Indo-Anglian fiction has usually been considered as a product of the meeting two cultures. The attitudes informing the works are also supposed to be a synthesis of two cultures. Sometimes, of course, the philosophy of life of a particular author has been studied in a general way. But within the general all-India pattern, regional cultures play a prominent part informing the personality and beliefs of the authors writing in English in India. It may, therefore, be worthwhile to investigate in concrete terms the indebtedness of such authors to a local tradition.

Here in the study, we are confining ourselves to the tradition of South India as distinct from Northern India. Of course, there are significant variations within the South Indian pattern. Still to the extent the South Indian culture and civilization are distinct from that of Northern India, such an enquiry should be quite useful.

We propose to investigate the way of life and mental culture of communities to which two outstanding South Indian writers belong.
Both Raja Rao and R K Narayan are traditional in their views though in different ways. Both of them had acquired a training and orientation that enable them to look beyond the frontiers of traditional life. Yet they are profoundly traditional in the values they hold. Whatever the differences, we may try to trace the roots of some of their ideas and beliefs, attitudes and convictions to certain elements in the traditional culture and way of life of south India. Such an enquiry will enable us to have a formal grasp of the content of the work and also a rough idea of the legancy of an old and rich way of life. Yet they are seriously disturbed by the challenges of modern life, which provoke them to reaffirm traditional values. Indeed, this point of view may help us to appreciate better their critical outlook towards modern Western civilization.

Though south India has its own distinctive way of life and tradition, it can not be treated altogether as culture and tradition insulated from that of Northern India. Rather, it is a special branch of the general Indian life and culture. An in-depth study of the constituent elements of both will lead us to similar roots. For instance, there exists rigid caste system, Brahminical hierarchy, the joint family, the strength of rural communities, the domination of the 'Shastras'
and the 'Gurus', conservatism, a stoic acceptance of fate as just, a sense of rapport with nature, domesticity, a suspicion of individualist pretension, etc. These and other such salient features of life and tradition of south India are, in fact, the essence of the general Indian life and culture. The only difference is that they are jealously preserved and guarded in the south whereas they have been modified and altered due to the more turbulent history in the North. These points shall be discussed in detail later.

In this introductory chapter, we attempt to locate the position of Indo-Anglian fiction in the milieu of Indian literature with an emphasis on the choice of an 'alien' language i.e. English to convey 'the thought-movements' and for telling the 'interminable tales' both by the modernists and the traditionalists. An attempt is also made to suggest that both R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao compared to the rest of the lot form a class by themselves and jealously guard the tradition though in different ways. And finally, an answer is sought to the vexed question, 'what is tradition?'
According to Prof. K. Subramanian of CIEFL, Hyderabad, it was Prof. K R Srinivasa Iyengar who popularised the term 'Indo-Anglian Literature' by saying "what makes Indo-Anglian literature Indian literature and not just a ramshakle outhouse of English literature is the quality of Indianness in the choice of the subject, in the texture of the thought, play of sentiment and language." (1)

Prof. K R Srinivasa Iyengar advises the Indian Critic: "Don't question the very base of this phenomenon of Indo-Anglian literature. Reason not the need, as Lear might have put it, judge by results. Don't let cheap nationalist sentiment colour or wrap your critical appraisals." (2) Thereby, he ascertains the position of Indo-Anglian literature as a viable and explorable one, which holds in some small measure the key to the future.

Prof. C D Narasimhaiah in his introduction to The Swan and the Eagle (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1968) refutes the view of V S Naipaul that 'the novel is of the west' and 'the Indian novel is a mimicry of the west' by explaining the rich potentiality of story-telling of Indians right from
the ages of Rig Veda and Upanishads. He emphasises his stand by elaborately talking about Vikramaditya stories, Kathasaritha Sagara, Jataka tales, etc.

As to the alien character of its medium, English, Rajaji is of the opinion that the unity of India is achieved by English and the imposition of Hindi might break India apart again. "He has warned us that a bird in hand, English, is better than the synthetic bird, Hindi, proposed to be manufactured in the future... He has boldly asserted that English is the gift of Saraswati to us." (3)

In the foreward to *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao not only gives reason for the choice of English to tell the *Sthalapurana* - (legendary history) of Kanthapura but also justifies the suitability of that language to 'convey the various shades and omissions of certain thought movement.' He argues, "... Yet English is not an alien language. It is the language of our intellectual make-up like Sanskrit or Persian was before - but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We can not write like the English. We should not. We can not write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression, therefore, has
to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it. (4) Thus by drawing an analogy between the 'alienness' of Sanskrit and Persian on the one hand and English on the other, he predicts the future of English as a surrogate of Sanskrit in ancient times. As hinted by him, his English is an Indian English as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or American English and exploits the elasticity of it fully to convey the tempo of Indian life with 'neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' and episode after episode unfurls almost like Ramayana or Mahabharata'.

R.K. Narayan echoes the assertion of Rajaji in an article 'To a Hindi Enthusiast': "English is an absolutely swadeshi language." (5) In an interview to The Times of India, Bombay (2nd December, 1964) he says, "...it (English) has served my purpose admirably, of conveying unambiguously the thoughts and acts' of a set of personalities, who flourish in a small town named Malgudi (supposed to be) located in a corner of south India." He successfully and authoritatively makes use of this language in dealing with the unchanging values of Malgudi. He gratefully acknowledges the greatness of English in an interview to Ranjana Kackar for Probe India (September '87): "It
is the only language I am really familiar with. It is the only language which is transparent and takes on the hues of the country or region where the story is set..." He feels that he can express himself far better in English than in Tamil or Kannada.

The cultural conflicts of east and west as well as their synthesis have given food for thought and material for writing to the Indian Writers who write in English. The writers are obviously aware of their Indianness as well as the acquired values of occidental system and the inherited values of their own oriental system.

As the Irish writers like George Moore, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce and others who freely broke the rules of English grammar, coined new words and enriched the English language in Vivacious prose, each in his own manner, Indo-Anglian writers mould the English to convey the ethos of India quite authentically. (6)

Those who failed to understand and appreciate the Indianness and flexibility of English and recognise the place of Indo-English writing dubbed it as 'Mathew Arnold in a Sari' or 'Shakuntala in Skirts' or as something 'delivered through a caesarian operation.' (7) But a close study of the multilingual Indian
context will reveal that English certainly occupies an inevitable place in it. In fact, English is the latest addition to our linguistic cultural spectrum—like Sanskrit and Persian before. This English may not strictly be an Indian language but it can no longer be an alien one either. Absorbing alien elements is a unique character of Indian culture from time immemorial. Such a view of Indian culture is developed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in Hindu view of Life. (8) “Multi-lingualism is also a feature of our sociocultural and religious life and an awareness of linguistic and literary variety is embedded deep within us.” (9) Jawaharlal Nehru in his The Discovery of India accepts English as a natural tongue of India. Thus it is simple syllogism that the Indo-Anglian writers neither face any ambiguity in wielding English nor face any awkwardness in portraying 'Shakuntala in a Sari.'

India has given birth to a number of languages and became a foster mother to a few adopted ones. The latest addition in this ever enlarging family is English. She, being the youngest, has become very popular all over the country breaking the barrier of compartments created by others and thus achieved the real unity of India.
There are three groups of writers who have made their mark in the Indo-Anglian literature. The first group consists of rebels like Anita Desai and Mulk Raj Anand who do not seem to have any nostalgia or sentimentality in their attitudes towards Indian tradition. To them the heritage of the past is a sterile one and the present is a horror. They reject the superstitions and blind customs of the past and react violently against the narrowness of traditional life. But they too serve to the total cause of culture and tradition with their negative approach. The second strand comprises moderates like Shanta Rama Rau, Bhabani Bhattachrya, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandeya, B. Rajan and Attia Hosain who in their novels present conflict between society and the individual, rebellion, romantic quest, search for identity, struggle between self and society and final submission to traditional values. The third strand is led by RK Narayan and Raja Rao. There is no question of submission or sacrificing anything to anything or changing something into something. They accept the given world without rebellion. Even suffering is a part of life. They represent the eternal India. Their attitudes are typically Indian in the traditional sense.
The first set revolts against tradition like ceaselessly struggling to swim against the current of a turbulent river. The second set struggles against the flow of that river but floats along all the same. And the third set flows with the flow of the river and in that flow experiences the ecstasy. Finally all the three sets reach the same goal though at a different point of time.

Mulk Raj Anand wrote in *Apology for Heroism*: "I am conscious that much of my insistence on the role of man in the universe derives from Hellenism." And so his heroes are rough, tough and stubborn individualists who refuse to accept the fate and thereby suffer continuously. Belief in man's power to master nature through a rational technology is evident in all the novels of him. The majority meekly accepts the miseries as something inevitable, his robust heroes with indomitable will-power struggle to improve their conditions. "He (Anand) is a rational humanist, in the western tradition, believing in the power of science to improve material conditions, in progress and in the equality of all men, and his manifest intention is to propagate his beliefs through his novels" (10). His characters are just his mouthpieces created to project his ideas. They spring from the
down-trodden oppressed classes and strive to change their lot by changing the whole system.

Bhabani Bhattacharya asserts, in his works, the positive vision of life through the bitter negative realities. He is the combination of the radical approach of Mulk Raj Anand and the traditional attitude of Raja Rao and R K Narayan and the culmination is the positive vision of life. He has neither the comic genius with artistic detachment and commitment to human values like R K Narayan nor the astounding philosophical depth of Raja Rao. "Since he believes that the novel should have a social purpose, his stories abound in social and historical realities, quite often bitter and gruesome, such as the Bengal Famine of 1943, the tragedies of the freedom struggle and partition and the evils of poverty, corruption, ignorance, superstition, exploitation, greed, sexual perversion, etc." (11)

So far we have briefly analysed the first two strands of the Indo-Anglian fiction taking into account the samples of cut throat angry rebels like Mulk Raj Anand and moderate rebel-cum-traditionalist like Bhabani Bhattacharya. Yet it must be said that their rebellion contains seeds of love. They are the best examples of Koestler's Indians—"Indians hate what they love and
love...what they hate..." (12) This point can be illustrated with the help of their own inner musings. Nirad C. Choudhury in his autobiography takes pride in the glory of the past: "...but we were great once and should be even greater in the future." (13) Despite his bitter criticism of Hinduism nowhere he says anything against the institution of caste or arranged marriage. His heart says, "Even the most westernised of Indians is likely to have traits of thought, habits of emotion and modes of expression which will unmistakably mark him as a man of India." (14) Mulk Raj Anand’s inner voice comes out cracking the hard shell: "Ours is the tradition of ‘Karuna’ of the Buddha." (15) These duality of love and hatred, shame and pride bring out the deep roots of tradition in the so called western influenced rebels.

Western education weakened most of the long cherished values of this ancient land. The ‘threat’, we find in the novels of the ‘rebels’, to our traditional institutions, ideas and values is largely due to the impact of that orientation. Rajaji is of the opinion that there never has been a lack of reaction to any threat and healthy restoration from time to time, coming up in order to keep the old pattern of behaviour from being exhausted. "From among our millions suddenly comes up someone who gives a new
lease of life to religion and philosophy among our people,"(16) he concludes. Indian history witnessed the emergence of such messiahs to safeguard the traditional values. The line of messiahs starting from Buddha of 6th century B.C. continued through Sankara, Ramanuja, Basaweswara, Alwars, Nayanmars to Gandhi of 20th century A.D. They drew their nourishment from the roots below and leaves above. (17) Thus it must be evident to all of us that the intensity of the threat determines the emergence of matching, balancing and rejuvenating power as and when it is required. In this sense, both R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao too are the true descendents of them as they play the role of guardian angels of tradition through their works.

By comparing and contrasting these two writers with the diametrically opposite Mulk Raj Anand, we can bring out the unique nature and attitude of them. H.M. William says: "Where Anand is an angry protester, a satirist and revolutionary, author of tragic, or near tragic 'Coolie' and 'Untouchable', Narayan is essentially a humorous writer. To Narayan south India is fundamentally a Hindu society. If Anand pleads for the powerless and casteless, Raja Rao reflects his conservation and his charismatic religious consciousness, his essential Hinduism."(18) Stephen Ignatius Hemenway is of the opinion (The Novel of India, 1975) that Anand suffers from clumsy
translation from the vernacular whereas Raja Rao innovates and exploits the vast potential of English language as a suitable medium to express the Indian sensibility.

William Walsh calls Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao 'the big three.' Anand who writes about the poor is basically a reformer, Narayan, the champion of middle class is a moral analyst and Raja Rao who excels in portraying the elite is a metaphysical poet.

Raji Narasimhan declares: "In Narayan, it is the surprising coincidence of all the three factors - sensibility, the equation between it and articulation, and quantity of output - that establish him as a full blown, fully representative Indo-English writer." (19) Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar calls Narayan 'a master of comedy.' He says: "Narayan's gifts as a writer are out of the ordinary: he wields so difficult and alien a language like English with masterful ease and conveys subtle shades of feeling and thought; unlike Anand, he uses hardly any swear-words at all; he does not exploit perversion of sex, and seldom brings in controversial politics. He is a master of comedy. At his best (as in the English Teacher) he can present smiles and tears together." (20)
R.K. Narayan expresses his unflinching total faith in the tradition and culture of this ancient land through his works. They are the epitomes of his ideas and attitudes, values and personality. To him epics are not fiction but human history and Gods are not heavenly and far off superior beings but personalities who represent human qualities in heightened form. Or in other words an ordinary mortal being can rise to the level of divinity by doing noble deeds. Everyone is ordained to lead a particular way of life. And so sufferings and miseries are part of life. Since goodness has to triumph in the end, there is no tragedy in life. Narayan's characters, both good and bad, are lovable at the end. He is a robust optimist. His faith in ultimate triumph of good is unshakable. Neither the triumph of the demonic nor the sufferings of the meek and the saintly are permanent. "There is suffering because of the need to work off certain consequences arising from one's actions, in a series of births determined by the law of Karma." (21)

Raja Rao fictionalizes the Indian spirit. He personifies the Indian virtues and the Indian outlook through his fictional character. Adherence to rituals, simple faith in the socio-cultural life of India and total surrender to the superior wisdom of a guru are his guiding themes. He, in the foreward to Kanthapura,
echoes the very same ideas and attitudes, feelings and reverence to the tradition of India of R.K. Narayan which the latter expressed in 'The world of Story Teller' (Gods, demons and others). "There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich sthalapurana, or legendary history, of its own. Some God or Godlike hero has passed by the village, Rama might have rested under the pipal tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, on one of his many pilgrimages through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one, by the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present, and the Gods mingle with men to make the repertory of your grandmother always bright."(22) Such is the range of thought, depth of vision and strength of faith of Raja Rao.

Both Narayan and Raja Rao portray an eternal India. They do not project only the good elements of that heritage for glorifying the tradition. They are capable of perceiving tradition in the unlikeliest of places and traces of goodness in the most unpropitious soil. For instance, Savitri in 'The Serpent and the Rope' smokes, drinks, dances and mingles with the westerners, yet she remains the symbol of Radha, Savitri... In 'Kanthapura' the diabolical Bhatta helps a poor students to get his higher education.
Raju, the cheat in 'The Guide' becomes the spiritual guide and sacrifices his life as a saint for others. Thus the inner self remains Indian in everyone. Conflicts, miseries, revolts are complementary and obligatory for working off the effects of the past deeds. And therefore there is no malice towards anything or anybody. Thus the miseries are not so much really suffered as submitted to. They, such experiences, promise better future. Both of them heavily depend on great all India traditional myths of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads as well as little local traditional myths of legends, folklore, primitive rituals and traits and rights of local deities. Thus tradition sustains their vitality. Both belong to the tradition that has, from time to time, tried to preserve and restore the classical norms of order and discipline in thought and expression. Their positive attitude and total adherence to the tradition are the strengths of their artistic vision.

II

What is tradition? It is the means by which "the vitality of the past enriches the life of the present" (23) says Prof. C.D. Narasimhiah. "The Indus valley civilization" writes Prof. Childe, "represents a very perfect adjustment of human life to a specific
environment that can only have resulted from years of patient effort. And it has endured; it has already become specifically Indian and forms the basis of modern Indian culture." (24) Such continuity, not in a static, unchanging sense, for India was changing and progressing all the time, is the tradition. Absorbing all the onslaughts and invasions of aliens starting from Aryans, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, Chinese, Arabs, Mediterraneans and down to the recent British, the strong cultural basis of India assimilated all the good points from them and in return influenced and enriched them tremendously. Jawarharlal Nehru sees in The Discovery of India not only the life and vigour and beauty of the present but also the immemorial loveliness of the past. He envisages a bright future for India as she is getting her nourishment from the past. (25)

India was, according to Dodwell, "infinitely absorbant like the ocean." (26) Only this makes a cultural stability for thousands of years. It is quite surprising to see how some of us just to appear the 'equal' of a foreigner go against our own traditional values and ape the west. How is it possible to forget the roots which had sustained and nourished us for centuries? Tradition continues from generation to generation. It makes people to feel a sense of pride.
It lives through family training, religious belief, literature, education and culture.

"If there is any honesty in India today, any hospitality, any chastity, any philanthropy, and tenderness to the dump creatures, any aversion to evil, and love to do good, it is due to whatever remains of the old faiths and the old culture.... the doctrine of Karma and transmigration have tremendously infused into and shaped Indian culture and even today the influence is alive and active." (27) Though modernity raises its head now and then what prevails permanently is the old faiths, the traditional values. Our villages are the visible embodiment of this great tradition.

T.S. Eliot describes tradition as "rather a way of feeling and acting which characterizes a group throughout generations... It involves all those habitual actions, habits, and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger ..."(28) Tradition depends on a special kind of 'historical sense,' a perception of the pastness of the past and its presence in the present. Thus tradition is time past, time present and time future... all roled into one, a timeless one. It
emerges out victoriously digesting and assimilating all the modernities and thereby ever living and remaining permanently new.

The Indian writers in English must be aware of this continuity. Eliot's 'historical sense', Aurobindo's 'vision of age' and Prof. V.K. Gokak's 'awareness of culture' (29) stress the same sense of continuity of tradition. R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao excel examplarily in maintaining this continuity and thereby safeguarding the traditional values.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


3. Ibid., pp.10-12.


24. Ibid., p.7.

25. Ibid., p.7.


