salvation. Sometimes, this desire is sharpened by worldly shock and despair. In *Seasons of Jupiter*, Rai Gyan Chand has been separated from his Askari and life has become one grey prospect. He feels his worldly duties are discharged and thinks to remove himself from the circle of pain. He acknowledges the wisdom of the sages in establishing the four stages - *Varnashram* - of life. In India, even a sensualist feels this instinctive urge from within to seek peace and God. It is the triumph of Indian culture. R. K. Narayan shows how Indians aim at retiring from active life at some stage in life. In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Jagan agrees with the septuagenarian bearded hair-blackener that he needs a retreat and adds that one should leave one's surroundings to make others enjoy peace in life. The old man, in a superior tone, expounds the philosophy of *Vanaprastashram* and *Sanyasashram*. This is why they say that an average Indian is a born philosopher. India is a land where cunning practicality and supreme disregard for the worldly exist side by side. Bhabani Bhattacharya refers to man's desire to retire for contemplation in old age. In *A Goddess Named Gold*, even a greedy man like the Seth thinks of retiring from active life after leaving his stores
to his son, and of contemplating on God.\textsuperscript{42} R. Prawer Jhabvala indicates that the spiritual craving in old age, not to brandish one's superiority, not to stress the value of money and power beyond an extent, - is a part of Indian Culture. In \textit{The Nature of Passion}, Lalaji envies his clerk for his detachment and spirituality, because in old age one has to turn to God in search of inner peace. He ruefully deprecates his greed and desire to wield power and influence. He knows that money and power are ultimately meaningless.\textsuperscript{43} Nayantara Sahgal shows how there are two different streaks in the paradoxical pattern of Indian life: sensuality and renunciation. In \textit{A Time to be Happy}, Sanad tells McLvor how Indian life illustrates two opposite tendencies constituting the basic paradox. The difference is the matter of time because the sensualist of today might be the ascetic of tomorrow. Each Indian is aware of the time concept as related to the deeds of life. Even if a sensualist does not become an ascetic, he would not question 'the ascetic as the ideal of a fulfilled old age'.\textsuperscript{44} The rational process that went into the making of the \textit{Varnashram} has stood the test of time. It aptly describes the four Ages of man. Its philosophic basis is as firm as ancient wisdom.

The Indo-Anglian novel reflects the reliance of Indians on faith. Faith is one's moral strength in the beliefs of religious right and wrong. It rehabilitates
a man's character and enables him to tide over critical situations in life without feeling crushed. It is a potent antidote to failure and frustration, danger and dejection. It also promotes a sense of noble self-abnegation and the stress on the spirit as contrasted with that on the mundane. True faith is a sublime peculiarity of Indian culture.

The Indo-Anglian novelist shows that faith is the anchor of culture. It gives steadiness and equilibrium to a man reeling under the impact of an unsavoury, untoward occurrence. S. Y. Krishnaswamy points out that Indian culture is such as would not allow faith to die. In Kalyani's Husband, when the narrator sees Kalyani prostrating before the Mother in all humility, he thinks of how the dormant faith would persistently float to the surface in moments of joy and sorrow. The real faith defies neglect, cynicism, fashion, exhibitionism and ridicule. It may be latent but it is never demolished. S. Menon Marath suggests that faith is a distinctive mark of our culture. In The Sale of an Island, Samban refers to the Hindu philosophy and otherworldliness. He says that Hindus must have developed at sometime in their history a great contempt for life. Chandu Menon remarks that the brain likes to question and doubt but faith means understanding. Zeenuth Futehally shows how a person clings to faith injected into him by his family and racial background. In Zohra, when Zohra is hovering between life and death, her father consults 'the Hafiz Oracle'. He opens a book
of Hafiz, picks a verse there-from at random and tries to read some meaning in it. Bashir is moved by the older man’s faith and thinks that in the subconscious mind of an Oriental, there still lingers a spark of faith or superstition. Faith, indicates Bhabani Bhattacharya, is bred in the bone in India and people keep it alive even when they might be on the verge of death. No ordeal is too high for people of faith. In He Who Rides a Tiger, Lekha witnesses the faith of her Old Aunt even amid the scene of starvation and destruction. With the new learning has come the spirit of questioning and Lekha has these visitations of suspicion. Her father has gone to Calcutta and still the misery is not over, despite Old Aunt’s fervent prayers. There is a cry in her heart: "Where are the gods?"

The sense of hospitality is an unalienable ingredient of Indian culture. To entertain or protect his guest, an Indian would stretch his capacity to the uttermost. To be hospitable means to be deeply gratified. Indian culture has raised a guest to the divine pedestal. R. K. Narayan shows how the sentiment of hospitality is powerful enough to brush aside all other considerations of caste, creed or status. In The Guide, Raju takes Rosie home. His mother’s instinctive Hindu susceptibility prejudices her against an unorthodox name like Rosie. However, she overcomes that unpleasant idea and receives her properly, as a guest any time should be. "A guest was a guest though she might be a Rosie." Kamala Markandaya also stresses the Indian
sense of hospitality. However, unexpected and unfamiliar guests might be, they had precedence over others in welcome. In *Some Inner Fury*, the special garland meant for Kit has to be offered to Richard who is an unfamiliar Englishman but a guest. B. S. Nirody refers to hospitality as an unfailing ingredient for self-content. Our ancient culture speaks of a guest as a god. In *Nandini*, Sajjan is invited at Jayram's house, presided over by his old affectionate aunt, who prepares the dinner for the guest so enthusiastically that she seems to be challenging her old age. In Jhabvala's *The Householder*, Prem feels gratified to be able to invite Raj to his place for lunch. Raj has almost reluctantly agreed to pay the high bus fare to honour the invitation that is, in fact, thrust upon him. But Prem, sublimely oblivious of Raju's discomfiture, revels in their new-acquired 'full stature of householders and married couple.'

Indian culture, as Rajaji has pointed out in *Our Culture*, cultivates in Indians a peculiar attitude to marriage. As he observes: "The general formula in India is: everyone should lead a married life and it should not be left to chance and romance." This attitude is in contrast with the Western attitude regarding marriage. Indo-Anglian novelists show how people in India insist on arranged marriages and hold that the bond of marriage is inviolable. Padmini Sengupta points out how parents start worrying when
their daughters are in the late teens. She suggests that Indians are marriage-maniacs because of the cultural belief. Sita, in *Red Hibiscus*, tells Kusum that she would prefer to die an old maid, if she does not find the right man. She remarks that people are marriage-mad because of the belief in the Shradh ceremony. To Indians, marriage is not merely a means for sensual gratification. Its basis is progeny, dynasty, funeral rites i.e. craving for Moksha. Marriage in India is a religious-cum-social event. Veena Paintal shows how according to orthodox Indian customs arranged marriages are still in vogue. In *Serenity in Storm*, when once Roshni knows that her marriage with Deepak is impossible, she becomes listless about it. Her mother, ironically enough, feels Roshni, is so well brought up that she respects the Indian tradition of leaving marriage in the hands of elders. An arranged marriage is a debatable sociological problem, but in India, it has so long been there rooted in social tradition and family culture. B. Rajan indicates how marriage, according to Hindu culture, is regarded as an ideal, sacred union. In *The Dark Dancer*, Krishnan cannot fully realise or appreciate the prolonged Vedic wedding ceremony. The sacrificial fire signifies much more than is generally understood. ".....the same fire which was their witness would burn in their homes witness to every consequence, everlastingly, inescapably, the fire of unity and of Sita's ordeal." Bhattacharya briefly points out how Indians are anxious to marry off their
daughters when they come of age. In *A Goddess Named Gold*, when Meera requests her Grandfather to return to Sonamitti from his wanderings and then they would be all together for all time. He is mildly tickled and surprised at Meera speaking as if she is not going to leave that home, ever. "For all time?" He broke into a laugh. "Beta, you have to go to a home of your own. How long can you remain with us? It is time already that -"56 This is a tender scene: he with his sense of concern; and she, puzzled and angry at her being marriageable, with her shyness and embarrassment.

Santha Rama Rau indicates how Indian culture does not readily approve of such drastic measures as divorce or judicial separation. Baba's parents, in *Remember the House*, are an ill-matched couple and cannot get adjusted in life. They live separately and the situation, without putting it into thought or language, is accepted. Alix asks Baba whether her parents are divorced because her mother does not stay with her father in Bombay. Baba is shocked. She cannot even think of others thinking thus of her parents.57 This scene is located in pre-Independence times, when divorce was a rarity. Now things have changed quite, but still Indian culture prevents divorce from being resorted to on flimsy grounds, as is done sometimes in the West.

Kamala Markandaya indicates that Indians pay less importance to the body than the spirit, due to circumstances,
climate and religion. Chari, in A Silence of Desire, thinks thus when Dandekar explains that Sarojini cannot be hospitalised because her spirit is unwilling and therefore, the body would not recover. Chari is sorry that in India the body is relegated to the secondary position of neglect. The explanation may not be wholly acceptable, but it has been invested with a sort of logic. The predominance of the spirit over the body has a purely philosophical basis and heritage.

K. Nagarajan asserts that Indian culture looks askance at sexual levity and promiscuity which may be rampant in a permissive society in the West. In Chronicles of Kedaram, Koni is perturbed over the Vasu-Nirmala intimacy. Vanchi laughs out his apprehension. Cole rises to Vasu's defence and attacks the Indian mentality which cannot bear to see a young man and a young woman together. Koni, however, does not like it at all. Character is the inside of man and in its degeneration man will be hollow. Culture without character has no meaning. Nagarajan also suggests that liberty with the opposite sex is undreamt of by an orthodox Indian who would not venture to write a letter of invitation even to a friend's wife. Koni wishes to invite Charulata to the birthday party of his youngest son and Vasu suggests nonchalantly that he should write to her. Koni simply would not do it, because he is not the man to break the custom of ages. Indians guarded their character as a miser would guard his hoard. This may now sound backward
in the days of strip-shows, but this sense of fealty to culture cannot be ignored.

Bhabani Bhattacharya shows how sexual awareness is against the concept of maidenly modesty. In *A Goddess Named Gold*, Meera tries to help the Halwai to drive away the flies. Her raised hand reveals the cutline of her youthful form. The lecherous widower focusses his attention on her breasts. She is filled with contempt as she understands his lust. The author suggests how young girls feel shy at their own youthful growth. Her grandfather comments playfully that the young woman cannot be their Meera. She has quickly blossomed into womanhood. Meera, bold in other respects, blushes uneasily. "Meera hung her head, awkward, hating to be a young woman, hating the shape of her body." Feminine modesty is an essential trait of Indian culture.

Romen Basu describes how an Indian girl refuses to surrender her body to her lover before their marriage and, after some conflict, she however, surrenders which shows the Western influence, when every restraint is cast off as orthodox. Sheila, in *A House Full of People*, resists the love-making of Arun at first but at last gives in to him in view of their three-month-long separation. "You are denationalized and unIndian in so many ways. Maybe your girl friends in England didn't mind making love with you and going to any lengths, but I do. I feel that a line should be
drawn somewhere." Mulk Raj Anand shows that the display of love-making is against Indian culture and even a foreign retorned person cannot brook it. Dr. Shankar, in Private Life of an Indian Prince, is uneasy to witness the Gangi tantrums in an open love-making. Despite his stay in Europe, his demure Indian susceptibilities are manhandled. Delicacy of sentiment is one of the vital tests of culture and Indians do not like to vulgarise sex by brazen displays. Love-making, to them, is sacred, hence private and inviolable.

Indian culture enjoins man to be respectful and protective towards women. In Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope, Rama, impelled by his Indian instinct, feels like an elder brother towards the saddened Catherine. This tie of brother-sister-affection is like a guarantee that at least one's sister would weep when one passes away. Rama said - ".....in India every woman who is not your wife - or your concubine - is your sister. You feel the responsibility of a brother to every woman on this earth, whosoever she may be and in whatever part of the world. Left to himself, the Indian would go tying rakhi to every woman he met, feel her elder brother, protect her love....." A culture attains to greater heights as it widens the area of human sensitivity and compassion. Indian culture strives to show that all man-woman relationships need not be circumscribed to sensuality. Kamala Markandaya brings out how women are to be treated with regard. Men should not readily thrust their worries on them. Women also respect men's domain and
are content with whatever is retailed and doled out to them. In *Some Inner Fury*, Premala and Mira are uneasy about Govind's activities and Kit's knowledge of them, as the district magistrate. Kit, though anxiety-ridden on Govind's score, prefers not to frighten the women. After his perfunctory explanation not making them any the wiser, the women also let go any further discussion, recognising man's right to be secretive if he so chooses.66

The Indo-Anglian novel reflects the traditional, cultural trait of wifely fealty and companionship. The Indian woman, at her best, is loyal, tender and selfless. She attains the splendid stature of a goddess in her unflinching loyalty and service to her husband, who, to her, is not at all less than her God: she would not take her food before he has taken his: out of respect for Indian cultural custom, she does not even utter his name which constantly fills her heart: even if her husband is tyrannical and unjust to her, she does not whisper about it to anyone, She tries her best to merge her individuality into her husband's and always aims at the collective family happiness. No praise is too high for her endurance, service, loyalty, modesty, dedication to her family.

Manohar Malgonkar endears his Kamala to us by investing her with the traditional, cultural trait of wifely devotion and companionship through storm and stress of life. Kamala, in *The Prince*, refuses to leave Abhay in the lurch. She
says she wants to remain by his side at the most crucial moment, because she is not an outsider. "I want to remain here. I am your wife. It is my duty to remain by your side. It is also my right." The modern wife may not be all Griselda, but then she is not all Nora too. She would rather be a combination of both. In the jungle of marital infidelity, sexual aberrations and sordid divorces, this traditional ideal of Indian culture is like a vernal breeze. Mulk Raj Anand conjures up a picture of the tender, selfless Indian brand of love where giving is the only gratification. In *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, Indira who always fights for her rights against her errant husband, follows him faithfully and tenderly to the asylum. In India, wives rise to the occasion and help their husbands out of the woods. Their chief merit is to give plentifully even when the receiver has forfeited all eligibility for such a divine magnanimity. Mulk Raj Anand again suggests that whatever the nature and condition of her husband, the woman likes to be by his side. Indian culture stresses the importance of content to be his shadow. Sapti, in *The Road*, tells Mala that they should not be away from Thakur Singh at the crucial moment of life. "Let us go to where your father is—we cannot stay where the light of the house is not." This is a characteristically Indian sentiment.

Mulk Raj Anand describes how the Indian wife wishes her husband well in spite of his tyrannical behaviour—
and a peasant girl remembers her peasant man when the sky is overcast with dark, dark clouds pouring out the blessing of the first rains. In The Old Woman and the Cow, Gauri, even when she has been struggling in the lecherous snare of Seth Jai Ram Das, cannot but wish she had been by Panchi's side to welcome the first downpour! She wishes that the rains might bring a good harvest to Panchi! 70

The simple, orthodox Indian woman - treats her husband as God and his words as scriptural wisdom and authority. Sabhrai, in Khushwant Singh's I shall not hear the nightingale, does not like Buta Singh's attitude to Sher's imprisonment, but she would not defy or displease him. 71 Bhabani Bhattacharya explains how a woman's reverential attitude to her husband in an Indian marriage, consummated in the best spirit of Indian culture, is of focal importance. She prizes her wifehood beyond anything else. In A Goddess Named Gold, Grandmother requested her husband, who had practically renounced worldly life, to keep on writing to her about his good health. 72 To a woman, her man's life is more important than her own life. This cultural emphasis is peculiarly Indian. R. Prawer Jhabvala too examines the belief that a husband is woman's God. In Esmond in India, Uma maintained the traditional view, supporting it by Sita's submission to Rama and the general scriptural teaching. Ram Nath says that those primitive myths must be interpreted properly - their original meaning having been lost, they are out of context in modern life. He resents the feminine meek
surrender to the male tyranny and wickedness. Jhabvala also shows how a woman, who regards her husband to be her God, does not hesitate to renounce him and his home, when he fails to protect her. Gulab, in Esmond in India, thinks that a husband may do what he liked with his wife so long as he protects her. There is an assault on her virtue—he has failed in his most sacred duty to protect her and so she is free to leave him. To an ideal Indian woman, nothing whatever is more important than her character.

R. Prawer Jhabvala points out how Indian culture admonishes woman to find her happiness in her husband and children. In Get Ready for Battle, Mala tells Kusum that she will be happy if Vishnu takes her to Bombay where her parents' family and friends are. Kusum, the marital iconoclast, asserts: "A woman's happiness can only be where her husband and children are." Masculine leadership in marriage and the family is upheld by Indian culture: man to lead, woman to follow. Mulk Raj Anand shows how the idea that the husband is more important than the wife is sometimes carried to the extreme of caricaturing in India. In The Old Woman and the Cow, Panchi tries to play the he-man and allows himself to be constantly angry with Gauri, who even fears to express her affection for him and indicates it by a sense of general cheerfulness as she goes about doing the household chores. C. Rajgopalachari also states, in Our Culture, that in Indian culture—'the merger of the feelings and rights and the personality of the wife in those
of the husband is carried to the point of a complete wiping out of the wife's individuality...".

The traditional orthodox expectation is that the Indian woman has to behave with a certain amount of restraint which may even border on suppression. Roshni, in Veena Paintal's *Serenity in Storm*, refuses Sanjay's invitation to go out for a dance. Sanjay bitterly comments that she should have been born in the eighteenth century. Roshni is, however, determined to honour the social restrictions: "I like to stick to our Hindu culture. It is not right for a married girl to go out with a man, even if he happens to be a dear friend."

Veena Paintal also depicts the conflict in the heart of a woman between the temptation of illegitimate love and traditional wifely morality as enjoined by Hindu culture. Sanjay, in *Serenity in Storm*, wonders why Roshni, like many other girls, cannot change her destiny by leaving her rascally husband and seeking her happiness elsewhere. He asks her who has given her those ideals that a girl should love only her husband. Roshni calmly replies that it is their Indian culture. "...I too, like all of us, am a link in that unbroken chain which once bound Ram and Sita. I would not break it for I cherish and seek inspiration from it." Half-hearted acceptance of Indian cultural traditions would not leave one anywhere. These are to be practised sincerely, scrupulously and selflessly.

Man feels fulfilled when a son is born, to whom he can leave the task of realising his ideals, carrying out
his unfinished work as also the duty of performing religious rites and continuing the flow of dynasty — this Upanishadic ideal is reflected in the Indo-Anglian novel. Mulk Raj Anand suggests how Indian culture holds sons as more important than daughters from the viewpoint of the family and dynasty. Laxmi, in *The Old Woman and the Cow*, tells Gauri how Gauri was never loved by her father, because he suspected that she was Laxmi's child by Amru and also because he would have loved to have a son instead of a daughter. "But perhaps if you had been a boy, he would have liked you; for among us, it is son and son's sons — the girls are a curse — ...."\(^\text{80}\) This is because a daughter is like a deposit that has to be returned, whereas a son is a repository of man's cultural heritage. Kamala Markandaya also shows the importance of a son in the family and the disappointment on the birth of a daughter. Rukmani, in *Nectar in a Sieve*, feels weak and disappointed and weeps when she knows that she has given birth to a girl, for what woman wants a girl for her first-born?\(^\text{81}\) Markandaya shows how Nathan, in *Nectar in a Sieve*, celebrates the birth of his first son by inviting the whole village to a feast.\(^\text{82}\) She also suggests how man craves for a son to carry on his task, profession, dream, ideal — a desire sanctified by age-old culture. In *A Handful of Rice*, Appu tells Ravi how people are waiting for his death. His regret is that he has only daughters and no son.\(^\text{83}\) Ravi, reflecting the modern spirit of scepticism wonders that difference sons would make when all one
has to offer is 'empty hands and appeal to their filial piety'. This shows the conflict between economic realism and cultural tradition.

R. K. Narayan suggests how Indian culture considers family property as a sacred trust. One inherits property if one is lucky and then leaves it undiminished to one's children, with addition, if possible. Srinivas, in Mr. Sampath, requests his brother to send him two thousand rupees from his share in the ancestral property. His brother sends him the timely help but also the admonition that the family property is not to be squandered away after individual whims, but that it is meant for children and their children. It is being really cultured if one thought about oneself less and about others more. Indian life has that as an ideal.

Respect for one's elders is one of the basic elements of good behaviour inherited by Indians. That means exercising restraint, which is symbolic of one's culture. K. A. Abbas, in Inquilab, suggests how Anwar, piqued by his uncle Amjad Ali's harsh words, practises restraint and, out of respect for age, pockets the insult and injustice, when Amjad Ali speaks disparagingly of the national leaders like Gandhiji and the Ali brothers and also of Anwar's father. Conquest of one's anger is a definite advancement in culture and Indian culture stresses it. The Gita lays down that anger be restrained. Dr. Shankar, in Mulk Raj
Anand's *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, desists from telling the Munshi that they the — out of deference for age — courtiers have been exploiting the Maharaja by humouring, pampering and flattering him.86 Kumaran and his friends, in Menon S. Marath's *The Sale of an Island*, need a stimulant at a very crucial moment, but do not smoke in the presence of their elders, out of respect for them.87 Khushwant Singh points out how in India youngsters are not supposed to enter into endless, vain arguments with their elders. In *I shall not hear the nightingale*, Sabhrai takes Sher to task for arguing heatedly with Buta Singh.88 In Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning*, Leela tells Rakesh that she cares for Kalyan's opinion as a mark of courtesy. Leela is only outwardly influenced by Western ways of living, but her heart is all Indian. Her reverence for age is characteristically Indian. "Reverence for age was a tradition bred into one's bones. An elder was a person you stood up to greet, and consulted on all important matters. This was not hypocrisy. It was a way of life."89

Indian cultural traditions might appear to be old and orthodox, but if one went deeper into the heart of things, they might reveal the inner core of things. Rahoul, in Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers*, thinks that the Hindu custom of keeping a new mother in isolation is good, since it affords much-needed rest to her and that these customs might appear like taboos but they have their significance — only one should try to discover it. "Hindu
taboos, old-seeming and fast dying off, often revealed an inner purpose if you looked beneath the surface." The
Decrying a custom without trying to penetrate to its inner purpose is playing a reckless rebel. All customs are not bad. They are our crystallised, epitomised, ancient wisdom and heritage. Some of these may be accepted in toto, to others be remodelled and just a few be eschewed if need be.

R. Prawer Jhabvala discusses whether a nation in chains could have her traditions, in Get Ready for Battle. Pitu remarks that industrialisation would not prove much fruitful. Premola Singh says that the Indian traditional crafts cannot be allowed to die. Pitu protests that a poor nation cannot afford to think of such traditions. Pitu is not reasonable. In fact, a nation in bondage must scrupulously observe her traditions.

Bhabani Bhattacharya indicates the generation gap between the old and the young, because of the two polar creeds - orthodox Hinduism and Hinduism liberalised under the impact of the West. In Music for Mohini, Mohini's father and grandmother do not see eye to eye about her marriage. One modernized boy, whom Mohini's father selects, Old Mother does not approve of. She objects that he has no respect for the elders in whose presence he smokes and asks indecent questions such as whether Mohini can dance and that Mohini will be a misfit in that fast and un-Indian circle. Marriage is a complete merger of two individuals into one identity and the clash of cultural backgrounds
would entail agony. Bhattacharya underlines the conflict between orthodox culture and liberalised cultural trends, between blind and superstitious faith and awakened socio-cultural susceptibilities. In *Music for Mohini*, Jayadev has to face the conflict of hurting his mother whose dogmatic, superstitious and orthodox decisions he has of necessity to defy. He wonders how misguided faith can gain so much ground in view of the Hindu quest for *Satyam, Sivam, Sundram*. He has to stop Mohini from offering her blood to appease the virgin-goddess in a primitive way to be cured of the curse of barrenness. It is yeoman's service to clear the national culture of the cobwebs of barbarous superstitions. Bhattacharya also shows how terrific is the conflict born of one's spiritual predicament - the traditional values in the context of new, changing social patterns. In *He Who Rides a Tiger*, we are made to witness the process of transformation of Kalo's social conscience. He has saved his daughter from a harlot-house, but she is polluted even by breathing there. "Kalo had not only to deny but to eradicate the values by which he had been bred. He had to cut his social tap-root and give up his inheritance." Sexual morality and upright character are predominant values in Indian life and culture.

Raja Rao traces the present state of cultural degeneration in India to political dependence. In *The Serpent and the Rope*, Savithri reports to Rama from Assam how sad
she feels due to monotonous downpours of rain and the arti­
ficility and pomp of the administrative framework in post-
Independence India. The India they are building is most-
unIndian. "Some want it to become like our neighbour China,
and others like their foster-mother white England. And:
nobody wants India to be India." What could be a worse
travesty of Indian culture than to shape India on expensive,
foreign models and ways of life? R. Prawer Jhabvala
cautically points out that the administrative scene in
today's India is largely corrupt and this is a blot on
national character and culture. Kanta, in The Nature of
Passion, censures the corrupt officer who has betrayed his
trust. She says she would punish him with death. Chandra,
who is in precisely the same predicament as that officer's,
feels uneasy. The irony is that the foot-rule changes,
corruption has continued and grown as a post-Independence
gargantuan malaise. People have abandoned hopes of getting
clean administration. Aamir Ali discusses how the true
Indian culture must be essentially moral, because the men
in the cities had been aping the English. In fact, they
were trying to be as unIndian as possible. Shankar, in
Conflict, thinks of the travesty of Indian culture that
they are making in the cities. He feels that they are
fake Indians. Their patriotism is hollow. They are cowards
and reluctant to make sacrifices. Jail-going is not such
a hardship, after all. His Shanti is the true India—a
true villager in the rural setting, the picture of simplicity,
poverty and purity.  

If the Western influence is not properly assimilated, the admixture of East and West might present a highly incongruous way of life. D. C. Home criticises the Indian tendency to imitate the Westerner, especially the Britisher. Samuel, in *Hungry Hearts*, tells Ranjit that it is very difficult for the nationalist paper to flourish and that people have lost originality and judgement because of prolonged slavery. Indians would look to the Western world for approval and approbation and accept the foreign judgement wholesale. Ranjit, therefore, should not despair, if his book is not read. "We've thrown away the foreign yoke but such is the depth of our degradation that we can't rely on our judgement. We flock for anything that is applauded abroad, even if it's a downright distortion of our life and institutions." This reminds us of how Tagore was praised to the skies, in India, in the wake of foreign approval and applaud.

The modern age has witnessed a radical degree of scientific and technological advancement in all spheres including transport and communications. The cultural insularity could not but be on the anvil owing to frequent, abiding and constant bicultural confrontations and occasionally tricultural and even poly-cultural confrontations at the time of world conferences and meets. Destiny had thrown India and England together because of the British rule in India. After Independence, this confrontation has been voluntary and, moreover, it is also quite natural that India
should also encounter other national cultures in her capacity as an independent member of the world community. The Indo-Anglian novel does reflect this East-West cultural encounter. Raja Rao presents the impersonal approach upheld by Indian culture as noticed by a sympathetic, understanding foreigner. Madeleine, in The Serpent and the Rope, writes to Rama that he is more interested in the sonship of their son whom she has borne than in his being her son. She says that Indian would regard the feminine as accessory. Rama thinks of the boy's future and she of his present. In India hymns and diet differ, depending upon what one wants the child to be. She is content with his being just a man: her son. Rama's attitude, she says, is impersonal. That's where the Indian differs from the European. "You people are sentimental about the invisible. We about the visible." The foundation of Indian philosophical thought is detachment, noninvolvement; one has to be then impersonal. Raja Rao deals with the confrontation of two cultures - Indian and European - as symbolised by Rama and Madeleine respectively in The Serpent and the Rope. Madeleine does not wish to go to India and Rama nostalgically recalls Indian scenes even in France and likes to imagine he is in India when he hears at dawn a grave and long-drawn mantra recited by Madeleine and he thinks he is on the bank of the Ganges in Hardwar. He muses, "It is beautiful to live, beautiful and sacred to live and be an Indian in India." The ties of culture are life-long,
trans-oceanic, trans-spatial, trans-temporal, trans-serial.
Rama might like France but India he breathed. India was him, he was India.

R. K. Narayan ably distinguishes between the two cultures - Eastern and Western - by juxtaposing their customs, ideals and expectations. Jagan, in The Vendor of Sweets, is flabbergasted at the breaking of the Mali-Grace union. He cites the Hindu puranic authority and remarks that the wife's place is by her husband, whatever may happen. Grace instinctively blurts out that they are not married. Jagan is appalled - how virtuous and good Grace appears to be and how unreliable she has turned out to be! He feels that by living in sin they have tainted his ancient home. Such wide margins between the concepts of marriage signify the polar extremes of both cultures: trial marriages, pre-marital and extra-marital sexual promiscuity on the one hand and, on the other, pre-marital impenetrable reserve of philosophic cultivation and post-marriage companionship till death should part. B. Rajan brings up the problem of East-West confrontation in The Dark Dancer. The Cynthia-Krishnan togetherness indicates the Indo-English cultural confluence and conflict. Krishnan once asks her to kiss, but Cynthia does not; he is glad; it would have been rather cheap. Cynthia has felt that Krishnan has not been a 'committed' lover. "You Indians are all alike," she reproved him. "It's the result of being too sensitive. First you care too much and then you don't care."
Indian character is full of paradoxical contradictions. This is one plausible explanation out of many.

Nayantara Sahgal points out that the true representative of India is the peasant - even from a foreigner's angle. Sanad, in A Time to be Happy, tells McIvor how he feels an alien in his own country. Western education and upbringing has made him un-Indian and he cannot belong anywhere. McIvor remarks that the peasant is the true Indian representative to whose level he cannot descend, but he can be a link between his country and the rest of the world. If there is no proper blending of one's culture and Western upbringing, it would result in a sense of belonging nowhere. Indian culture must be supplemented by Western civilization and its progress and not overshadowed by it. Nayantara Sahgal sounds a bugle-call to action. In the changing contexts of life, traditions and customs are to be reassessed, reshaped and even demolished. Dubey, in Storm in Chandigarh, tells Saroj how when one culture meets another, the process means loss and gain and change, but in India the orthodox religion renders impotent the East-West confrontation of two complementary cultures. Indian culture resists conciliation. "But it had not happened here. A monolithic slab of antiquity had survived the ages. A way of life, wrongly called a religion lay embedded in it. Against it the intellect floundered and the emotions were reduced to insignificance." It is not true to say that India has not changed at all. Our way of life is, in
fact, overhauled, as it were; fortunately, however, still
the ancient, lasting, invaluable core of culture persists
in India.

Raja Rao suggests how difficult it is to synthesise
two cultures so as not to compel the one to lose its ide­
tity in the other. Rama, in The Serpent and the Rope,
tells Medeleine that in spite of her being a Buddhist, the
fact is that it is India that has separated them, because
India is impitoyable and, therefore, Buddhism has also to
leave India. One can be converted to Christianity, Buddha­
ism, Islam but not to Hinduism, but can be born as a Brahmin,
an Indian. He remarks that India is beyond time and space. 105
Zeenuth Futehally brings out that the Muslims have the
benefit of many cultures. In Zohra, Hamid tells Zohra how
Indian culture has waned owing to slavery, because Western
things are imposed upon Indians who have become imitators.
Zohra says that the Muslims of India have the tripartite
heritage of Indian, Arabic and Persian cultures and they
can add to them the new, Western culture and revitalise
the present life. "We should yet achieve that unity of
East and West — that much desired synthesis." 106 The sense
of synthesis is a prominent characteristic of Indian culture:
to respect all cultures and absorb the best in them and
harmonise it into the national culture. Nayantara Sahgal
brings out the tolerant, synthetic and harmonious character
of Indian culture but also points out that receptivity
should not be at the cost of losing one's identity. In
This Time of Morning, the Prime Minister of India addresses the new recruits in the foreign service about the prime concerns of India. India, a tremendously vital country has imposed its cultural pattern in other countries. They should not give up their ways of doing things because of the influence of European or American ideology. They should be, however, always ready to learn but not imitate. 107 India is a land of firm cultural faith—humble enough to learn but proud enough not to lose its own cultural pattern.

R. Prawer Jhabvala satirises the foreign visiting Professors, Indologists and Indian—culture enthusiasts who laud Indian rural life and culture after living a posh life only in metropolitan cities. Prof. Hoch, in To Whom She Will, glowingly suggests that their cultural pageant must show the Indian village life in all its beauty and simplicity. He says that the cities are defiled by evil Western influences, but the villages are unchanged, unruffled. 108 This shows how the Government propaganda conducted by Culture Committees, programmes, diases etc. is bogus. This has become an outlet and platform for the sophisticated idle, pompous, exhibitionist, aristocratic influential people. Jhabvala, suggests that the foreigners who wished to make India their home should adapt themselves to the environment. Clarissa, in A Backward Place, advises Etta, whose married life is a failure—to cultivate acceptance and adjustment in life as Judy has done. Otherwise, one
would get finished. She stresses the peculiarity of the civilisation. "One either merges with Hindu Civilization or is drowned by it!" This reveals the all-absorbing catholic character of Indian life and culture. Bhabani Bhattacharya shows how the props of spirituality are evaluated by the Westernised in the spirit of the New Age. Bhashkar, in Shadow from Ladakh, remembers how Satyajit stamps the Zest for living as vice. The real vice is in stagnation and immobility. He analyses: "Vice in this country lay choked in taboos, inhibitions - the rickety props of Spiritual India!....." This is a plea for liberal living based on material advancement. The process of revaluation of all facets of life has been still going on in independent India and even the ancient spiritual heritage has been on the anvil of utility-test.

Thus, Indian fiction in English deals with the diverse characteristics of Indian culture - its stress on the internal, asceticism, unity in diversity, simple living and high thinking, Karma and other worldliness, retirement from and renunciation of worldly life in quest for truth. Its peculiar and outstanding qualities are clearly brought out - Indian culture is sweet and tender, catholic, hospitable and deep and it fills the hearts of its votaries with tranquillity and equanimity and nurtures a spirit of resigned and fatalistic acceptance. Its basis is implicit faith which sometimes degenerates into meek submissiveness. Indo-Anglian fiction traces the impact of Indian culture
on marriage and divorce and shows how parents generally arrange the marriages of their sons and daughters and how a divorce is seldom resorted to, even when the husband and wife are like polar existences. Indians attach greater value to the spirit than to the body and sexual levity is not brooked. Respect for elders and for woman is considered to be a must for the truly cultured. The Indian wife has vertical ascent of idealism before her - she must be chaste, obedient, self-effacing, all-enduring, devoted to her husband and family. The Indo-Anglian novelist, however, indicates that she is not all Nora, but now she is also not all Sita - this is because of the new winds of change from the Western direction.

The novelist also suggests the conflict between tradition and modernity, but rightly holds that not all traditions could be justified. He takes stock of awakened socio-cultural susceptibilities of his times and advocates that the traditional values be re-assessed in the light of modern socio-political changes. The post-Independence cultural degeneration is traced to political unscrupulosity and corruption and also to self-derogatory aping of the West. He believes that the Western influence should be properly assimilated, otherwise Indians would be unIndian - never true to themselves. They should not be culturally conquered - as they certainly were not even in pre-Independence times. The Indo-Anglian novelist poses the problem of East-West encounter. Though he generally seems to
admit the failure of communication, understanding, dialogue between East and West, he does not rule out the possibility of cultural conciliation and synthesis. Anyway, he would like to encourage endeavours for promoting inter-cultural harmony on the basis of mutual regard. Independence has certainly helped him in shedding his - what once seemed to be ineradicable - sense of diffidence and inferiority. He, however, has not been able to cast off his self-consciousness. Before Independence, he was conscious of his slavery and inferiority and now of his equality with others and of his desperate eagerness for asserting and establishing it.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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12 Bhabani Bhattacharya, So Many Hungers, Jaico, Bombay, 1964, p. 111.


18 Bhattacharya, Shadow from Ladakh, p. 309.


21 Ibid., p. 212.

22 Futehally, Zohra, p. 198.


24 S. F. Dhanda, Surgeon Goes to War, p. 157.


36 Ibid., p. 133.


38 Ibid., p. 79.


44 Sahgal, *A Time to be Happy*, p. 160.

45 Krishnaswamy, *Kalyani's Husband*, p. 129.


47 Putehally, *Zohra*, p. 133.


60 Ibid., p. 121.
62 Ibid., p. 60.
71 Khushwant Singh, *I shall not hear the nightingale*, p. 194.
74 Ibid., p. 248.
75 Jhabvala, *Get Ready for Battle*, p. 16.
76 Anand, *The Old Woman and the Cow*, p. 76.


79 Ibid., p. 21.

80 Anand, *The Old Woman and the Cow*, p. 123.


82 Ibid., p. 21.


88 Khushwant Singh, *I shall not hear the nightingale*, p. 78.


91 Jhabvala, *Get Ready for Battle*, p. 86.


93 Ibid., p. 220.

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