INTRODUCTION

Contemporary novels are the mirror of the age, but a very special kind of mirror, a mirror that reflects not merely the external features of the age but also its inner face, its nervous system, the coursing of its blood and the unconscious promptings and conflicts which sway it.

(Allen 16)

A modern form of art, novel, is an appealing genre in literature as it covers comparatively a longer span of time and deals with the predicament of human characters. It explores almost everything of the age from the “external features” to “the coursing of its blood.”

A prominent feature of the postcolonial novel is that it is deeply rooted in its culture. The cultural conflict of the oppressed find projection in the novels because it portrays both inner conflicts and consciousness of the colonised community. The conflicts take birth due to the fusion of multicultural communities, when one is not able to keep loyalty to one’s own culture. Postcolonial literature deals with debatable themes like national identity, diaspora, gender, cultural hybridities and race. Mala Pandurang observes, “The term postcolonial can be used to describe writing that was both a consequence of and reaction to the European imperial process” (5). When the novels of different colonies are
scrutinised, the theme depicting the victory of the native culture and tradition over the Eurocentric culture is seen dominating. These novels attempt to eradicate the colonial hangover from the human minds. Fanon states, “Decolonisation is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy of any super natural power; the ‘thing’ which has been colonised becomes man during the same process by which it frees himself” (WE 28). Writers play a critical role in changing the “thing” into “man.”

A pivotal motif prevalent in the postcolonial literature is the return of the native to his culture and tradition. The return is often occasioned by a tension between his/her tradition and a Eurocentric tradition. The return is in fact a return from colonisation, geographically and psychologically to one’s own culture and tradition, which is deeply cemented in the minds of the protagonists in the younger age itself due to the influence of indigenous society. In spite of attaining political independence, the countries which were once colonies of Europe are not free in the real sense, as the colonisation aftermath still lingers in the minds of the people. The postcolonial novels portray the postcolonial trauma, inactivity, confusion, dependency and cultural conflict provoked by the colonial rule. Viney Kirpal asserts, “One’s tradition exists as unobvious signposts in one’s consciousness, acquired
like fossils over the generations; there is instinctive knowledge of them” (The Third World Novel 79). Kirpal also explains the difficulties of adopting the new culture psychologically and emotionally, even when the gap could be bridged intellectually.

Each protagonist of this study appears to be highly individualistic and unique, but this ardent desire to return girdles them. They try to "bridge" this gap “intellectually”, but fail. The predicament of these protagonists is similar to that of any modern man who has some sort of love towards his own tradition and culture. The world has now become a cocktail of cultures, languages, religion and race. Arora’s words are of great significance in this context:

Postcolonialism is the term coined with the need of studying literature of those countries that became free after experiencing the colonial rule. In the real sense, postcolonialism has come out from the womb of ‘colonialism.’ Hence, postcolonialism is the legitimate child of the illegitimate parent. (Arora 31)

The “illegitimate parent” tries to teach the “legitimate child” much of its History, Geography, manners, language, tradition and culture; but the child’s mind realises the vitality of its own motherland. By the 1930s, colonies and excolonies covered 84.6 per cent of the land surface of the
globe. These territories are of two kinds: "Those like Canada, New Zealand and Australia in which English people colonised and established their culture and those like India and Nigeria where they were rulers by force and imposed their institutions and norms" (Das 1). The second group is opted for in this project as this group has a broader and universal problem which can be linked with many countries and continents. A broader study of the colonised countries is possible through the literature which emerged since then and it will bring forth the similarities of oppression in different countries. The colonies faced a breakdown in native culture and tradition due to the European rule. They also encountered exploitation of colonial resources, poor treatment of local population and the spread of Christianity and literacy. Though the postcolonial theory came into the forefront only a couple of years before, the editors of *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* observe, “Post-colonial theory has existed for a long time before that particular name was used to describe it” (Introduction. Ashcroft, Griffths, and Tiffin eds. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* 1).

One of the earliest works in this field, *The Wretched of the Earth*, deals with three different phases in the works of native writers. In the first phase the native writer substantiates that "he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power." Fanon articulates that in this stage “his
inspiration is European" (WE). This unqualified assimilation reflects the Parnassians, the symbolists and the surrealists. In the second phase the disturbed native recalls the “past happenings of the bygone days of his childhood.” “Old legends” are reinterpreted “in the light of a borrowed aestheticism.” The last phase is called fighting phase in which the native tries to “shake the people.” He becomes an awakener of the people and gives birth to “a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature” (WE 179). The chosen works of Achebe, Ngugi and Lamming belong to the revolutionary group and those of the Indian writers are attributed to the second phase. There are many novels which deal with the theme of return. Life is presumably a journey and every experience is the beginning of another journey and naturally novels present this journey. So return becomes inevitable in this journey of life. Romantics picture the return to nature in their works. Return to the homeland is a relief for expatriates. Hardships and strangeness of the foreign land are resisted with this staunch desire to return.

The main objective of the present project is to explore the different dimensions that the return motif acquires in different fictional works. One Caribbean, two African and three Indian authors are chosen for this study. The novels selected for study are The Serpent and the
Rope by Raja Rao, A Dream in Hawaii by Bhabhani Bhattacharya, The Strange Case of Billy Biswas by Arun Joshi, Arrow of God by Chinua Achebe, The River Between by Ngugi wa Thiong’o (James Ngugi) and Water with Berries by George Lamming. This project aims at investigating the factors that compel such a return, from the perspective of postcolonial theoretical discourses. It also analyses the reasons for return and different types of return. The motif of the return of the protagonist to his native culture and tradition has historical, cultural, psychological, and philosophical implications.

This thesis is inspired by The Return of the Native, the sixth published novel by Thomas Hardy. It first appeared in the magazine Belgravia and was presented in twelve monthly instalments from January to December 1878. The novel deals with the native, Clement (Clym) Yeobright—A man of about thirty who gives up a business career in Paris to return to his native Egdon Heath to become a schoolmaster to the poor and ignorant. Hardy himself gave up a successful career as a London architect and returned to his native Dorchester to become a writer. This theme presented by an English writer in the nineteenth century recurs in the writings of Raja Rao, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Arun Joshi, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and George Lamming in the twentieth century. When Hardy’s novel celebrates the return to one’s
native place, this thesis presents the return to one’s own culture and tradition. This study on return is broader as it is not limited to one country or one continent. It explores the aftermath of colonisation which still lingers in the minds of the colonised.

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary gives three meanings to the term ‘native’ when it is used as a noun. The first one means “a person born in a place, country, etc, and associated with it by birth.” The second one means “a person born in a place, especially one who is not white and considered by visitors and those who have settled there to be inferior.” And the third means “an animal or a plant that lives or grows naturally in a certain area.” The second meaning sounds appropriate when the colonised community is considered. The terms “not white” and “inferior” reflect the image of the native. The term native is used in this sense in this study. But the ‘native’ used in Hardy’s The Return of the Native is not a non-white or inferior. Hardy has employed the first meaning.

The returnees presented here are the protagonists of select novels and they do not have much uniformity. In the case of Indian natives Ramaswamy of The Serpent and the Rope, Yogananda of A Dream in Hawaii and Billy Biswas of The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, the return is from the foreign soil to the native land. But the African
natives, Ezeulu of *Arrow of God* and Waiyaki of *The River Between*, face the conflict in their own land due to the colonisation. In fact a geographical return does not take place in their case. But their experience cements the traditional bonds and they realise the value of their own culture. The most radical writer of this study is Ngugi, but it is George Lamming who presents the most violent and reactive protagonist – Teeton in *Water with Berries*. Teeton adopts violence to fulfil his desire to return from England to San Christobal. He even goes to the extent of burning the Old Dowager, who represents Prospero. Other protagonists also would have adopted the violent measures, if their desire to return had not been fulfilled. But they are not exempted from the internal conflicts.

The concept of return plays an important role in the postcolonial context. Colonisation is a journey of the coloniser from the imperial centre to the colonies. After the colonies attained independence, the coloniser returned from the colonies. The colonised Indian natives – Ramaswamy, Yogananda and Billy and the West Indian native, Teeton, journey to the West. After their sojourn, they intend to return to their homelands. The African natives Ezeulu and Waiyaki face aggressive clash with the coloniser as the administrative power is in the hands of the colonised community. There are mutual conflicts within the local
community. Though a physical journey to the coloniser’s land is not made by these African natives, they are forced to move to the coloniser’s culture, staying in their own land. Geographical return has no significance in their case. But they long for the geographical return of the coloniser. Staying in their own soil, they become homeless and rootless. This accentuates the pathetic plight of these natives.

The thesis investigates the return of the protagonists and the situation after their return. It also testifies whether the natives can decolonise themselves from the colonial hangover. In a multicultural scenario, the concept of return has considerable significance. The ultimate goal of postcolonialism is combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures. It is not simply concerned with salvaging past worlds, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect. Viney Kirpal asserts, “Return to his motherland aggravates an emigre’s feeling of rootlessness. He realises how different he has grown, how incompatible he finds life in his native land. At the same time, he feels estranged and exiled in the adopted land” (The Third World Novel 79).

The novels of this study project variegated cultures. The link between culture and society is of great significance in postcolonial literature. The six novels project the value of indigenous culture and
tradition focussing on the return of the protagonist. The English world glorified by the English writers appreciates English literature and imbibes English culture. This study highlights the importance of indigenous culture. Various factors shaping return are grouped under different chapters. The study focuses on literatures of India, Nigeria, Kenya and West Indies.

In the multicultural societies, the significance of one’s own culture and tradition is lost. The knowledge of British history, English society and culture are essential for the proper understanding of English literature. Instead of forcing the colonised minds to read, comprehend and appreciate the English settings, birds and animals, the colonised nations have a duty to glorify their culture and tradition instead of blindly aping the West. When globalisation drags the world to a world culture, literatures of different countries and continents should be given proper representation. The comparative study of the postcolonial literature of India, Africa and West Indies focussed in this study projects the universality of the East-West encounter. This encounter produces clashes of which the cultural clash is of great significance.

Eminent writer Yahya asserts that the impact of literature on human mind is stronger than the power of colonisation. “While British soldiers and empire builders were busy making conquests over 4.5
million square miles, an army of metaphors was busy making conquests on the mental landscape of 66 million inhabitants of the colonies” (11). He further opines “an unquestioned status of the works of the English literary tradition and values remained potent in the cultural formation and the ideological institutions of education and literature” (11).

Literature portrays different cultures; education boosts its propaganda.

The four natives, except Ezeulu and Waiyaki, visit Prospero’s or the coloniser’s land and reflect the different versions of Caliban. Just as Hardy’s native, the natives of this study are involved in the jobs that are of great use and significance to their society. Ramaswamy, Yogananda, Billy Biswas and Waiyaki are teachers. Ezeulu is a chief priest and Teeton is an artist; they too have a moral obligation to the society. These natives are representatives of colonial anguish. The words which Caliban utters to Prospero come from the hearts of these writers too:

You taught me language; and my profit on’t

Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you,

For learning me your language! (Tempest: Act 1 scene 2)

When Caliban uses the coloniser’s tongue to curse, the writers react and revolt against the coloniser using his language. It is important to observe the measures taken to anglicise the natives. Thomas Babington Macaulay attempted to anglicise the Indian subjects to create a class of
persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste and opinion. The coloniser believed that through the colonial apparatus and education, they can transform the uneducated natives to useful ones. Macaulay states, “We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language” (126).

Macaulay’s introduction of English education gave a fillip to English literature in the postcolonial countries. A good number of Indians acquired and admired Western education. Even Tagore admits that when he was young he had an admiration for Europe, its high civilisation and its vast scientific progress. He asserts that its glorious literature gave a new inspiration to his life as it was full of love, justice and humanity. He argues that Indians have to show sympathy to the West though they rebel against the foreign rule. This view of Tagore is contrasted with the majority opinion of the colonised writers. The conflict between tradition and modernity, East and West are represented often in literature. In fact, it is the conflict between the “illegitimate parent” and the “legitimate child.” There are writers like Sasi Taroor who never consider English as an alien tongue. He observes that the novel means new and when one writes a novel one does not have a model and that urge comes from within. For a writer like Taroor,
English is not a barrier as he admits that in the same medium he was educated. He even played, taught and fought and loved with the weapon of English. Even Achebe is not totally against colonisation as he admits in an interview conducted by Robert Serumaga:

There have been gains – I mean let’s not forget that, there have been gains, I am not one of those who would say that Africa has gained nothing at all during the colonial period, I mean this is ridiculous – we gained a lot. But unfortunately when two cultures meet, you would expect, if we were angels shall we say, we could pick out the best in the other and retain the best in our own, and this would be wonderful. But this doesn’t happen often. What happens is that some of the worst elements of the old are retained and some of the worst of the new are added on to them. So if it were for me to order society, I would be very unhappy about the way things have turned out. But again, I see this as the way life is. Every society has to grow up; every society has to learn its own lesson, so I don’t despair.

(Duerden 13).

But this view of Achebe is contrasted in his latest book *The Education of a British-Protected Child*. Achebe who comments in the interview, “we
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gained a lot” from colonisation professes, “I hope nobody is dying to hear all over again the pros and cons of colonial rule. You would get only cons from me, any way” (EBPC 4). There are many writers who are against the coloniser and the coloniser's language. The great writer who has even given up his colonial name is Ngugi. In an interview conducted by Aminu Abdullahi, Ngugi comments, “Writing, I take to be a kind of confession where the writer is almost confessing his own private reactions to various individuals, to various problems, you know the feeling of shame here, the feeling of inadequacy there, the love-hatred. But in a place like Kenya, you might feel inclined to want to say only good things about your community and pass over the other communities because you see you are fighting for your community” (Duerden 128). There is a great truth in what Ngugi states as the writers mainly try to protect their land and culture, just as a mother protects her children and says only good aspects of them to others.

The Indian writers eulogise the return of the native due to the oppression they faced from the colonisers. The Indian novel owes greatly to Western contacts. It has developed since 1864 with the appearance of Bankim Chandra Chatterji’s Raj Mohan’s Wife. Most of the native writers openly scorned, sometimes tacitly hated Westernisation, and it was reflected in the writings of the postcolonial period. This study
on return of the native portrays that wherever one stays, whatever language one uses, whatever food one eats, whatever clothes one wears, the mind of the native will always long for and will be snivelling for the native. This aspect is more dominant in the writings of Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Anita Desai, Bhabhani Bhattacharya and Arun Joshi. The study focuses on some selected novels published in 1960s and 1970s. The authors themselves have experienced the collision of East and West and try to portray the fusion by placing their protagonists in similar oriental-occidental fusions. When the oppression became unbearable, the natives revolted against the autocratic rulers physically and mentally in order to prove their identity and establish that they themselves, their manners, customs, cultures and civilisations are equally important. In *Narrating Postcolonialism*, D. Maya states about the Indian novelists who feel, “the pull of two entirely different cultural moves – the umbilical pull towards the inherited culture and the attraction of the value system of the West to which he has been constantly exposed” (162). This “pull” plays a vital role in return as the umbilical pull may not be always matching with the requirements of the time. Each protagonist takes different phases in his return.

Hybridity of the oral tradition and the imported literary techniques of Europe are very much evident in the postcolonial novels.
Unfortunately the postcolonial fiction is assessed with the Western measuring rod, the imposed literary jargon of Europe. For Africans, their culture and religion are of great validity, though the English consider it barbarous and uncivilised. The Gikuyu experience expressed by Ngugi and the Ibo experience presented by Achebe in fiction may be incomprehensive to the coloniser. However, to the colonised, though the language used is strange and foreign, the feelings and culture are very familiar. It is difficult for the Carribeans to state where they belong to, how their home country looks like and what their culture is. Lamming remarks that his generation became West Indian not in Carribean, but in London. Many returnees find it difficult to link themselves to the country of their origin. Many feel that home has changed beyond all recognition. What is natural becomes vague and artificial due to the diasporic experience. The condition is not different in India as reflected in the words of Manmohan K. Bhatnagar:

Conscious always of the need to voice the ‘feel’ of the cultural and emotional life of the people in their works, Indian English writers obviously work under a kind of creative tension with which writers writing in their native languages are not confronted. Besides the tight rope walking on the linguistic front, Indian English writers have
to content with another difficult choice: writing for a foreign as well as native Indian clientele, the former requiring them to explain uniquely Indian thoughts and situations, the latter treating such explanation of the obvious as inartistic and an excrescence, placing the writer on the horns of a uniquely situational dilemma. ("Indian English Literature – A Perspective" 2)

The “creative tension” and “tight rope walking” reflect that the writers are not able to reach the depth of expression. It leaves both the writer and the reader in the situational dilemma. It is a difficult task to meet the demands of both foreign and native readers.

In the African continent, the natives were forced to give up their traditional ways of life and attend a European school, study European history and adopt Christian beliefs. The coloniser has set up targets of hidden exploitations by infusing the feeling of inferiority into the mind of the native. These exploitations are the outstanding features of postcolonial writings which emerged in different colonies and found expressions through writings of Wole Soyinka, Sembene Ousmane, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Peter Abrahams. Ngugi states that the biggest weapon wielded and actually unleashed daily by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb.
The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples’ languages rather than their own. (DM 3)

Writers like Achebe, Ngugi and Lamming try to present their colonies as fruitful lands, instead of considering it “wasteland of non-achievement.” Lamming has stated that for him there are just three important events in British Caribbean history, the first is discovery, the second, the arrival of China and India in the Caribbean and the abolition of slavery, and the third is the discovery of the novel by West Indians as a mode of cultural investigation. (Pleasures of Exile 37)

The terms Caribbean and West Indies are interchangeably used. The Caribbean is a region consisting of the Caribbean Sea, its islands, and the surrounding coasts. These islands, called the West Indies, generally form island arcs that delineate the Eastern and Northern edges of the Caribbean Sea. These islands are called the West Indies
because when Christopher Columbus landed here in 1492 he believed that he had reached the Indies in Asia. Geo-politically, the West Indies are usually regarded as a sub-region of North America. Earlier, there was a short-lived country called the Federation of the West Indies, which comprised ten English-speaking Caribbean territories, all of which were then UK dependencies. The region takes its name from that of the Carib, an ethnic group present in the Lesser Antilles and parts of adjacent South America at the time of European contact. They are an Amerindian people whose origins lie in the southern West Indies and the northern coast of South America.

A clear demarcation between the terms Caribbean and West Indies is found in Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies. It is stated that the terms Caribbean and West Indian are often used interchangeably to refer to the island nations of the Caribbean Sea and territories on the surrounding south and Central American mainland like Guyana and Belize. While Caribbean refers to all the island nations located in the area, West Indian refers to those nations that were formerly British colonies e.g. Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, St.Lucia, St.Vincent, Antigua, Dominica, and Guyana.

The Caribbean islands, once dominated by British imperialism are not only culturally distanced from the
imperial centre, but also, metaphorically, stand at the periphery of civilisation, marginalised, overlooked and trivialised. For many West Indians, migration became an easy solution to their political and economic problems characterised by physical insularity, racial and political divisions, economic and educational dependence. The island to many became a symbol of creative sterility and cultural stasis. (Dooley 175)

In order to avoid the distance from the centre, the West Indians migrated from the “periphery” to the “centre.” In the “centre” they experienced discrimination of all sort and were pushed to the margins. The West Indian creative writing developed during the eighteenth century. But really meritorious authors appeared only in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Jamaican literature developed gradually in Trinidad with the emergence of the journal named “The Beacon” in 1930s. The contribution of V.S.Naipaul’s father Sepersad Naipaul is remarkable. During that time writing was considered an amateur activity and there were no established magazines. Writers like Derek Walcott, Edgar Mittelhozer, Samuel Selvon and George Lamming made tremendous contributions.
The West Indian literature of post-war years depicted nationalism, feelings of anti-colonialism, and interest in local culture. Derek Walcott gains a unique status with his selective use of dialect and patois. Employing the poetical techniques and allusion, he wins the heart of his readers by depicting his home island, St.Lucia. V.S.Naipaul attacks with the weapon of irony and projects the political and cultural confusion. The flow of images, symbols and events make Wilson Harris’ writing extraordinary. Through the techniques of fluidity and fragmentation, he pictures West Indian society as a new society. The female voice of Jean Rhys echoes the collapse of white Creole society after emancipation. The major West Indian poet Edward Braithwaite expresses black consciousness. The West Indian writings depict racial difference, creolisation, alienation, victimisation and discovery of traditions and folk culture. Viney Kirpal states in “The Third World Fiction” that “while the African was colonised, the West Indian was expatriated, uprooted from his mother country (Africa, India, China) and transported in a new country either as a slave or as an indentured labourer.”(15)

George Lamming, who was born in Barbados, taught in Trinidad and Venezuela. He has to his credit many short stories and novels namely In the Castle of My Skin, Emigrants, Of Age and Innocence,
Season of Adventure, Water with Berries, In the Castle of My Skin set in Barbados, is highly autobiographical. It is the first West Indian novel to achieve the classical status. Bruce King justifies:

While the 1950s were perhaps the most important decade of West Indian writing in the sense of their having established an identity, an awareness of common themes and a canon of significant writers and texts, it should be noticed that any of the best known literary works were published during the 1960s. By the early 1970s many writers had become involved in the debates concerning ideology, neo-colonialism, black consciousness, folk traditions and an African heritage which resulted from the failure of independence to bring into being social justice and authentic national culture.(4)

Bruce points out that one reads Wilson Harris’ novels as poems which are full of images, symbols and events without worrying about causation. “Such fluidity, fragmentation, and improbability of narrative are used by the author to show that the West Indies are a new society, a new beginning. The past, rather than being a burden, offers varied materials with which the imagination can build a new culture from the many races and peoples in the Caribbean” (King 6).
Colonisation brought social, cultural and political changes in the West Indian community and it is made the subject of West Indian literature. It deals mainly with the themes of independence and colonialism. Like other new literatures it shares creation of myths of the past, the use of local scenery, emphasis on community, nation and race, treatment of individual as representative, transforming and modifying English as a literary language by deliberately using local forms and rhythms of speech. Common themes include identity crisis which results in search for truth and roots, injustices and conflicts of all sorts, the desire to break the shell of imprisonment, the discovery of traditions or a folk culture.

A proper examination of postcolonial Indian, African and Caribbean Literatures highlights common characteristics. The common denominators are the English language and colonial trauma. They depict myths of the past, local scenery, peasant lives, how individuals represent class or society, history and present, dispossession and freedom, metropolitan and regional culture. The common themes in these literatures are search for roots, identity, social and historical injustices. Kirpal opines “Third World expatriate fiction discloses a developing belligerence and gloominess in the writer’s depiction of the reality both of his ancestral country (as against the idealised version of
the mother country of his mind) and of the land in which he is living (England/ France) at the time of writing” (The Third World Novel 80).

A key goal of postcolonial theorists is clearing space for multiple voices. This is especially true of those voices of the oppressed that have been previously silenced by dominant ideologies. Spivak’s main contribution to Postcolonial theory came with her specific definition of the term subaltern. Spivak believes that essentialism can sometimes be used strategically by these groups to make it easier for the subaltern to be heard and understood when a clear identity can be created and accepted by the majority.

The Serpent and the Rope is a novel in which the protagonist Ramaswamy (Rama) is deeply immersed in philosophical meditation. The title The Serpent and the Rope is apt and suggestive. It indicates the basic theme of the novel – appearance and reality. The Serpent stands for appearance, illusion, unreality or Maya or Sansar. Rope is Reality, Truth, Brahman or the Absolute. This world is merely Maya, Unreal, an Illusion. It is merely the Serpent, but in ignorance is taken to be the Rope. Rama believes that Guru alone can dispel all illusion, clear away the darkness of ignorance and make universe realise the truth. It is only with the help of the Guru that one can see the Rope, where earlier the Serpent was seen. Ramaswamy, the narrator-protagonist, thinks that his
Guru Sri Sankara can dispel all his illusions and in that hope leaves for India. The novel begins with the sacred note of the protagonist Ramaswamy: “I was born a Brahmin – that is, devoted to Truth and all that. ‘Brahmin is he who knows Brahman,’ etc., etc...” (SR 5). By stating quite often about his Brahminship, Ramaswamy is doubtful of his existence and acceptance as a Brahmin. He says that very few of his ancestors knew truth and wrote about it since Sri Sankara. The admiration Ramaswamy has for Sri Sankara is evident in the opening lines of the novel itself and his return from France to his home in search of his Guru is justifiable. When his father is sick, he returns to India leaving Madeleine, his French wife in France. The temporary return gives him a feeling of immortality because he realises his bond with his country during his visits to holy places with his stepmother whom he addresses as Little Mother. When he goes to Benares to perform the last rites of his father he is not accepted as a Brahmin. The sacred Brahmins at the ghats do not permit him to perform the rites for he has been to Europe and does not have the sacred thread. Moreover he has married a European. Rama overcomes the difficulty by providing them a present of fifty rupees, and the last rites are duly performed. The thought of return is there always in him. He decides that once his doctorate is over, he will take Madeleine to his ancestoral home and she will settle with
him. Rama, who has completed all the four stages of acculturation, feels the prick of conscience, when he is rejected by his own people in his own country.

Unlike Ramaswamy, whose mind sways with the thought of return, Yogananda of A Dream in Hawaii returns from America to India, soon after the desire for return is generated in his mind. Swami Yogananda goes to Hawaii at the invitation of an American disciple, but hastily returns to India when he defiles himself and intends to escape the department store type promotion of his spiritual powers. The presence of his old student Devjani in Hawaii has an important bearing on his actions. Hawaii, a tourist’s paradise, is the unique East-West mix and the strong place of interculturation. On the surface level, A Dream in Hawaii is a novel of conflicting cultures, but in reality it is about the conflicting needs of a man. It is the dream of Vincent Swift to set up an international cultural centre in Hawaii. It is the dream of Stella Gregson to Easternise the Western society. But the title is more apt to the dream of Yogananda in which he makes love to a woman. It is this dream which brings him back to the consciousness of Neeloy Mukherji. His return to his ashram is a journey of self-realisation, which starts with his confession to Devjani. Though Neeloy Mukherji who transformed to Yogananda is worshipped as a guru, his own self does not accept him as
a swami or sage. Deep in his heart the fascination for his student Devjani is firmly rooted and stops him from performing his duties as an ascetic. Moreover, the situation of the American society aggravates Yogananda’s problems. “But even the Great Society with all its splendor was faced with problems which were becoming deadly. It was high time for the Great Society to be less satisfied with its attainments and more self-searching” (DH 32).

What Yogananda pronounces has much relevance in the case of Bimal Biswas, (Billy) the protagonist of *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* as it is stated, “The problem was not American, not even Western in a wider sense; it had a worldwide application” (DH 33). In the beginning of *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, Romesh Sahaai (Romi), the narrator of the novel says, “As I grow old I realise that the most futile cry of man is his impossible wish to be understood. The attempt to understand is probably even more futile” (SCBB 3). The entire novel revolves round the cry of Billy Biswas to return to the other side and his struggle to make the civilised society understand him. Billy Biswas, who holds a Ph.D degree in Anthropology from an American University, turns his back on the world of fashion and comfort to join a tribe and lives with them in the Saal forest of the Maikala Hills. Billy’s father has major expectations in him and it is to please his father that he goes to the U.S.
But instead of engineering – the subject which is proposed by his father – he takes Anthropology without even informing his parents. It is Romesh Sahaai, the witness narrator who spots an extraordinary person in Billy as they share room in Harlem. Different from other protagonists, Billy’s return indeed has three phases: he returns from America to the urban side of India i.e. Delhi; not satisfied and realising that it is not the place he wanted to be, he returns to the ‘other side’ i.e. his primitive world. Later the civilised society including his father and wife, Meena, hunts him in the Saal forest and their search ends with his death. He takes his final return from his ‘other side’ to the other world.

The return motif is not confined to the Indian peninsula, but is widely spread to the African countries too. The traditional ties are changing in the works of the Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe and that of the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o. This change is very dominant in *Arrow of God* and *The River Between*. Larson affirms:

> Traditional ties in African cultures are altering so quickly that the group-felt experience is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, for the ties that once bound an individual to his community have been loosened by Westernisation. Respect for the elders, for example, so common in the past has been rapidly disappearing, and with it a respect for the
traditions represented by the older generation. No longer
does the African youth feel that he must have the
permission of the chief or the elders before he marries –
his bride today is one of his own choosing. (118)

One of the foremost Nigerian novelists, Chinua Achebe was born
into an Ibo family at Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria. His novels are primarily
directed to an African audience, but their psychological insights have
gained them universal acceptance. Chinua Achebe proclaims in,
“Morning yet on Creation Day”, “I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight by African experience. But it will have to be a new English still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings” (62). Through Arrow of God, Achebe takes us to the preindependence days of Nigeria. It tells the tragedy of a hero who rigidly identifies with the values of traditional Ibo society. Ezeulu, the priest of Ulu is the arrow or instrument in the hands of God he serves. The weapon is not used for destruction but for modification. Ezeulu secretly nurtures the desire to increase his power. When the interviewer Serumaga asks Achebe whether he sees bows behind the arrows of the Gods, to turn them to the right direction, he replies “I mean the coups themselves are bows shooting the arrows” (Duerden 13).
The locale is Umuaro, a compendium of six villages. Ezeulu feels that there is something that makes the white man wise. He sends his son to a missionary school to learn that wisdom. Achebe’s veneration for the indigenous culture can be seen in Arrow of God. Ezeulu who is imprisoned by the white man, Winterbottom refuses to name the day of the New Yam Feast as he has not eaten yams during his imprisonment. The priest of Ulu has to ceremoniously eat the last of the sacred yams marking the end of the year. If he does not declare the closing of the old year and the beginning of the New Year, the people will suffer the calamity of famine with the yam buried under the ground. He plans to take revenge on the people of Umuaro, who were indifferent during his imprisonment in Okperi. His return from Okperi plays drastic changes in his life and attitude. Even after the repeated reminders by the elders, Ezeulu refuses to declare the New Year. Finally people approach the Christian God with the first offerings of the New Yam. Thus the traditional religion is buried and the alien one wins the heart of the people. But in the mind of the protagonist, the traditional values are deeply cemented. The unexpected course of events turns Ezeulu insane. Alienation is chiefly responsible for his insanity.

The postcolonial theorists Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin link alienation with a sense of dislocation or displacement
that some people feel when they look to a distant nation for their values. The writers have a great role of instilling the values. Ngugi wa Thiongo compares writers to surgeons as both of them have the passion for truth in common. According to him, “Writers are surgeons of the heart and souls of a community” (DM Preface ix). The River Between by Ngugi wa Thiongo tells the tale of two rival communities Kameno and Makuya, which face each other and are separated by the Honia river. The river between is the Honia river which separates two ridges: Kameno and Makuya. The two villages are in a constant battle over conflicting myths of leadership and religion, which have been the basis of their arguments for many generations. The novel portrays conflicting relationship between two villages respecting traditional African beliefs on the one side and Christianity on the other. Westernisation, in the form of Christianity is the central theme of the novel. Oral history is used to complete the traditional life. In an interview conducted by Aminu Abdullahi, Ngugi says, “The river between: in the novel itself there is physically a river between two hills that house two communities which keep quarrelling but I maintain, you know, that the river between can be a factor which brings people together as well as being a factor of separation. It can both unite and separate” (Duerden 125).
Waiyaki, the protagonist rejects Christianity and welcomes the Western education provided by the white man, Livingstone in Siriana. Waiyaki tries to use education as an instrument to unite the people of Kameno and Makuya, who are the offspring of Mumbi. With that purpose he starts a number of schools. But his relation with the uncircumcised Nyambura, the daughter of a staunch Christian Joshua, produces drastic effects. He is accused of having secret dealings with the Christians. When the novel ends, he and Nyambura are waiting for the judgement by the elders. Eriks airs about the political situation depicted in *The River Between*:

The novel is set in the 1920s, when the first anti-colonial political associations, such as the Kikuyu Central Association, were set up in order to voice grievances and seek solutions to them. The largest of these grievances was mass outrage over the fact that white veterans of the World War had been offered large tracts of the best land in Kenya, land that was taken from the Gikuyu. It should be noted that the introduction of large scale farming over vast areas of land was contingent on the compliance of a generally reluctant black workforce. Significantly, at the time issues such as the practice of female circumcision, religion and
access to education were, in addition to land relocation, the causes of conflict between the Gikuyu, the colonial government, and Christian institutions. Government and mission schools had sought to deny access to education for female students who had been circumcised, and 'Kikuyu Karing’a independent schools had been set up as radical alternatives. (Eriks)

History plays a vital role in postcolonial novels. In a press release issued by Brown University, Anthony Bogues declares that Ngugi and Lamming are masters of what may be called the political novel – that is the novel in which plot and characters weave a set of stories and narratives in which the reader gains glimpses of the structural politics of a specific moment and nation (“Lecture and Reading with Kenyan Writer”). As history plays a vital role in the postcolonial novels, New Historic reading is beneficial. New Historicism, coined by American critic Stephen Greenblatt is a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts usually of the same historic period. This method gives equal weightage to literary and non-literary texts. Louis Montrose defines it as a combined interest in the textuality of history and historicity of texts. Historical documents are not subordinated as
contexts, but analysed deeply. They are called co-texts rather than contexts. The historical moments are analysed through texts and co-texts. Old Historicism made a distinction between literary text and historical backgrounds. Bruce King’s comment is also noteworthy:

The notion of a West Indian literature is largely a product of the period after the second World War when a sense of community between writers of the various parts of the region was established through the publication in the new journals, the Caribbean voices broadcasts, travel between the islands, the shared experience of those who emigrated to London, the rise of independent movements and self government, and plans for a federation. (7-8)

The postcolonial writers have displayed their colonial experience with a skill and comprehensiveness that makes their writing really remarkable. In Water with Berries, Lamming presents the vital theme of West Indian emigration and exile to Great Britain. He presents three artists who face the artistic sterility and bankruptcy during the initial period of emigration and exile. Later they take revenge on the host country by involving in acts of violence. The predicament of the three artists is an ironical variation of the Caliban theme. The title Water with Berries echoes the words of Caliban to Prospero in the Tempest:
When thou cam’st first
Thou strok’st me and made much of me, wouldst give me
Water with berries in’t, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night, and then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o’ th’ isle
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place, and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! – all the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me

The rest o’ th’ island. (Act 1 Scene 2)

Prospero claims that he has taught Caliban everything elegant and refined. But the anguish of Caliban is hidden in his words which can be inferred as the words of colonised all through out the world. As pointed out by R.K. Dhawan in the introduction to *The West Indian Fiction*, “A noteworthy function of the West Indian novel is that it aims primarily at investigating and projecting the inner consciousness of the West Indian community” (9). *Water with Berries* portrays “inner consciousness” of three expatriate artists – Teeton, Derek and Roger – who face failure in
personal relationships due to which they undergo a period of creative sterility. They also find it difficult to come to terms with their historical past and connection with England. The protagonist of the novel, Teeton is a painter, whose wife involves in extra marital relation with the American Ambassador to save the life of Teeton. She commits suicide because Teeton does not forgive her infidelity. Teeton's friend, Roger, is a musician of East Indian descent. Roger's wife, Nicole, is an American lady. When she becomes pregnant, Roger repudiates her because he cannot face the child's racial impurity. Nicole cannot bear this repudiation and she commits suicide. Another friend of Teeton, Derek, is an actor who rapes his white co-actress on stage.

At the end of the novel the three artists are awaiting trial for rape, arson, and murder though there is a clear suggestion that the spiralling violence, in which they have involved is unavoidable backfire of the violence suffered by the colonised and the only conceivable means of freeing themselves from their ambiguous relation with Britain.

(Jelinek 159)

Lamming announces in a conversation with Kent that he has attempted to reverse the journeys, “In Shakespeare’s Tempest, it was Prospero in the role of the visitor to Caliban’s island. In Water with
Berries, it’s reversed. The three characters really present three aspects of Caliban making his journey to Prospero’s ancestral home – a journey which was at the beginning, a logical kind of development because of the relationship to Prospero’s language. Then they discovered the reality of Prospero’s home – not from a distance, not filtered through Prospero’s explanation or record of his home, but through their own immediate and direct experience” (89). The situation existing in West Indies is at the extremity as pointed out by Ian Munroe, “The West Indies in Lamming’s poetry is a spiritually sterile prison for the creative spirit: islands cramped with disease no enemy can cure” (126). Lamming faces alienation and lack of creative freedom, in the unfriendly city of England. His feelings are similar to a black American character named Marian Anderson in his poem “Song for Marian.” Lamming tries to define himself both as an artist and a West Indian. In an interview conducted by Aminu Abdullahi, Ngugi comments, “The West Indies is a mixed community, and also the literature is just emerging, and there would be interesting parallels and contrasts and comparisons between this emergent West Indian literature and the new literature from Africa.” He further states, “I was overwhelmed by George Lamming. I read him uncritically – almost everything he wrote, uncritically- from cover to cover. He really overwhelmed me” (Duerden 128-129).
All these protagonists are in a constant struggle with the indigenous and foreign cultures irrespective of their habitation in the native soil or the foreign land. Kirpal avows that home is not a quest for spatial identity but search for roots and the romantic idealised memories of the mother country would treacherously haunt them and make them yearn with longing for the ideal landscapes they had once known so intimately.

Nostalgia for the land of one’s birth is universal. The exile never fully accepts his exile. With the passage of time as the idea of his mother country grows more remote (and his efforts to assimilate in the new land fail) he begins to doubt and fear his decision. Proportionately his idealisation of the old land increases. (75)

This thesis, which is structured into five chapters, explores the theme of return in a postcolonial perspective. The first chapter “The Return of the Native” deals with the prominent aspects of postcolonial literature in general by attempting a glance at imperialism and colonisation. The cultural shock and cultural cringe are dealt in this chapter justifying the return of the native. The narrative techniques employed in the novels are analysed. The relevance of the return motif in postcolonial literature is also projected in this chapter.
The second chapter “The Multifarious Protagonists” treats the protagonists who are from different countries and who are exposed to different types of cultures. Ramaswamy, an Indian Brahmin, faces the cultural clash in France; Billy Biswas and Yogananda, who too are Indians are subjected to the exposure to American society. The African protagonists like Ezeulu and Waiyaki clash with foreigners who come to their land. The relevance of the novelists’ personal experience in the creation of these protagonists is also stated in this chapter. Apart from this, minor characters who glorify the native culture are also pictured.

The role of female characters in the hastening or delaying of the return is treated in the third chapter entitled “The ‘She’ Behind Return.” Madeleine, Devjani, Meena, Muthoni and the Old Dowager play a significant role in the return of Ramaswamy, Yogananda, Billy Biswas, Waiyaki and Teeton respectively. The other female characters vital to return are also presented. Woman’s role, as the centre of the family, in holding the traditional values is also of great significance. This socially marginalised category that remains in the periphery affects the centre and plays a vital role in return.

The fourth chapter is “The Native Haunting” in which the conflicts of the protagonists are stated as they clash with their own culture and an alien one; their own place and the foreign, the native
language and the foreign. It explores the native customs, myth and language. How the protagonists are motivated geographically, socially, culturally, religiously and linguistically to return to their own culture and tradition are investigated in this chapter.

The most outstanding feature of postcolonial literature – the quest for identity is dealt in the fifth chapter “The Quest for Identity.” The question ‘Who am I?’ is reverberated in all these novels. The binaries, hybridisation, inferiority and dependency complexes are dealt in this chapter. The masked and multi-layered identities of the protagonists are examined. The quest for identity of these natives becomes a “spiritual odyssey of the modern man, who has lost his social and spiritual moorings and who is anxious to seek his roots” (Pathak 52). The “Conclusion” draws together the observations of preceding chapters. It deliberates on the situation after return and the essentiality and consequences of return.

Even after the days of colonisation, due to many reasons people migrate to other countries. They leave their native land, hunting for jobs or for educational advancements. One may live in a foreign land, one may use a foreign language but the spirit one has is truly native. In a global context the theme of return has much significance.