INTRODUCTION

"I'm just a red nigger who love the sea
I had a sound colonial education
I have Dutch, nigger and English in me
And either I'm nobody or I'm nation"

Omeros: Derek Walcott

"One did not have to belong; one could simply float, effortlessly, through a super-market of packaged and commodified cultures, ready to be consumed"

-In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures— Aijuz Ahmad

The discursive constitution by both novelists and critics of the field now termed "Indo-Anglian" or "Indo-English" literature has created various ways of characterizing Indian fictive writing in English, even while it remains a continually and stubbornly contradictory enterprise. On the one hand, the ongoing analyses of Indo-Anglian literature by its critics and its creative writers themselves – in their essays, introductions, prefaces, and in the fiction more obviously written with a view to its critical reception – are predicated upon notions of a consensually discernible national identity that is Indian in essence. On the other hand, the very use of the English language brings crucially into question the sort of national identity that can be assumed to have escaped Western "Orientalizing"

The basis for such a contradiction is provided by the field's preoccupation with the vexed questions surrounding nationalism: how "Indian" is this body of literature and, given that it is written in English, from what point of view can it be

pronounced "true-to-India"? The *raison d'etre* of a body of writing constituted as Indo-Anglian by its creators and commentators has been defined precisely by the extent to which it has addressed these questions. This is why a historical sketch of Indo-Anglian studies as they emerged and then developed over the years is necessary; the impulse is not to offer a history so much as to go to visible conjunctures where one could say the writers' and critics' concerns with nationalism { section (3) Is it Indian?} and nationalists authenticity [{4} How is it true-to-India?] began and then persisted in problematic relation to a socio-political reality informed initially by British colonialism and then by post-and neo-colonialism.

Our first section, however, comprises a study of Nationalism and Orientalism. At this early point we wish to raise some skepticism regarding the attachment of the concept of nationalism with India-the subcontinent, that has been projected as a 'nation' for the first time, only by its colonial rulers.

1. NATIONALISM AND ORIENTALISM:

Nationalism has always been a problem with India. It is well known that much of our received knowledge about the concepts of nation and nation-state is derived from the West and is based on the Western experience. The compulsion for conceptualizing an Indian nation was largely the outcome of British colonial presence and its articulations.

The rise of Nationalism in the West has been briefly traced out by Dipankar Gupta:

> As capitalism sponsors a continuous hierarchy, it is unable to internally fuel a politics of commitment... a politics of commitment emerges when identities are informed on the principle of repulsion. This is why the forces of capitalism must necessarily take recourse to creating a supra-local allegiance based on territorial attachment to the nation state. This gives its continuous hierarchies more space to realize themselves, and at the same time fashions an exclusivist identity based on the principle of repulsion. From this identity then, a politics of commitment can be more realistically commandered. From now on members of a nation state are on guard against those who belong to other territories and other nation states.
>
> (Gupta, 65)

With India however, the case is a bit different. Its formulation as a nation has been a recent task undertaken by the British colonizer:

> Recapturing the problematic of the [Indian] nation state, it is worth reiterating that often colonial expediency alone, without any concern for history, tradition, culture, language, economy and geography had determined national boundaries. In addition to this, in India's circumstances nationhood must be forged consciously out of a commitment to political liberalism which would unite Indians against the colonizers and transcend earlier divisions & loyalties.
>
> (Pathy, 71)

Thus a land, where "...the idea of tribe, region and nation conveyed a single complex whole.... [Where] each could only be comprehended if studied along with others" (Pathy, 76) a separate space has been created, in the name of nationalism, for its 'Others':

> It was colonial subjugation that reduced the holistic multidimensional premise to analytically separable and operative wholes *with distinct spaces of their own.*
>
> (Pathy, 86)

India had been a collage of self-determined multi-cultural communities: Liberalism, tolerance and acceptance of the 'others' were the hallmarks of Indian tradition. Swami Vivekananda has stated-'I am proud to belong to a tradition which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance' (World Parliament of Religion; Chicago, 1893). But--

> Despite the oft-repeated slogans of unity in diversity, the practice in the last fifty years has revealed that in order to build a manufactured homogeneous syndrome on a basically heterogeneous landscape with diverse political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions, the diversities have rarely been honoured. Rather, the formation of the nation state led to the denial of diversity of cultures and value system of the peoples, and the creation of a single standardized pattern. The modernization syndrome disregarded the heterogeneity of communities and thereby not only threatened their ecological base but also their cultural viability as groups. In brief, the diversity that should have been preserved and valued has been reduced to a near historical memory under world capitalism ...That all these states contain different cultural-linguistic groups within their boundaries and that they have a tendency to maintain

> their distinctiveness is something that has been derecognised.
>
> (Nandi, 149)

Benedict Anderson's analysis shows that nations were not the determinate products of given sociological conditions such as language or race or religion; they had been 'imagined' into existence everywhere in the world. Nationalism is often defined as an ideological phenomenon, a matter of ideas and concepts adhered to by certain groups and communities. But history shows that people of different ethno-linguistic groups located in various regions have lived harmoniously. With the rise of imperialism there is a constant fear for loss of culture, language and tradition and even religion. Thus they begin to detach themselves as 'unique' and 'other' and in this way nation becomes "region as a mental construction" (Hartshrone). A series of elements are identified, constructed and placed together to constitute the nation.

Benedict Anderson has also indicated the ties between nation-building and print communities formed around newspaper and novels. The novels, he says, helped to create "imagined communities" through their "empty, calendrical, time" that accommodates an entire civizentry. Accordingly, the critics and writers of Indo-Anglian literature, being aware of their uniqueness or 'Otherness'

> ....tend to be either racists...or individualists. The racists devoutly believe *Indianization* of Indo-English literature and usually seek to demonstrate that Indian writers think alike, feel alike, and therefore write alike (and thus separated from European writers)...so long he is Indian his writing is regarded as an expression of nativity, a verbal manifestation of Indian soul...Nationalist critics are preoccupied with mapping the geography of Indo-Anglian literature...a literature conveniently contained

> within the arbitrary territorial and essential boundaries drawn by the former colonial powers.
>
> (Manom, 292)

Infact, using the 'nationalist' platform, we are participating in the act of seclusion / exclusion and in our process of denial what we have been doing is an assertion of Western Orientalizing.

In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said has shown how the post-Enlightment age in Europe produced an entire body of knowledge in which the Orient appeared as a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire. As a style of thought, Orientalism is 'based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident". On this basis, an ' enormously systematic discipline' was created ' by which European culture was able to manage_ and even produce_ the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightment period.'Orientalism created the Oriental; it was a body of knowledge in which the Oriental was contained and represented by dominating frameworks and Orientalism was 'a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient.'

The central characteristics of the dominating framework of knowledge have been described by Anouar Abdel-Malek as follows, and this characterization has been adopted by Said. Abdel-Malek identified the problematic in Orientalism as one in which the Orient and the Orientals were

> ...an 'object' of study, stamped with an otherness_as all that is different, whether it be 'subject' or 'object'_ but of a constitutive otherness, of an essentialist character...This 'object' of study will be, as is customary, passive, non-participating, endowed

> with a 'historical' subjectivity, above all, non-active, non-autonomous, non-sovereign with regard to itself: the only Orient or Oriental or 'subject' which could be admitted, at the extreme limit, is the alienated being, philosophically, that is, other than itself in relationship to itself, posed ,understood, defined_and acted_ by others. .At the level of the thematic, on the other hand, there was an essentialist concept of the countries, nations, and peoples of the Orient under study, a conception that expresses itself through a characterized ethnist typology...
>
> (Abdel-Malek, 102)

By applying this distinction to our material, we will find that the problematic in nationalist thought is exactly the reverse of that of Orientalism. That is to say, the 'object' in nationalist thought is still the Oriental, who retains the essentialist character depicted in the Orientalist discourse. Only he is not passive, non-participating. He is seen to possess a 'subjectivity', which he can himself 'make'. In other words, while his relationships to himself and to others have been 'posed, understood and defined' by others, i.e. by an objective scientific consciousness, by Knowledge, by Reason, those relationships are not acted by others. His subjectivity, he thinks, is active, autonomous and sovereign.

At the level of the thematic, on the other hand, nationalist thought accepts and adopts the same essentialist conception based on the distinction between 'the East' and 'the West', the same typology created by a transcendent studying subject, and hence the same 'objectifying' procedures of knowledge constructed in the post-Enlightment age of Western science.

There is, consequently, an inherent contradictoriness in nationalist thinking, because it reasons within a framework of knowledge whose representational structure corresponds to the very structure of power, nationalist thought seeks to repudiate. Partha Chatterjee has rightly observed:

> The domain of sovereignty, which nationalism thought of as the 'spiritual' or 'inner' aspects of culture, such as language or religion or the elements of personal and family life, was of course premised upon a difference between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized. The more nationalism engaged in its contest with the colonial power in outer domain of politics, the more it insisted on displaying the marks of 'essential' cultural difference so as to keep out the colonizer from that inner domain of national life and to proclaim its sovereignty over it.
>
> (Chatterjee, 26)

Similarly out of an urge to construct an essentially 'true' Indian novel, the Indo-Anglian writers have infact nourished the Western definition of the 'native' and have failed to erase the marks of colonial difference.

Thus the themes handled by the older generation of novelists in English had for a long time remained predictably, what Meenakshi Mukherjee calls, 'pan-Indian': "the time worn clichés of East-West confrontation". It is a well-accepted fact that novel as a genre has traditionally been implicated in the construction and consolidation of the idea of nation, e.g. *Robinson Crusoe, Jane Eyre* or *The Forsyte Saga.* The Indo-Anglian novels have also, in its brief history, been visibly concerned with defining such a national identity. Raja Rao's definition had a Brahmanic frame; R K Narayan distilled its essence through a benign small town, middle-class and upper-caste in its composition; some others constructed their India in opposition to what the West was supposed to connote. What appeared to be 'indigenous', in fact was the repetition of the British criteria for being 'Oriental'.

In an attempt of constructing a clearly defined and recognizable India, the writers have given a detailed description of the Indian 'ways' in such a detailed fashion that in their attempt of 'Nativization', the implicit addressee [reader] seems to be situated outside the culture, possibly in England, or among Colonial administrators living in India, who are concrete representatives of the abstract 'Other' as far as Indians are concerned. For example when Lal Behari Day in his novel *Govinda Samanta* (1874) announces without context that there are no taverns in Bengal village for peasants to spend an evening in, or that young men and women in India have no concept of courtship, he is testifying to his concern with alien reader. His gratuitous cultural gloss goes on to elaborate Indian matters, for the benefit of this reader:

> In Bengal and in most of India_ they do not make love in the honourable sense of the word. Unlike the butterfly whose courtship Darwin assures us, is a very long affair, the Bengali does not court at all. Marriage is an affair arranged either by the parents and guardians of the bachelors and the spinsters... (p. 3)

A Madhaviah in his novel *Satyananda* (1909) similarly pauses in his narration to provide anthropological details about the outlandish habits of Hindus:

> The Hindu husband and his wife have no recognized form of addressing each other and strange are the devices often resorted to by them...The Brahman wife generally calls her lord's attention by means of a peculiar noise...while the husband refers to his helpmate as 'she', 'it', 'our housewoman', 'you' or more often by a meaningless interjection. (p. 255)

In all these instances, we perceive how the addresser (writer) is in turn being constructed by the supposed alien addressee, located in a foreign culture. At a time when one of the functions of the Indo-Anglian novel was the consolidation of an incipient nationalism, any assertion of a broadly Indian identity was undertaken generally to emphasize "Otherness" and exoticity rather than to make a political statement. The project of portraying a "true" India has resulted in reaffirming the British definition of the "Oriental".

(2) THE 'TRUE-to-INDIA' FORMULA !

We often doubt if there can be a truistic equating of "Indian" with nationalism. Can there even be such a point of view that can be called 'true-to-India', such a formulation, i.e., that can be represented in terms of 'truth'? Two theoretical issues merge here, that of representation of nationalism and that of the discursive functioning of this representation as 'truth'. In Michel Foucault's socio-historical work on genealogy and discourse, it is the various interested constructions of 'truth' that have come under active scrutiny. For

> and ...truth isn't outside power...Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its own regime of truth, its general 'politics of truth: that is, the type of discourse which it accepts makes function as true.
>
> (Foucault, 131)

Foucault implies here what he states later on: discourses produce effects of truth; they are in themselves neither true nor false. In this sense, as a post-independence country hungry to define itself as a nation, the Indian subcontinent began producing nationalist formulations that discursively and genealogically affected certain "truths."

Hence, the Indo-Anglian critic's formulation of "truth", insofar as it has defined Indian nationalism and nationalist authenticity in Indian writing in English, has been non-productive. An effort to locate Indian national identity (itself an enormously heterogeneous and problematic concept) in its corresponding "truthful" expression in literature can prove and indeed has proved to be a deadly malaise when all that it amounts to is an announcement of inviolable otherness; this "otherness", however, is an "Orientalized" construct that had already been attributed to the "native" of the Indian subcontinent under the British government's imperialist campaign. So one may put to question the usefulness of the gesture of putting on the garb of otherness as if it were an originary, self-discovered identity.

At least one result of the critic's (and the writer's) location of national identity in Indo-Anglian literature in terms of "truth" has been the privileging of India-born writers who display nationalist affinities. This privileging has, in turn, worked to undermine the writing of Indian immigrants to Britain and North America.R.K Narayan and Raja Rao provide the bastions on which the validity of Indo-Anglian literature rests and Salman Rushdie and Bharati Mukherjee stand in for the Westernized, alienated writers lost in search of their Indian identity.

V.K. Gokak, an influential Indian critic who was the first to define the term "Indian-English-writers" (i.e. Indo-Anglians), makes this bias very clear:

> Where Indo-Anglian writing very nearly approximates to English writing in its accent, tone, vocabulary, syntax and style, *by reason of the writer's interest or domicile*, it also tends to lose, to that extent, Indianness of thought and vision. *Our Indo-Anglians*, who are *fond of cosmopolitan living*, have plenty of flavour of conversational English in their writings. The *latest fashion in language, which they assimilate, and employ in their writing, makes them more 'Anglian' than 'Indian'*. They tend to write about India from the

> outside rather than inside. On the other hand, the Indo-Anglians who are true to Indian thought and vision cannot escape the Indian flavour even when they write in English... (Italics mine)
>
> (Gokak, 9)

Gokak here attaches a particular "truth" to the writer's domicile. In other words, "Indianness of thought and vision" can only be written by native Indians; hence expatriate Indian writers are cast as Westernized and unpatriotic by virtue of their "interest and domicile" for, "fond of cosmopolitan living", they "merely follow the latest fashions in language". The latter are "Anglian", the former "Indian."

In fact, by delineating the field of Indo-Anglian literature in this manner, Gokak prefigures and, to some extent, even dictates the nature of more recent unfortunate reactions by Indian intellectuals to Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. The popular Sikh writer, journalist, and consultant editor of Penguin in India, Khushwant Singh, himself an adventurous risk-taker in his work, was among the first to voice his uneasiness over Rushdie's controversial and "irresponsible" treatment of the Prophet's life in *The Satanic Verses*. He was soon followed by the majority of Indian intellectuals who were well versed in the consequences of religious riots in the subcontinent and to whom Rushdie unmistakably represented the Westernized immigrant alienated from the cruel realities of religious segregation in India. (If a shift from Gokak's aestheticized idealization of India to Singh's awareness of its political realities seems to have occurred, this is due, in part, to Singh's own delicate position as a consultant editor of Penguin in India who, upon reading the manuscript for Penguin, has to adjudicate Rushdie's radical political views for an Indian audience.)

It is interesting to note that Govinda Sarma, who quotes Gokak in *Nationalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction*, devotes his study to the "Indian" and not the "Anglian" writers; he accepts Gokak's bias as self-evident truth. By thus

legitimizing the "Indo" "Anglian" division, his argument becomes a redundant and circular exercise: he chooses to study writers who are "Indian" and the writers who are "Indian" display the spirit of nationalism in theme and language. Therefore, a host of illegitimate local arguments has been valued in the service of the "truth" of Indianness; this Indianness has been preserved as inviolably "Other", "non-Western", when, in fact, it is a received Western, "Orientalized" definition of the Indian "native".

Gokak's and Sarma's arguments point to the inadequacy of the title "Indian-English"/"Indo-Anglian", its inability to contain and explain the definitions it has produced in the context of an increasingly multicultural, internationalist, capitalist, and cosmopolitan world that has grown at once smaller and more complicated. Further, even as post-colonial, post-war "brain-drain" has led to a diminishment of the immediacy of nationalist concerns at home, the First World countries of Britain and the United States to which immigrants like Salman Rushdie and Bharati Mukherjee now "belong" are in turn having to re-articulate their own nationalist concerns in order to contain and explain their multicultural diversity.[Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 50. At times illuminating, Brennan's work fails to take into account the actual weight and work of Indian nationalist literary thought that Rushdie is up against. Instead, Brannon's effort is expended towards making Rushdie exemplary of the Third World]

Symptomatic of the inadequacy of the title "Indian-English"/"Indo-Anglian" is the fact that Gokak ambivalently calls the Westernized Indian writers "*our Indo-Anglians* ". Now, in what sense are these "Indo-Anglian" writers <u>his</u> and presumably an entire Indian-based community's if they are more "Anglian" than "Indian"? There seems to be an appropriation of the sophisticated English which these "Anglian" writers presumably use even if, at the same time, Gokak extols the value of "Indianness".

What we wish to examine in subsequent pages of this study, then, is the constitution of Indian-English /Indo-Anglian studies as a field which allowed and disallowed privileges based on the critics' and writers' claims to nationalism and nationalist authenticity. An examination of R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao shows that these claims have elided the radical raptures that have taken place due to the creative use of the English language. Two symptoms of these raptures appear in the form of the contradictory or essentialist national identifications and problematic translations.

Because its definitions have proved to be inadequate, the field has been unable to include Salman Rushdie's and Bharati Mukherjee's rich and complex identifications with nationalism. Rushdie's and Mukherjee's writing points to and indeed even lives in the space which is an excess of the field as it has been defined thus for; this excess should serve equally to define the field. For with Rushdie, Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh and Anita Desai, contradiction and translation determine the very condition of their existence as immigrant writers.

Finally then, we will argue that the field of Indian-English studies must be re-defined in global term—not as the overly aesthetic and neutral study of "Indo-Anglian"or "Indian-English literature" but as the study of a highly political and global category of literature about (and not necessarily in) the Indian subcontinent, one that records the conditions of multicultural, multilingual Third World, post-colonial discourses.

In the larger narrative of the history of Anglo-American and European criticism, post-modernism and post-structuralism mark a break from the concerns of classical aesthetics, and so make it possible for literature to be read in relation to the politically charged categories of race, gender and class. This literature has, however, been largely European and Anglo-American. In the specific study of marginalized (in this case "Third World") literatures, the post-colonial critic combats two methodological problems that become the parameters for post-

colonial critical studies. First, while the categories of race, gender and class are to be recognized as themselves politically constituted and deployed, in the post-colonial context they must not be reconstituted in terms of a nostalgic recovery of what was lost through British imperialism. One is not, that is, at liberty to imagine and posit an ideal, non-stratified, pre-colonial Indian condition.

Second, one must not reinscribe within the categories of race, gender and class a hegemonic "First World" reading implicated in the act of domesticating a simply oppositional "Other". Gayatri Spivak says,

> To consider the Third World as distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritage waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation fosters the emergence of "the Third World" as a signifier that allows us to forget that 'worlding' [the narrative, in literary history ....of what is now called the "Third World"] even as it expands the empire of the literary discipline.

(*Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism*, 261.)

In this essay, Spivak renders the moment of imperialism as a fracture that makes impossible a nostalgic recovery of the colonized country's origins. In the same essay, she tries to locate the category of gender in Western feminist terms as itself imperialistic:

> It seems particularly unfortunate when the emergent perspective of feminist criticism reproduces the axioms of imperialism. A basically isolationist admiration for the literature of the female subject in Europe and Anglo-America established the high feminist norm. It is supported and operated by an information-retrieval approach to Third World literature which often employs a deliberately 'non-

> theoretical' methodology with self-conscious rectitude.
>
> (*Three Women's Text and a Critique of Imperialism*, 243)

In other words, to non-problematically incorporate the "Other" that is the Third World into a First World literary field is to ignore the fact that the incorporation itself might be an act complicit with the history of imperialism.

In the following pages, we work within these parameters in order to study and redefine Indian-English/Indo-Anglian studies. A search for pre-colonial origin seems, by its naïve nature, to imply that the moment of colonialism is only an interruption of a continuous, linear Indian history. But the moment of imperialism not only fractured this historical continuum; it dictated the very discourse in which Indian scholars would talk about Indian history, whether that history be pre-colonial or modern. The danger of a First World academic domestication of the simply oppositional "Other" is that it tends to merely continue or parallel the history of the imperialist, Orientaling project. This appropriation of the Third World then blocks out the possibility and positive value of critical intervention in the course of both the history of empire and the history of academic imperialism.

These parameters are not meant to posit another politically correct "truth", as opposed to the "truth" that Indo-Anglian critics have engendered. Instead, they provide the boundaries for a responsible political stance from which to study and re-define Indo-Anglian studies. First, how did Indian scholars and writers go about constructing a national identity that is in fact problematic because, far from being uniquely Indian, as they claim, it relied on Western thought for its conception?

[3] Is it Indian? Or "Matthew Arnold in a sari?"(*The Swan and the Eagle*, 12)

In the genealogy of Indo-Anglian critical studies, Indian nationalism was equated uncritically, even pre-critically, with an unexamined and finally subjective sense of what it meant to "write" race into the English language. The whole problem of how this creative writing could ever have taken place without a radical rupture in the meaning-making process enacted between text and writer, text and reader, was not explored. That it could not have been explored was due, in part, to the fact that such writers as R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao achieved popularity in the West in the nineteen-thirties, at a time when anti-colonial movements did not connote a particular value there. Since their literature targeted a Western audience (only critical acclaim abroad legitimized these novels at home), it was already rhetorically geared toward reproducing Orientalized information for the very audience that had determined its production in the first place.

The earliest Indian writing in English began as far back as the second half of the nineteenth century because, after 1835, English came to stay in India as the language of most educational institutions. In fact, even before Macaulay's decision in 1835 to institute the English language on all levels of governmental and educational work in the Indian subcontinent, enough Christian missionary teaching of English in schools and colleges had begun. It is a well-recorded fact that these missionaries produced a vernacularization of English which, in turn, was itself influenced by Indian vernaculars.[for instance, Feroza Jussawalla, *Family Quarrels: Towards a Criticism of Indian Writing in English* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), 2.] Further, many Indians desired a Western education and Macaulay implicitly addressed this desire in his minute on Indian Education of February 2, 1835.

Macaulay's minute signified the British government's imperialist concern with instituting English as the language of educational systems, a concern which, by extension, had to have altered Indian literary and cultural forms. It is important to note that these resulting changes can't be of their ideologically charged content and can't be dismissed as simply "bad" or simply "good". Instead, the question may usefully be asked, what did this decisive minute produce?

Abdul JanMohamed has underscored a distinction between the "dominant" phase of imperialism (which lasts up to the granting of independence to the colonized country) and the "hegemonic" phase (neocolonialism, or the phase in which "natives" have internalized Western forms of administration).[Abdul JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature", *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985), 61-62] JanMohamed allots to the first phase the direct colonialist material practice of exploiting "native" resources; in the second phase, which he sees as properly neo-colonial, colonialist discourse starts to exert full force in convincing the "native" to change his savage ways.

JanMohamed's model provides a distinction between two planes of the history of empire as well as between the different and contradictory rules that govern colonialist material practice and colonialist discourse in each. A mapping out such as this one serves to lay bare some of the operations and effects of imperialism. But it also runs the risk of rendering them static. In a complex way, Macaulay's minute is both colonialist discourse and direct material practice; it is distributed unevenly in both its overt aim, in the guise of Britain's "social mission", to educate and Westernize (i.e. civilize) the Indian, and its overt aim to produce an Indian intelligentsia which would ally itself to, and ensure, British economic presence in India.

Macaulay, in his administrative capacity as member of the Supreme Council and President of the Committee of Public Instruction, spoke to an audience comprised of the Governor General Lord Bentinck and his representatives on the urgency of promoting "European literature and science among the natives of India".[Thomas B.M. Macaulay, *Prose and Poetry*, ed. G.M. Young (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 719]. Lord Bentinck formally approved such a plan on March 7. The tone and content of the minute on Indian Education are, of course, rampantly imperialist, but so sanctioned and institutionalized as to appear only natural. It is obvious matter of fact to Macaulay that,

> ...a single shelf of a good European library [is] worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the Committee who support the Oriental plan of education...It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England.
>
> (Macaulay, 722)

All this is said when "I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic." "But", he says,

> I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works.
>
> (Macaulay, 722)

Suffice it to say that while it is the obviousness (of the fact) that renders proof of the superiority of the English language unnecessary, it is also the same

obviousness that makes it unnecessary for Macaulay to read Oriental literature except in select canonical Orientalized translations and as a way of correctly estimating their value. Edward Said has pointed out that gestures like Macaulay's were traditional "Orientalizing" moves:

> ...the Orient in itself was subordinated intellectually to the West. As material for study or reflection the Orient acquired all the marks of an inherent weakness.
>
> (*Orientalism* 152)

As was evidenced by the socio-political history hinging upon the ambiguous benefits of the English language, Macaulay's minute now allowed Britain's centralized literate power to be more widely and heterogeneously reproduced and distributed among certain sections of the Indian intelligentsia ("brown sahibs", anti-British activists, college students, aspiring writers, etc.) even as it constituted the site for further heated anti-British sentiment.

For the purpose of genealogically locating the discourses around and about the Indian-English literature, Macaulay's minute and the importation of the novel serve as dominant and visible impulses behind the gradual production of books written in English by Indians in the nineteenth century. The eighteenth-century writing of Fielding, Smollett, Richardson and Sterne established a viable precedent for the genre of the novel in Britain, although the point has to be made that there, too, the novel has to be located and defined in problematic relation to the cultural conditions that produced it. But there had hitherto been no genre recognizable as the novel in the Indian subcontinent, although poetry, epic and drama had occupied "high" and "popular" places in an active and primarily religious, written and oral history.

Critics seem to agree that this early Indian writing in English was largely unsuccessful in terms of the handling of English by a non-English writer; but this literature's concern with "Indian" themes makes it authentic. [Most of my information about these early novels, largely inaccessible and out of print, comes from Narasimhaiah, *The Swam and the Eagle* and Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English*. A brief list of novels is as follows: Pyaricharan Mitra, *The Spoilt Child* (1858); Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864); Sorabji, *Life Behind the Purdah* (1901); S.B. Banerjee, *Tales of Bengal* (1910); Romesh Chander Dutt, *The Lake of Palms* (1902) and *The Slave Girl of Agra* (1909)] These novels demonstrate powerfully the birth of a paradox that would later become a contradiction to boggle the Indian intellectual mind: namely, how can one write in the colonizer's language about colonized subjects? Further, these novels put into motion the positioning of the Indian as native informant. Indians began producing writing that contained "native" Indian subjects; most of it took the form of social treatises aimed at the reform of "barbaric" Indian practices (like dowry and the purdah). Addressing itself to Western curiosity about the Orient, it was already shaped by British literary influences. A striking image of this kind of paradox may be found in the figure of the Indian poet, Henry Derozio (1809-1831), who taught for a while at the Hindu College in Calcutta. A self-acclaimed westernized liberal, Derozio condemned Hindu superstition and primitivism and lauded the French revolution and Christian missionary work in the subcontinent. Fired by the Romantic ideals of Byron, he rode through the streets of Calcutta on an Arab horse. Yet a more patriotic zealot could not have been found. His poems draw equally on Hindu mythology and Wordsworthian influences and demonstrate a disgust for India's colonized situation. [See H.M. Williams, *Indo-Anglian Literature (1800-1970): A Survey* (Bombay: Orient Longman Ltd., 1977), 15]

The first critical discourses to adequately respond to the minute and this production of books were formulated in the early nineteen-sixties. They

unanimously hail the English language's utilitarian purpose of yoking disparate regional linguistic elements {by virtue of providing a language common to educated Indians across the sub-continent}. But they meander into an unfortunate contradiction that was to determine the course of Indo-Anglian studies. Namely, they create as their object of study a quintessential Indianness that withstands a translation to the English language and survives intact in the literature in spite of that translation and the political condition of neo-colonialism; at the same time, they measure, in some confused spirit of critical evaluation, the early Indian novels written in English against their Victorian "counterpart" in Britain, institutionalizing thereby a practice of letting the "master" text exert and continue its own hegemony in the space of Indian writing in English. If a novel didn't "sound" English enough, it wasn't good enough. I am referring to the first full length critical works that in fact expressly aimed to constitute the field of study of Indo-Anglian literature, C.D. Narasimhaiah's *The Swan and the Eagle* (1969) and K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English* (1961;rev. 1973). Iyengar does this by the immediate claim to nationalism. Narasimhaiah's bias toward the innate superiority of the English language and Indian nationalism emerges more subtly. Feroza Jussawalla succinctly summarizes his critical prejudices:

> 1) the literature could not be any good if it did not imitate what was produced abroad; 2) it could be any good if it was written in English by someone who had not been abroad—implicit in this is the judgment that Indians could not use English effectively by themselves; 3) the writer could not produce great literature if he was not concerned with the profounder issues which could range anywhere from Indianizing English, to expressing Indian philosophical problems, to dealing with the current nationalistic issues.
>
> (*Family Quarrels*, 7)

In the constitution of the field as Indian-English, then, the novels of the first major writers, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao were made synonymous with a sort of aesthetically delineated nationalism that was only very

tenuously linked to and in fact displaced the material sense in which "nationalism" originated as a political movement against British imperialism in India with the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Partha Chatterjee's historical research has shown that Indian nationalist political thought was itself attempting to structure an essentialist Indian nationalist discourse, even as it was being shaped by nineteenth century British logic. [Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986)]. Indo-Anglian studies performed a similar activity, with a further complication introduced by the aestheticizing, rather than the politicizing, of nationalism.

Feroza Jussawalla, whose study explores the relationship between Indian writing in English and its criticism, seems to skirt the issues surrounding the earlier critics' aestheticized displacement of nationalism by casting this displacement in the friendlier language of absorption and incorporation:

> Indian critics...felt that Indian literature should be patterned after British literature. At the same time, Indians should attempt to make the English language their own. For, nationalist criticism indicated that Indians should shake off the yoke of imperialism but if it could not be thrown off, it should be incorporated into Indian nationalism.
>
> (*Family Quarrels*, 7-8)

In any case, what was beginning to get theorized was a now familiar critical agenda: the text or subtext in Indian writing in English is about a clearly identifiable national identity which, while it is jeopardized by the threat of foreign presence, stands to gain from the influence of that presence; so Indianness is distilled from Indian writing in English as the pure factor which enables originality while the sophistication and flexibility of the English language are lauded. Narasimhaiah asserts dogmatically:

> Now what holds writers so divergent as those whose work is examined here, together? First and foremost, their writing is the *expression of a distinct, identifiable sensibility which is Indian, and the language, foreign in that it is not picked up on the mother's lap but learnt assiduously by a most sensitive exposure to its practitioners* in a wide-ranging variety of speech and writing in India and abroad.
>
> (*The Swan and the Eagle*, xiii-xiv)

Published as recently as 1985, Samares Sanyal's study, *Indianness in Major Indo-English Novels* represents precisely the nationalist enterprise which salvages thematic concerns (Indian English, Myth as Technique, Asceticism and Renunciation, Gandhian Nationalism) peculiar to the Indian temperament. "English", he says,

> though not native to the Indian soil, can be adopted by the Indian writer to the needs of expressing Indian thought and tradition without being grossly misused. Whatever merit the Indian languages can claim to have for expressing the life of the Indian people and the distinctiveness of the values of Indian life is possessed by English too.
>
> (*Indianness in Major Indo-Anglian Novels*, 13)

Sanyal's is a gesture that leaps to a non-problematic equation between language and "life"/"values"/"thought"/"tradition" on behalf of both the sub-continent of India and the original English speaking countries of the world. The point to be made here, however, is that his notion of "English" is of course an already received one; the more obstinately difficult point to be made is that his notion of what is "Indian" falls into a received category also, a category that is already "Orientalized". What must be acknowledged is that any nationalist concept of Indian-writing in English is one that must invariably be mediated by already "Orientalized" categories of understanding. When, for instance, Sanyal

salutes the ambitious project of the "Indo-Anglians", his idiom and ethic are Victorian: "...there are men and women who have bravely run the race and reached the goal."(6). What in this sentiment is especially Indian?

Note also the chapter "India" in *The Commonwealth Pen: An Introduction to the Literature of the Commonwealth*, in which K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar puts himself in the position of "native informant" to the West:

> Indian literature is somewhat akin to a garden. Nature, man, the march of history, the play of chance, all have taken a hand in making this garden. One marks the individual trees, one is attracted by the flower here, the fruit; but one takes no less the garden, admiring its relations and proportions and inferring its unifying and harmonizing elements. (116)

As native informant, however, Iyengar legitimizes his identity by writing in line with the British literary mainstream; his notion of unity and harmony presents itself as vaguely Johnsonian or Austenian in ethos. And here we have clear Keatsian and Tennysonian traces:

> Drinking deep in the springs of English literature, Bengali youths wished to lisp in English and also to give Bengali a new vigor and sensibility. (119)

In this essay, Iyengar seems to be engaged in the project of legitimizing Indian writing in English in nationalist terms under the rubric of "Commonwealth literature". It is illuminating to note that, in his 1989 study, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, Timothy Brennan quotes Srinivasa to show that Indian writing in English had a limited following in the West, in contrast to the following of

African and Caribbean Commonwealth literatures. Brennan seems to be responding to Iyengar's position as native informant by placing him in the position of authority. This position, however, is itself engaged in the act of producing, promoting, and establishing that very authority. [Brennan, *Salman Rushdie*, 79].

Actively influenced by the nationalist spirit which produced this sort of nationalist criticism, the post-war, post-independence Indian novels written in English sought to locate "India" and delineate proudly its "unity in diversity" (the patriotic motto later emblazoned in post-independence Indian history textbooks): "Again and again, behind the seeming complexity, the forces of unity and harmony seem to prevail." [Iyengar, "India", 18]. But this "India" is not recoverable in terms of its origins. As Edward Said's research has shown, it had been arranged into recognizable shape only by the first Oriental studies done by Western scholars. [for instance, Said, *Orientalism*, 78-79. Said's initial work in the field of Orientalism had made possible the task of the already "Orientalized" Oriental to come to terms with an identity that is neither purely Indian nor purely western(ized).]As such, it is always already a pre-given category within which newer readings of India were and still are being rearranged and appropriated by the Indo-Anglian scholars themselves.

[4] How is it "true-to-India"? Authenticating the use of the English language

The preceding section has elaborated critical issues attending the delineation of the field of Indian-English literature studies. What has been intended to show there was a picture of the field in the grips of a binding

contradiction: the attribution of a sort of duality to the literature by critics (best exemplified by naming it as "Indo-Anglian", so that it is Indian but it is English too) has been justified, in effect, explained away, in terms of nationalism. Yet the Indian creative writer's use of English can never be neutral particularly since one of its effects has been to illicit the charge by "regional" writers (i.e. creative writers of the "bhasa literature") that the use of English is politically incorrect and corrupts a subject that is essentially not English. English thus put to use, nationalistically traitorous and creatively misplaced as it is perceived as being, has "sold"—literally and figuratively—an exoticized India to foreign audience and alienated the Indian writer in English from his native country.

Some historical background to the current controversy between Indian writers in English and Indian writers writing in Indian languages is pertinent here since it demonstrates how Indian-English studies represented themselves to "native" Indians, some of whom claimed for themselves another kind of nationalism. This was the nationalist discourse which emerged from a refusal, in certain quarters, to write in the master language of English; its particular "truth" was that one could express a nationalist sensibility only through the medium of an Indian language. An excursion into this background reveals, further, the manner in which Indo-Anglian studies sought to legitimize the authenticity of their own nationalism in the face of this other nationalism. What we are confronting, then, is a debate between competing positions, each of which claims to possess true access to nationalism. This debate highlights competing discourses of "truth", but what we have the occasion to witness is the way in which these discourses are being made to operate as true by other side.

Much of the debate between regional writers and Indian writers in English over the post-independence status of English was precipitated in the late sixties at an All-India Writers' Conference in Bombay. The president of that conference, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, announced that English had, in fact, arrested the growth

of regional languages from its first instance; he further called for the abolition of its use both within the country and outside it.

Iyengar's announcement caused an immense indignant stir within the Writers' Workshop, a group of Calcutta-based young writers in English who published their writing in their own journal, *Miscellany*. Their spokesman, Professor P. Lal of St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, responded vociferously to Iyengar's criticisms in *The Free Press Journal*, a Bombay weekly. On another occasion, Lal took up arms against the editor of *Quest*, Professor Ayyub, who had stated in an editorial that: "[f]iction and poetry written in English by Indians cannot be regarded as freakish or at best as highly exceptional". To this, P. Lal retorted in the form of a manifesto (he had a penchant for the declamatory air of the manifesto):

> Freakish? But isn't any great writer freakish and flashing-in-the-pannish? What about Conrad, Beckett, Naipaul? Is their mother tongue English? And is not this scorn for a 'minority group' a most reprehensible thing?"
>
> (*The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*, 3)

First, Lal declares as universally self-evident the eccentric greatness always attached specifically to writers in the Western humanistic literary tradition. How this greatness is to be adjudicated in the complicated Indian regional context is glossed over strategically; hence, the comparison with Conrad and others is made valid while, at the same time, Lal is able to make his cause the cause of a beleaguered "minority group".

This is not to suggest, however, that the regionalist claim to "truth" is the valid one. With the unmistakably unprecedented and remarkable spread of the English language to virtually all corners of the world and the ideological and hegemonic institutionalizing of the language in neo-colonial political

administration and education, it appears incredibly innocent to posit as an alternative the exclusive creative use of a language other than English. Linguists calculate that at present, 30-40% of the world's population using the English language are those to whom English comes as a second language; it is estimated that, by the year 2000, "its non-native speakers will outnumber its native speakers." [For an account of the heated controversy between regionalists and Indian writers in English, reference can be made to David McCutchion's Introduction to *Indian Writing in English* (Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1969), 20-22]. But even more than merely innocent, Iyengar's call for abolition of the English language is baseless because it ignores, as an issue, the complex relationship between international capitalism, nationalism and literary culture as a form of modernity. Further, the regionalist claim too easily relegates the domain of Indo-Anglian studies to discourse in English when in fact the literature's status as "English literature" is as yet dubious and marginalized within the academic discipline of English studies. There is even a nationalist agenda to Indianize English to the extent that it is no longer recognizable as "English" (British or North American); the English language in these novels has been termed by many "Indian English".

Much of the proud desire to create a writing uniquely "Indian English" was articulated by Raja Rao in 1937 in his now-famous Author's Foreword to *Kanthapura:*

> The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word "alien", yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up like Sanskrit or Persian were 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 cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot 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 someday prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.
>
> (*Kanthapura*, vii)

Yet to return to the regional/Indian writing in English debate, the defensive attempt by Indo-Anglian writers and critics to characterize Indian English has mired itself in essentialist notions of "Indianness" ("our emotional make-up"). Grounding themselves in a finally subjective sense of "Indianness", these essentialist notions typically privilege and sanctify dominant representations of India. The essentialist position on India has yet to recognize its own historical constitution in the history of Orientalism and, further, its strategic suppression of other Indias (the India of the Sikhs and the India of the illiterate female labor, for instance) that might disturb its imagined unity. To talk about India means first to talk about enormously heterogeneous constructs of India, many Indias, many representations that, for one reason or another, might be interested in the formulation of their own position as the position on India. Raja Rao's own position on India, for instance, is the South Indian Brahmin's position, as his semi-autobiographical narrative, *The Serpent and the Rope*, amply demonstrates.

One way out of the double bind that regional writers and writers in English have created, I suggest, is to acknowledge that the literature partakes of both Indian and English words and worlds, but that when it does so neither can then be seen as distinct and incorruptible. There is a body of writing that is in "Indian English"; significant chunks of this consist of translations from an Indian to the English language; and some parts find expression in one of the Indian languages. In other words, instead of a situation where the sole use of English is seen as traitorous and the sole use of an Indian language is seen as nationalist by

the regional writer, we have a situation in which the two are bilingually, dialogically defined, with neither occupying the place of "truth".

Indian writers typically have available languages other than English and a significant body of their writing finds expression in these languages. Problematically placed side by side with English, they render impossible the notion that language is a pure transparent medium, a line moving unconfused from writer to reader. If this were so, we would not have before us a text criss-crossed with "foreign" words and passages whose dictionary definitions in English and American publications are provided in a glossary at the back; one consequence of such a text would be the cross-disciplinary nature of a reading which is literary but also etymological, sociological and anthropological.

More importantly, the availability of more than one language to a colonial and post-colonial writer should indicate not just indeterminacy of meaning (the instance in which one word in one language seems to signify, yet defy, a possible meaning in another language). It points to choices that a writer makes towards the inclusion or exclusion of either language. When one of these languages is what we may call the "master" language, English representing the imperialist language of the colonizer, and when this language forms the narrative framework and substance of the novel, how are we to read the status of the various Indian signifiers dispersed through the text? Or, conversely, how may the Indian signifiers that are translated into English be interpreted?

M.M. Bakhtin's insistence on discourse that is dialogic offers an initial position from which to address the Indian writer's working situation of bilingualism. His project in *Discourse in the Novel* is an attempt to fix attention on the novel as the area where the "heteroglossia" of socioideological life, impelled by stratifying and centrifugal forces, effects a no-win no-loss battle between one discourse and another alien discourse. The battle is, then, necessarily cast in "dialogic" terms; it is always at least "double-voiced", for any word on its

way to meet its object finds itself internally dialogized as a result of having to encounter within the object an alien word. (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 324). The relationship between signifier and signified is not simply indeterminate so much as doubly wrought:

> The word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way
>
> (*Discourse in the Novel*, 329)

Inextricably linked to this activity is its corollary: the situation in which a word seeks out the alien subjective belief system of another and finds itself dialogized.

These dialogical transformations, when stylized in the novel, enable Bakhtin to displace classic critical topoi (author, narrator, character). His insistence on the characteristic way that socioideological heteroglossia multiplies individual utterance (in other words, makes it imperative that one talk always in other tongues) takes authority away from a unitary system of language and disperses it in the field of battle where several languages intersect. His ability to account for multilingual situations in the contradictory midst of which a writer chooses between languages may make him useful for a study of Indian writing in English (and, indeed, readers of contemporary African literature find him congenial for this reason):

> The actively literary linguistic consciousness at all times and everywhere...comes upon "languages" and not language. Consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of having to choose a language.
>
> (*Discourse in the Novel*, 295)

> . . . as soon as it becomes clear that these [languages] were not only various different languages but even internally variegated languages, that the ideological systems and approaches to the world that were indissolubly connected with these languages contradicted each other and could no longer leave in peace and quiet with one another—then the inviolability and predetermined quality of these languages came to and end, and the necessity of actively choosing one's orientation among them began. (296)

After Lacan and Derrida, one has to say, of course, that such a choice cannot be a free one; consciousness doesn't "come upon" language because it is already constituted and in fact overdetermined by language. But in the case of multilingualism, in the specific case of a country like India, which struggles to contain roughly eighteen linguistically different state languages (not to mention the superabundance of regional dialects within each state) and the uneven and only partially unifying presence of English, one has to be struck by the persistent proliferation of meaning(s). One is also struck by specific moments of an overdetermination of meaning in which two systems of signification confound each other in ways that are not simply oppositional. Using the Bakhtinian model, one could say that the Indian writer who writes in English shuffles between "authoritative" discourse and "internally persuasive" discourse (342), and that the dialogic space between the two is rich with contradictory drives. Authoritative discourse has already persuaded the writer to use the master discourse of British English; this use is problematized by the fact that he/she may be equally internally persuaded by utterances that stretch beyond the master discourse of English: the "internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's"(345).

It is this curious overlapping of authoritarian and internally persuasive discourse in the post- and neo-colonial phase that Bakhtin does not adequately consider. He casts authoritative discourse as isolated, as radically the "Other":

> Both the authority of discourse and its internal persuasiveness may be united in a single word....But such a unity is rarely a given—it happens more frequently that an individual's becoming, an ideological process, is characterized precisely by a sharp gap between these two categories...Authoritative discourse may organize around itself great masses of other types of discourses (which interpret it, praise it, apply it in various ways), but the authoritative discourse itself does not merge with these (by way of, say, gradual transitions); it remains sharply demarcated, compact and inert...one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it. [342-343]

But the internally persuasive word, if it is "half someone else's", lends itself to being positioned as authoritative, with the "someone else" in this case being the colonizer. The individualized "half" of the equation described by Bakhtin ("half ours") may then be usefully represented by the Indian writer's drive to include, in his/her writing, discourse other than authoritative: Indian languages.

A revealing instance of this blurring between the authority of discourse and its internal persuasiveness may be found in the "ideological development" of R. K. Narayan. In *The Dialogic Imagination* Bakhtin observed:. "Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values."(346) Such a struggle, we argue, is implicit in Narayan's

identification with the English language. In a BBC interview with William Walsh, Narayan stated:

> Until you mentioned another tongue I had never had any idea that I was writing in another tongue. My whole education has been in English...I am particularly fond of the language...it came to me very easily. I can't explain how. English is a very adaptable language. And it's so transparent it can take on the tint of any country.
>
> (*The Other Tongue*, 311.)

The sheer transparency of the English language allows it to take on the hues and shades of any foreign culture. Narayan also considers English to be, for all practical purposes, his first language. One notes the amazingly neutral manner in which he discusses his use of the English language; the internal persuasion to use English language is made self-evident, so natural that it can't be defined: "It came to me very easily. I can't explain how." Yet when, in his youth, Narayan failed in English language and literature and was consequently prevented from graduating from high school, he was fully cognizant of the social implications of his failure: English stood for the hallmark of a good education. In his memoirs, *My Days*, Narayan remembers:

> ...I had failed where I was most confident—English. I failed so miserably and completely that everyone wondered if I was literate at all... [My father] was forced to exclaim in surprise, 'Stupid fellow, you have failed in English! Why?' Proficiency in English being a social hall-mark, I remained silent without offering my explanation (55).

English as a dominant discourse plays a crucial role here.

Hence, the colonial context mandates that the line between authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse cannot render authoritative discourse as radically "Other". Further, the Bakhtian model, which posits authoritative discourse in absolute terms of either total truth or total falsehood, runs the risk of subtly reinstating authority as that which is simply oppositional to another kind of discourse which is then seen to be disempowered.

Foucault's work in the genealogical histories that reveal discourse as the teeming and shifting site for relations of power/knowledge seems to be more pertinent to a study which is calling into question literary representations of nationalism in the colonial and post-colonial context. An examination and critique of the power with which these nationalist representations invest themselves in the name of "truth" may serve to disrupt the ends of dominant nationalist literary discourses. Hence, one needs to talk about Indo-Anglian studies in a way that refuses to erect any one position on nationalism (be it the regionalist-nationalist or the Indo-Anglian nationalist) as the true position. Consequently, we may more usefully see how every dominant discourse is an interested one and one that can never be disengaged from its operations on power/knowledge

In a Foucauldian analysis, it is not a matter of a simple opposition such as that between a discourse that seems to possess truth and a discourse that is then seen to be disadvantaged. This kind of simple opposition only fosters a continuation of the hegemony of "truth":

> ...the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false.

(*Power/Knowledge*, 118)

Homi Bhaba clarifies this not-simply-oppositional relation between two discourses:

> The productivity of Foucault's concept of power/knowledge lies in its refusal of an epistemology which opposes essence/appearance, ideology/science. 'Pouvoir/savoir' places subjects in a relation of power and recognition that is not part of symmetrical or dialectical relation—self/other, master/slave—which can be subverted by being inverted. Subjects are always disproportionately placed in opposition or domination through the symbolic decentering of multiple power-relations which play the role of support as well as target of adversary.
>
> (*The Other Question*, 24)

What seems to be most powerful in such a formulation is the peculiar way in which opposition is functional, productive, and the way in which it almost invariably then forefronts the actual operations of power. More importantly, this formulation may be rewritten in terms of the momentarily complicit rather than simply oppositional relationship between two kinds of discourse that together seem to forefront operations of power. For it is in this complicit rather than purely oppositional sense that Indian-English literary studies have unconsciously set themselves up in relation to imperialist discourse. The opposition, if any, between the two has been homogenized over the years, as when Sarma undertakes to "see how far the English language used by the Indo-Anglian fiction writers has been Indian in their hands, though basically it is still English":

> A study of the style of Indo-Anglian fiction reveals that even from the beginning there has [sic] always been two main tendencies—to write always chaste, standard English of impeccable idiom and rhythm of speech; and to write an Indian English with translated idioms, occasional direct use of Indian words and Indian rhythm of speech in an attempt to capture the tempo of Indian life.
>
> (*Nationalism*, 327-328)

Significantly, Sarma does not address how both "chaste, standard English" and "Indian English" are to be mediated in the texts of the writers he studies and what the agency of this mediation might be. In order to study this mediation, he would have to examine the way in which a writer's use of Indian English is embarrassingly complicit with, rather separate from, the use of "chaste, standard" (British) English.

The next section touches upon the various ways in which the earlier Indian writers coming out of the colonial context (the nineteen-thirties and forties) were equated by Indo-Anglian critics with Indian nationalism. The texts of R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, in my own examination of them, seem to elide the crucial disrupting factors presented by the use of the English language. Two symptoms of this elision emerge in these writers' unexamined contradictory and essentialist nationalist identifications and their problematic handling of translation.