Chapter 2. FROM EXILE TO HOMECOMING

2.1 The Concept of Homecoming

Exile is loss of self', a sense of having lost one's moorings because one is unable to hold on to anything stable and enduring. It is a state of mind where, in the absence of a feeling of being united with or integrated into something larger than one's own fragmented identity, one has a sense of being an outsider, a detached observer of the scene around one. The very sense of detachment gives rise to anguish, frustration, bitterness and more often than not expresses itself in terms of irony, sarcasm, satire, parody and so on. The journey from the loss of self to its recovery may be called the journey, an exploratory venture by which one comes 'home'. The terms 'home' and 'homecoming' have both a literal as well as a metaphorical meaning. Coming home, therefore, is coming to terms with oneself in a very profound sense. It is, for one thing, achieving a state of mind, a whole new set of perceptions of the external reality around one. It is also a sense of having come to terms with one's oppressive past, overcoming the destructive element in it and recovering what may be called the creative element. To come home in this sense is to make a discovery, to experience a sudden joy. It is a unifying experience which enables one to achieve integration of one's inner self with the social world and the world of nature. A feeling of dispossessing oneself of the destructive element and possessing a calm and even sublime
sense of the essential unity of the self with the universe informs this state of mind. In the present context, it is obvious that the term 'homecoming' implies a number of freedoms or dispossessions (getting rid of) in the sense in which I have used the term 'dispossession'.(1) The authors whose works I am going to review from this point of view achieve such homecoming by dispossessing the native mind of the colonial status. This is a very important and necessary condition. Homecoming thus is a psychological and spiritual journey from rejection to acceptance of one's homeland - its people, its past, its traditions and its linguistic and other resources which make a new kind of creativity possible. In the course of this journey, the artist will also find that the culture of his homeland has undergone changes - some of them quite profound during the colonial period. It is very important to underline this element because the naive, uncritical assumption that once the colonial rule ends one will find one's old culture and traditions chaste, inviolate and undisturbed may lead one to a 'pseudo-homecoming', yet another form of revivalism which is full of pitfalls, (for it may make people blind to or unmindful of the harsh, ugly realities under neocolonialism, making the artist the progenitor of an even worse form of false consciousness). True homecoming in the sense in which the term is used here cannot be equated with the vain efforts to regain the chimerical 'pre-colonial ethos'.

In the first chapter, the term 'exile' or 'loss of
self was defined as a kind of surrender of one's identity under the pressures obtaining in a colonial situation. It is almost self-evident that a total, or even a near-total, retrieval of the surrendered— and, therefore, lost— identity is impossible. It cannot be achieved by merely launching a cultural programme of revocation or recapitulation of the pre-colonial ethos. There is certainly involved a process of negation which ultimately results in the loss of one's identity. However, the expression 'surrender' is used in the discussion here, instead of 'negation' as the earlier expression suggests a strategy of lying low, a kind of 'hibernation' of the psyche. Only such a 'going under' as it were, making crucial adjustments with the realities of a changed situation which seems beyond one's control, only a sort of hibernation would seem to keep alive both the spirit and the body under impossible conditions. Yet another metaphor that seems to suggest itself to account for the process is that of 'pawning'. A native living with the trauma of colonialism might feel that the loss of his identity was not a permanent loss. Rather, he had accepted a different identity in exchange for it just as a person pawning an article of his gets money in exchange. When you pay back the money, you receive your article back. A native under a colonial dispensation may well feel that the identity forced on him could always be put aside and the original one retrieved under auspicious conditions that is when the
colonizers would quit his country. Such a neutral adjustment always keeps the possibility of retrieval open. However, it must be remembered that what is to be retrieved is not the pre-colonial psyche and the world-view that went with it. The re-creation of the past in toto at the physical level is impossible because the pre-colonial psyche would be missing from it and the whole effort would be reduced to a kind of make-believe or a kind of exhibit in a museum. It is obvious, hence, that what is ideally to be aimed at is the well-integrated, wholesome state of the psyche free from the stigma it carried during the colonial period, from which the malaise of 'anomie' has been eradicated. "Homecoming", is, then, essentially, a psychological state achieved in the country of mind which gives one the sense of having finally come to terms with oneself, of having achieved an integrated and creatively "at home" identity. Being "at home" in this sense means the resolution of the psychological problems - it is the effort to remove the stigma and the bruises. It is the struggle to preserve and protect the essential human creativity and the constructive aspect of one's sense of identity during the colonial regimes. Indeed it may so happen that even after the departure of the colonial oppressors one might wake up to the painful discovery that the indigenous rulers who replaced the colonial oppressors are not less but perhaps more viciously oppressive than the latter.

From "Exile" to "Homecoming" may, thus, well be likened to a psychological and spiritual journey. Perhaps the
metaphor of the journey through Hell and Purgatory to reach Paradise so well known after Dante and his great epic *The Divine Comedy* though developed and used in a Christian context is of great relevance in the present case. In the light of this metaphor, the alien (Western) culture's total political and cultural domination, suffocating the native culture may well be likened, from the native's point of view to Hell, the process of resisting the dominance whether alien or indigenous (western colonial or native neo-colonial) and devising of various counter strategies, and counter-rhetorics may be compared to Dante's journey through Purgatory; and finally the genuine liberation from the colonized, stigmatized state of mind the genuine 'de-colonization' both of land and psyche may be viewed as similar to attaining Paradise.

2.2 Culture Contact and Culture Shock

An encounter with Colonialism is basically an encounter with an alien culture. Whether it is the colonization by the Greeks, by the Romans or by the Europeans the situation is always more or less the same. One of the two parties involved in the contact situation (and this is particularly so when the process of colonization is carried out with expansionist, exploitative motives) - is in one way or the other superior to the other party. The 'superior' party, then, tends to impose its cultural mores in overt or covert ways. The culture that is subjugated or dominated over also comes to accept the cultural mores, cultural world view of
the dominant culture sometimes willingly, even eagerly; sometimes reluctantly or at times only after putting up a fierce resistance to the influence. Not only the western institutions such as the law courts, the administrative apparatus, schools and colleges and the church make inroads into the native culture but also such things as the dress, the mode of public life, the structure of the family (and its relationship with the community) tend to imitate the models provided by the dominant culture. The more prolonged the contact, the deeper and all pervasive the cultural impact leading to a state of amalgamation from which it is well nigh impossible to reclaim or retrieve the native culture.

This situation is somewhat similar to the one that obtains in the study of languages. The study of a language in its pristine stage is possible only so long as the community speaking the language is absolutely totally cut off from contact with any other community. The state of the language of such a community at any given point may be said to resemble considerably closely to what it had been even centuries ago. But we know from our experience of the languages the world over that such an extreme case of isolation is a rarity. Only a freakish geographical situation may cut a community off from the rest of the world and keep the speakers simultaneously in the last years of the twentieth century and in the Stone Age!

In the case of most living languages, the individuals
and even sizable parts of the community speaking the language come in contact with other languages and a certain interpenetration is inevitable. The impact is obvious at the phonological, syntactic and even at the semantic levels, thus changing the language so much that it would be foolhardy to try to reclaim the language before the contact. Since language is a very important component of a culture, what happens to the two individual languages when they come in contact with each other is very much like what happens to the respective cultures in contact, and hence it is not possible to go back to the pristine stage of the pre-colonial ethos. How the colonial ethos affects the native ethos, the native sensibility at various levels has been analysed at length in the previous chapter. In the context of our discussion here, Homecoming is, always a discovery. It is a reassertion of and a search for what is still enduring and relevant in one's native, pre-colonial culture. Homecoming, in other words, is achieving a delicate balance of three things. Firstly, there is what is still wholesome in one's native culture. Secondly, the positive values and the broadening of mental horizons that one acquired during the fight against colonialism. Thirdly there is the perception of a more humane future for mankind. Homecoming implies a fresh world view. The vision of 'home' is a moral vision. It looks forward to a world where man's potential for creativity and humanity will be fully realized.

Sometimes, two nations come in contact with each other without there being present a 'colonial', expansionist
motive overtly at work. The situation then appears to be a normal culture contact situation based on a certain degree of mutual give-and-take. Even in such a situation one of the two sides may be seen as playing the role of a 'superior', 'higher' form of culture sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly. What is interesting to note is that the 'elite' belonging to the supposedly inferior culture may be seen to acknowledge the superiority of the other culture. A case in point is the domination of American culture in many countries, both in Europe and in the third world. Yet another case in point is the way the French culture dominated the cultural scene in Russia and many other European countries. In situations like these the native cultures (non-American cultures in the first case and the Russian culture in the second case) acquire layers of the dominant culture which may eventually get absorbed and become a more or less permanent feature, although in a metamorphosed form. It may be that the impact is a superficial one and hence the acquired cultural layer may get peeled off in due course.

However, in a colonial situation, the impact is almost always very deep and all pervasive. It necessarily brings about changes in the traditional cultural life which make the restoration of the original native culture impossible, since they are the result of a very thoroughgoing radical transformation.
2.3 The Reaction: A Schema:

**SCHEMA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonization</th>
<th>Culture Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>(One of domination type and the other of subjugation type)</td>
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<td>Culture Shock</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rejection of the colonizer's culture and assertion of the native cultural values</th>
<th>Total acceptance of the colonizer's culture and values producing a strong distaste, even hatred for one's native culture.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Total acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blind because</td>
<td>Total acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impervious to the changing world spirit, a haughty and outright rejection.</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manifested in Atavism, Fundamentalism, Orthodoxy of the extreme sort:</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brahmo Samaj, Reformist</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arya Samaj</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivekananda's Satyashodhak Samaj</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<td>Pramanya in Samaj - Phule</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dharma</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aurobindo's Nationalism</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shariyat in Independent Church</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movement in Africa etc.</td>
<td>Acceptance of the colonizer's cultural mores in public sphere of life while holding on to one's cultural mores in private life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Emergence of a new consciousness and sensibility whose soil and roots are essentially native but which is a product of assimilation of the idealistic, romantic, even utopian and humane visions found in the Western influences mentioned in the previous column. This reconciliation of the new identity, a new role both in public as well as private domains of action will be more pronounced in this class and also the initial efforts at moving from the 'inferno' (hell) of exile to the 'purgatorio' of genuine efforts at overcoming the loss of private domains. The success of new integrated identity and in some cases ultimately Gandhi, writers like Ngugi, Brathwaite, leading to a situation defined there as 'homecoming', in spite of being utopian as would even a partial achievement in the writings of Achebe.</td>
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2.4 Analysis of the Schema

It is needless to say that the schema presented here does not claim to have traced every category to its logical conclusion. Many of the responses or the states of consciousness they denote co-exist, in some cases there may be transitions (for example Dr. B.R. Ambedkar seems to move from a westernized liberal framework of attitudes to a more nativistic position in his and his followers' conversion to Buddhism). A chronology of sorts could be discerned (for example Marxism is not likely to emerge in this country before the emergence of revivalism) but it would be outside the scope of the present discussion to pursue it in detail. In some cases there may be an overlap of sorts as for example in the case of some Indian revolutionaries like Shahid Bhagatsingh where revivalism and Marxism or some other western influence may be seen to be at work simultaneously. The same is true of the terrorist movements elsewhere.

2.4.1 Two Polarities

The threat is felt so acutely that it functions like a grit in an oyster which the creature smoothens by making it disappear inside the pearl. Atavism or fundamentalism, is thus, creating a kind of cocoon inside which, perhaps the native culture may retain its purity. Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi depicts such a culture in Delhi which the author saw perishing before his eyes in the first two decades of this century. (2) Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart presents
the tragic but inevitable end of the protagonist Okonkwo because he chooses to be an atavistic and a die-hard individual loyal to his tribal sensibility. Okonkwo has to opt out of his community through death because his reaction to the colonizer's culture is that of 'total' rejection. Total cultural atavism is an anomaly, a senseless effort to turn the hands of the clock backwards, because culture is essentially dynamic... it is both rooted in the people and oriented towards the future.

At the other extreme we find that there is a total acceptance of the colonizer's culture as a substitute culture. If the successful 'cultural transplant' takes place there is no 'homecoming' as there is no 'exile' but such a person ceases to be a valid member in the eyes of his own community.

The categories which are important for the process of 'homecoming' lie in between these two extremes. Except for a few die-hard atavists like Okonkwo, total rejection of the colonizer's alien culture is impossible.

2.4.2 Compromise and Partial Acceptance

Two responses are then likely to arise out of the situation: there may be firstly a compromise with the alien culture and secondly a partial acceptance of it. The compromise and acceptance of the things alien (including modes of thinking, modes of conducting one's public life, one's clothing and one's acceptance of non-native professions) particularly in the public domain may indeed
make an individual realise that a schism pervades his identity and may make him restless and motivate him to explore the routes to an integration implied in the term 'homecoming'. There may appear to be very little difference between 'compromise' and 'partial acceptance' in the present context. I would like to clarify that 'compromise' here would indicate that state of mind which accepts the truth of the colonial presence and agrees to come to terms with it, (accepting, in the process, a position of subordination or inferiority) largely in the 'public' domain, while retaining the traditional moorings in the 'private' domain. On the other hand, 'partial acceptance' of the coloniser's culture and values would be seen in those native individuals who possess a more profound and more enlightened awareness of their cultural heritage and its significance for the present times. Such individuals may even in their private life shun traditional, ritualistic aspects like wearing the sacred thread or performing shraddha. But certainly in such individuals a certain impatience with the traditional life (or some aspects of it) may indicate a preference for the ideas, values and goals taken over from the colonizers. A case in point, I would venture to say is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru's rejection of the exploitative, oppressive aspects of the colonizer's culture is complete as it is genuine. At the same time Nehru's goals, values and ideas are certainly not indigenous (as for example Mahatma Gandhi's or Acharya Vinoba Bhave's were). At the same time there is something in Nehru's way of life which is
indicative of his partial acceptance of the colonizer's culture and values. A certain number of individuals belonging to this category both in the field of cultural and political activities and in the field of creative arts may seem to have travelled a long way towards 'home'. But somehow the predilection for what is good from their point of view for the native culture seems to be uncritically taken over from the West and applied rather unimaginatively to the native conditions, preventing them from achieving true homecoming. Thus to come back to Pandit Nehru again, the slighting reference made to the peasants' way of life:

A peasant, at his very low level of living on the soil and for the soil, has ... sense of organic connection. Hence, I suppose, his extraordinary tenacity and perseverance. But his level of existence is terribly low, and most of us had rather be uprooted than exist at that level. (4)

is both symptomatic and at the same time suggestive of many of the ills of the modern Indian society. Somewhere along the route a firm grasp of the real essence of one's native culture which alone can ensure a wholesome synthesis seems to have been lacking. (Another charismatic figure of the period, Jayaprakash Narayan, seems to traverse the same path till he moves away from it and turns to a more genuinely nativistic figure namely Acharya Vinoba Bhave).

2.4.3 **Emergence of Superior Consciousness**

Next to compromise and partial acceptance I have placed 'Emergence of a superior kind of consciousness and sensibility'. It is in this consciousness and sensibility
that the journey toward 'home' is completed. This is a highly nativistic sensibility but it is neither atavistic, nor subservient to the colonial impact. In it there is certainly a fusion of one's native culture and a colonial culture. The colonial culture is purged not only of its oppressive or exploitative aspects but also of the root cause of the malady from which these evils spring. In other words, this kind of sensibility is highly eclectic, autonomous in manner and supremely confident of its grasp of reality. It brings from the alien culture the humane elements, those great fundamental universals of humanity which are valid and wholesome across time and cultures and joins them to make up for what seems to be lacking in one's own native traditions. In order to be able to do this, however, one must have the keenest 'intelligence and sensibility to evaluate not only one's own culture but also the other's culture without elevating or downgrading it. The appeal in such cases, in sharp contradistinction to the other categories, will be not so much to any doctrine or dogma or creed or 'ism' but to the man's deepest convictions as a human being about man's destiny, and future and creativity.

2.4.4 Nativism

Nativism is an important basic position for any candidate who seeks 'home', a kind of necessary condition, for only through a healthy and wholesome approval and acceptance of one's native genius can one learn to recognize
the positive aspects of the native cultures. However, 'going native' is not an automatic process nor is it an easy one. It has to be a conscious decision, which needs to be followed up with great effort demanding self-discipline and vigour. Certainly, there is in this position, an aspect of 'discovery', of going back to one's people, a re-appraisal of one's history. It will be remembered that in recent years there has been a great deal of re-search for the lost native traditions such as the oral tradition, narrative traditions and networks of symbols and myths. Surely, these re-searches are going to open up a truly original, significant nativistic literature which will at the same time hold its place among the contemporary world literature.

The culture contact brought about by the colonial presence in one's native land immediately provokes a quick response. It is a reaction to conditions of alien domination, one's being subjugated and the resultant sense of rootlessness. The manifestation of such a reaction is almost always in the form of movements which partake of 'native' elements. These reactions, therefore, are nativistic in the traditional and somewhat pejorative sense.

In the matters of confrontation between the native religion and the colonizer's religion, a nativistic response in this sense may lead to two different kinds of revivalistic movements.

a) Religious fundamentalism.

b) Reformist revivalism.
2.4.5 Religious Fundamentalism

In the Indian context the insistence on the perpetuation of Hindu Orthodoxy (Smriti Pramanya) would be an example of the first kind though it had remained somewhat incipient in the early days of colonization. Even in the case of Islam a similar trend to shun the western or Christian contact and to keep Islam pure according to the teachings of Hadis can easily be discerned. The movement in the name of protecting and perpetuating Umma effectively put an end to the efforts of modernizing Islam. In Africa there was a reorganization of resistance to the conquest in the form of religious movements under the authority of oracles, prophets and doctors. The Maji-Maji rebellion in southern and central Tanganyika in 1906, which threatened the German rule there and the uprising in Sokoto province in Northern Nigeria around the same time both belong to the first category.

2.4.6 Reformist Revivalism

The Reformist revivalism was an outcome of the exposure to and absorption of a new religious ideology - the Christian doctrine as preached by the Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century. Swami Vivekananda’s insistence on interpreting the Hindu Dharma as the ‘Sanatan Dharma’ - the vedantic aspect of Hinduism (Shrutipramanya), as opposed to Smriti Pramanya, Dayanand Saraswati’s Arya Samaj, Ram Mohan Roy’s Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj are various revivalistic movements in India, which show a shift
towards 'collective' practice of religion and an inclination towards monotheism. It is significant to note that both Swami Vivekananda and Dayananda Saraswati take recourse to the Vedas. Their attempt is to find doctrines more amenable to their task of presenting a counter rhetoric - to the monotheistic rhetoric of Christianity. Obviously the response to the trauma was through modification of the native religion so as to bring out the similarities between Hinduism and Christianity.

2.4.7 African Version

In Africa some religious revivalistic movements arose when the colonial domination became an irreversible reality. The classic example would be that of the mumbo cult on the eve of World War I in Kenya which particularly affected the Gusii speaking people. (5) Mumbo first appeared in the form of a giant snake having come from the Lake Victoria to repair the damage done to the cultural fabric of the rural life. It prophesied the more or less violent disappearance of Europeans and the colonial apparatus from Kenya / Africa through supernatural means and attracted serious attention when the British evacuated the border town of Kisii in 1914 due to the fear of the German invasion. The town was looted and burnt and the British treated the cult members as potential subversives. But mumbo was, in fact, a very quiet anti-colonial movement as it believed that 'God' would cleanse the world of injustice. It is to be noted that this essentially revivalistic movement attacked the traditional
ideas like circumcision, challenged elder and male authority and was hostile to the chiefs. In other words, the old 'tribal' way of life was sought to be modified. The mumbo cult in its vision of the future Kenya incorporated both Christian as well as native values and accorded them considerable importance. It was not a simple or naive return to the pre-colonial native ways of life in Kenya but a synthetic movement which combined both criticism and a great admiration for the modern secular, materialistic values for which the movement had stood.

The movement of Mwana Lesa (the son of God) from Belgian Congo against witches in 1920s belongs to the same category. (6)

In Africa, the colonial conquest brought a quickening tempo to missionary activities because education was mainly in the hands of the British. It was they who set up the schools and established Education Department. Along with propagating the Christian beliefs and values the missionaries also spread the values of early, nascent capitalism - Western family structure, individualistic orientation and self-justifying work ethic. Though they occasionally fought the settlers' interests they did not oppose the core principles of the colonial system: segregation, land alienation and migrant labour. They also accepted the racist and oppressive aspect of the colonial domination without many qualms. But as time passed, and as the number of natives converted to Christianity grew considerably larger, some of them came to occupy lower rungs
of the Christian Church in Africa. There was a feeling that in some way the teachings of Christ did not conform to the practice of the Christian colonizer. The search for a mode of religious practice in which the contradictions were resolved - or at least kept to a minimum - led to the movement of the Independent churches. Some of these churches encouraged or where encouragement clashed with the Christian precepts, tried to accommodate 'native' customs like polygamy or even circumcision. The churches of the Scottish missionaries, however, did not allow such customs which produced a sharp reaction resulting in a very notorious struggle in Kenya in 1929.

The Swedish anthropologist Bengt Sundkler typed these independent churches as either Ethiopian or Zionist. They seemed to represent a yearning for emotional and social connections that the mission churches failed to provide. Sundkler felt that the land act of 1913 and the impact of segregational politics in South Africa led to the spread of Independent churches. A striking and, in the present context, significant feature of this movement was the stress it laid on ecstatic personal experience. Orthodox, white Christian Missionaries must have deplored what obviously appeared to be a pagan element and must have tried to curb it. But experience of such ecstasy along with a messianic belief in a better world to come were fundamental to this movement because these remnants from the tribal way of life - the nativistic element - fulfilled a deeply felt emotional
need of the natives. They had surrendered a very important prop to their personality structure when under the influence of Christianity they had jettisoned these age old practices. Ecstatic personal experience, messianic belief in a better world to come were fundamental probably because it was the emotional/spiritual need of the people who had surrendered their identity. Faith healing and witch cleansing were also part of the Zionist practice.

Many Africanist scholars of African cultures have assumed that these churches were in some sense proto-nationalist, pre-figuring the fully political forms of protest that were to emerge later in colonial Africa but actually very few of them functioned as anti-colonial well-springs. As Bill Freund observes, 'They were indeed a response to colonial conditions, not in the politics of protest but in the ideology of displacement.' (9) Religion thus, surprisingly, serves as a means of acceptance and adaptation. In the African religious movements apocalyptic predictions constituted a characteristic feature. It was again and again given out that the society would be saved by a seer or by a prophet or a messiah. This naturally has the effect of preventing the people from examining the religion or the religious practices in the light of reason. In India such examination of the religious tenets as well as practices is a recurring feature and a very prominent one during the early years of colonial rule. In Africa, on the other hand, there was little or no effort to bring about a rational transformation of social conditions through
movements for religious reforms. Such reforms inevitably force people to examine and assess the present and to change the social structure. In Africa, nothing of the kind took place.

2.4.8 The Caribbean Scene

When we turn to the Caribbean Islands to review the impact of the alien culture and the native culture's response to it, we are struck by a very basic difference between the situation obtaining in, say, Africa or India and the one perceived in the Caribbean. So far as the religious fundamentalism and the reformist revivalism are concerned the West Indian Scene is rather intricate. Nor is this surprising if we consider the antecedents of the 'native' population there. They were brought from Africa to work as slaves. They were thus already an uprooted, unstable and drifting kind of populace, often treated no better than the livestock on the same farms where they worked. They had very little sense of true religiosity (for which a stable community is a must) which gives a sense of dignity and self respect. The slave population imported from Africa did practise the customs of the tribes as they recollected them and in such a manner as the new dispensation under which they worked allowed them. The slaves had no religious rights just as they had no political rights. The work of the missionaries was disliked by the planters. It was the idea of brotherhood in Christianity which seemed so dangerous to them. The main object of the
missions - the Moravians, the Baptists and the Methodists - was certainly the conversion of the slaves to Christianity which was an extraordinarily difficult task. The African tribal customs which still survived would not be readily given up for the practices of Christianity which the slaves hardly understood. To make matters worse, the slaves did not understand the language of the missionaries either.

Teaching the slaves to read was an important task of the missionary and a very unpopular one with their critics. Bishop John Smith, a Scottish Missionary, was warned by the Governor of Demerara, "If you ever teach a negro to read and I hear of it I will banish you from the colony immediately." (10) The slaves, however, made their own contributions to the churches. The question of the reformist religious revival does not arise in such a situation. The missionary work was made difficult by the fact that it coincided with the main anti-slavery movements. Many times the fact that the rebels demanded the right to go to church was interpreted by the planters to mean that Smith was the cause of the rebellion. The religious and the cultural revivalism in the effort to assert their identity could be seen only in the form of Rastafarian movement and some of the cult practices in Jamaica and Haiti which are further discussed in the next chapter.
2.4.9 Trade Union Activity and Emergence of Nationalism in the Caribbean

The nationalistic movement was not likely to exist during the days of slavery. It is at the turn of the century (1890s) that the West Indian workers started organizing themselves into groups to protect their class interests. These could be regarded as the early efforts at trade union activities. In Cuba the tobacco and port workers set up their unions in 1889 and 1890 respectively. In Jamaica a Carpenters’, Bricklayers’, and Painters’ Union was formed in 1898. The Working Men’s Association started in Trinidad in the late 1890’s. In 1906 Hubert Critchlow led a strike of the dockers in Georgetown in British Guiana. These were essentially organizations of the town workers. In the countryside the workers on the ‘estates’ did not have the right to go on strike to demand higher wages or better working and living conditions like their town brethren. It was just not possible for them to organise themselves into a body or an organ of protest. After World War I and with the depression of the 1920’s in the U.S.A. they went into decline mainly because no effective political support for them existed. At about the same time some leaders from the middle class like Captain Arthur Cipriani from Trinidad and Alfred Thorne, a Barbadian settled in Guiana as a headmaster offered them encouragement and support. During the same period several prominent persons from the middle class, discontented with crown colony government, demanded from the
Colonial Office a greater share in the Governments of the islands and formed 'Representative Government Associations' with the membership of 'coloured and black intelligentsia'. It is worth noting that they did not intend to give everybody a vote and they were not demanding self-government either. But the rich planters and merchants in some of the islands opposed even this very modest demand. It is not at all surprising that the Crown Colony Government found the planters' and merchants' opposition very much to their advantage and refused to accept the demands for a greater share in the government by the natives. By 1929 it was quite obvious that the feelings of frustration and desperation mounted among the black population. Equally obvious was the weakness of the Crown Colony Government. The British West Indians were allowed to criticise the government but not to govern themselves. There was not yet any strong alliance between the labourers and the middle class leadership against the crown colony government. At about the same time the 'United Negro Improvement Association' led by Marcus Garvey, a very powerful orator and a colourful figure, gained popularity in Jamaica. The Negro Progress Convention in British Guiana and the Negro welfare and Cultural Association in Trinidad also came about this time. These were responsible for instilling the pride of their race and for encouraging them to fight for better living conditions.

Black Jamaicans had learnt from Garvey that their inferior position was not ordained by God. His great
If it can be summed up briefly, was that the giving and receiving of respect had nothing to do with black, or brown or white, but with character and behaviour. Alexander Bustamante brought the supremacy of the white man under fire. The inability of the Crown colony government to ease the hardships that the economic depression had caused made some members of the middle class go further in their demands. Around the beginning of nineteen thirties these men demanded self-government. In 1932 a group met in Dominica to discuss the matter. At the same time, T. Merryshow, the champion of political independence and West Indian federation was away in London discussing the same matter with the colonial office staff. By 1938, there were many leaders like O.T. Fairclough and W.A. McFarlane, in Jamaica and J.A. Marineau and W.A. Crawford in Barbados and they were not alone. They, however, were not unanimous about what should replace the crown colony government. Not all of them agreed with the demand for self-government based on universal suffrage. In 1934 there were strikes in Trinidad Sugar Estates, which spread to Jamaica in 1937 and to Barbados in 1938. These gave strength to the political activity throughout the Caribbean islands. The middle class politicians now demanded not only self-government but higher wages and better social services for the workers. In 1938, the Moyne Commission was appointed to look into the problems that caused fresh strikes and riots on the islands. The members of the Moyne Commission did not support immediate
and complete self government not did they grant immediate adult suffrage. They were of the opinion that the West Indies should move towards self-government gradually. Since 1944 the movement towards greater participation of the West Indians in the Government had gone forward fairly steadily. The notable exception was British Guiana. There Dr. Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham successfully led the 'People's Progressive Party' to victory. Their government elected by universal adult suffrage took office in 1953. The Imperial Government, however, charged that the People's Progressive Party was attempting to establish a Communist government in British Guiana and sent British troops to suppress the riots which were expected to follow the overthrow of the government. The initial impact of the suspension People's Progressive Party of Dr. Cheddi Jagan was traumatic but gradually the leaders seemed to adopt the roles in which the British had cast them.

Ultimately the political changes in the British islands took these islands towards internal Self-Government and the Federation was formed on January 3, 1958. In September 1961 Jamaica withdrew and four months later Trinidad followed ending the 'Federation'. The Federation sentiment had never been high and the mutual communication among the islands which were British colonies had always been poor. A kind of distrust had developed which ultimately led to the partial failure of the 'Federation' experiment.
2.4.10 Cultural Nationalism

The cultural aspects of the nativistic movement would cover all the other areas. Cultural nationalism, Gandhism, asceticism, etc. are some of the movements that belong to this category.

According to the cultural nationalist approach the real crisis in the colonial society is mainly due to the confrontation of dissimilar and very often opposing values. The ideology of nationalism can be fruitful in the construction of a new identity which overcomes the crisis. Just as religious adaptations are partly a response to Christianity and fundamentally a response to Western values which are incompatible with one's traditional values, nationalism can also be seen as a substitute for religious values performing a similar function as religious revivalism does. It creates a new space in which the individual (the native in this case) can search for an alternative identity. It suggests an appropriation of essentially modern western ideas and their embodiment in values derived from the colonial 'nation'.

In Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta introduced a highly developed theory of 'cultural nationalism' in his book Facing Mount Kenya. The theory passed through a number of phases. In the 1930's some missionaries started a campaign against the Kikuyu custom of circumcision of adolescent girls. It was opposed by those who were critical of the collaborator system. K.C.A. (Kikuyu Central Association) which could mobilise popular feeling against such alien interference
with the traditional customs and values did mobilise it. The problem the militants faced was how to coordinate and control an extensive movement of opposition in the absence of institutional channels of expression. A solution was sought in the adaptation of the custom of 'oathing'. It was used by the ex-K.C.A. officials, some Kikuyu elders and Kenyatta himself to promote and maintain the solidarity among those involved in oppositional politics. Around 1945 the next step was taken when some radical Kikuyu politicians in Nairobi — men involved in trade union or Independent Church activity started using 'oaths' to mobilise greater support for the movement. The 'oathing' movement was extended in many ingenious ways and its impact strengthened by making it a more intense experience and by linking it with the more extreme demands over land and independence which eventually led to the emergence of the Mau Mau movement. As John Breuilly puts it:

The people who had begun the Mau Mau movement were nationalists. Even under the most extreme pressure its leaders remained committed to Kenyan independence and tried to keep some kind of overall political organization going. Structural deficiencies — acting outside recognized institutions, building on local grievances, running up against collaborator enmity — compounded by declaration of emergency prevented the movement acting in terms of its leaders' objectives and cut it off from other forms of nationalist action. (11)

Jomo Kenyatta who had worked under functionalist anthropologist M. Malinowsky in London had raised questions about cultural nationality and territorial nationalism in his Facing Mount Kenya. Till his arrest in 1952 he had also led the Independent school movement. He had also been
involved in the Pan-African movement. After his release in 1961 he emerged as a national leader with considerable prestige, with a halo of impending martyrdom about his head and a tremendously charismatic appeal.

As we have seen, if a political movement is to provide to the native participants in it, a means of achieving — besides political freedom — liberation from a stigmatised, fragmented identity, the leaders of such a movement must display a special kind of intelligence, and a special capacity for assimilating what is best in both the native and the alien traditions. We have also seen that the leaders must possess an unusual degree of skill in creating new symbols, new myths which while fostering one's ties with one's native past must also accommodate the future developments. (Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha, his championing of 'Swadeshi' and 'Charkha' as a means to gain independence come to mind in the context). Negation or mere negativism is not enough. In Kenya the movement that Jomo Kenyatta started might have a promise of 'homecoming' in it but as it turned out the substance of the movement was nothing but an inverted version of the British model. If the British had already established Kenya as an exotic land full of adventure and big game hunting, the Kenyan government after independence only continued the practice by making Kenya appear a tourist's paradise, selling or prostituting the soul of Kenya in the process as Kenyatta's critics vehemently claimed. The Mau Mau movement was thus by and
large turned into a false dawn; as the government in independent Kenya actually helped to legitimise the continuation of the colonial apparatus.

2.4.11 Asceticism

An important strategy which could be adopted by a sensitive victim of colonization would be to follow the path of asceticism. Every culture provides for asceticism so that certain individuals can opt out of the mainstream struggle and set up their own in a highly individual manner. Asceticism is often an individual's denial of certain repulsive features in one's culture and a readiness to accept the consequent suffering without complaining. Two things stand out here. In the first place practising asceticism is essentially an individual's way and secondly it is the creation of space in which the individual can find 'peace' with himself. In the present context it may be his 'home'. That is why the individuals whose make up is 'ascetic' in this sense cannot make asceticism into a movement even though they are leaders of political movements. An example of such a person is that of Shri Aurobindo. He was steeped in Western culture and Western mores to such an extent that he would appear, when he returned from England, to be a fit candidate for 'total acceptance' category. However, an extraordinary metamorphosis seems to have taken place in his case. He became part of the terrorist movement and also a member of the extremist faction of the Indian National Congress. Then
while he was serving his sentence in prison he turned to an ascetic's way. He established an 'ashram' at Pondicherry and practised an ascetic's life though not in conformity with the traditional Indian model. He attracted a number of gifted individuals towards himself and was a source of much spiritual enlightenment to them. In his formulation of a 'super-consciousness' to dawn on the horizon of human civilization he may well have found an inner space where he felt 'at home' with himself but this would still be an individual's way. It could not become a movement for the masses, to provide them with means in the material world to overcome the state of exile.

Indeed one reason why asceticism cannot become a movement is that in many cases it turns out to be an escape route for an individual. By a sort of 'opting out' the individual appears to free himself from his responsibility towards society. Such is the case with many who become Sanyasis in the Indian tradition. One would venture to say that the obverse side of this phenomenon is aestheticism where pursuit of beauty at great personal suffering (a case in point is the renowned French novelist Gustav Flaubert) seems to absolve the artist of any responsibility to the society around him.

The positive contribution of asceticism in the context of the present discussion lies in its giving support to an individual to withstand the onslaught of the alien culture in all spheres. In the case of those individuals who seem to achieve 'homecoming' as envisaged in the present study,
there will certainly be evident, in some degree, an element of asceticism combined with cultural nationalism.

2.4.12 Nationalism

In all colonial encounters there arose sooner or later a situation where the means of countering the alien culture were transmitted through the very institutional instruments introduced by the alien culture. If colonial educational system was devised to make available clerks who could assist the running of the administrative machinery, in due course the very system also provided access to ideologies and systems of values. The discovery provided the sensitive young minds with a means whereby they were given a hold of something which would enable them rectify, overcome or jettison what was irksome or outright incompatible with the times in which they lived. A contact with modern western ideologies enabled the native intelligentsia to face squarely the psychological problems arriving out of a stigmatized, downgraded status. It also provided them with means of analysing the colonial presence and of removing it through more effective modes than the ones provided by the native culture. This very process implies that individuals who open themselves to the modern western ideologies are aware of and accept what is of positive import to them in the alien culture. An important ideology was the ideology of nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which seeks to justify the nation state as the ideal form of political organization. The concept of a nation state, in
the sense in which it is used in modern political analysis, was non-existent in the colonies. It was, therefore, an importation from the west where it had crystallized, according to Kedouri and others, in the nineteenth century. The concept of 'nation' or 'nation-state' when received in the colonies particularly as an important underpinning of the political struggle for freedom, necessitated its modification to accommodate certain indigenous aspects. (12) Such an acceptance made the idea palatable to the masses. For example, quite early in the freedom struggle in India, the country was seen as 'Bharatmata' and the call 'Vande Mataram' fired the imagination of millions of people bringing together and uniting various communities and strata. In Kenya, Mount Kenya was used as a symbol of the unity of all the tribes in the present day Kenya. It was a symbol used to overcome the distinction between the nomads and the non-nomads, Masais and Kikuyus. This symbol also epitomized the distinctions which characterized the various tribes in Kenya. It is possible to say that the power of the symbol and need for the unity made the natives accept the notion of Kenya as one nation.

However, it should be borne in mind that embracing the ideal of nationhood would not wipe out all the evils attendant upon colonization. Nor would it mean that the nationalists were able to come to terms with their past. There were many aspects of the native cultures (for example the caste system in India, animism in certain African
cultures) which were obviously incompatible with the changed scene and a better and a more wholesome state would come about only when these obscurantist elements were finally jettisoned. It is certainly true that in varying degrees the native nationalistic movements did address themselves to some of these aspects. But since the main thrust was political freedom, they did not receive the kind of priority they ought to have received. Then again, it is possible to say that the grafting of the 'nationalistic' ideology on many native colonised cultures (attempted, it is true, by the natives themselves) was not complete and in some cases quite precarious in terms of its being able to transform the 'colonised state of mind'. The ideology of nationalism came under threat in many de-colonised countries because it was not properly understood and assimilated. In many of these newly independent 'colonies' the mind sets inherited during the colonial regime, while the colonizer-colonized game was on, were firmly established. As a result the erstwhile victims who grabbed power now turned no less oppressive and exploitative than their erstwhile white master and began to intimidate, oppress and exploit a section of their own people. Indeed these colonies witnessed the now familiar phenomenon of neo-colonialism, reminiscent of the end of George Orwell's classic 'Animal Farm'. The neo-colonial 'masters' were often aided by the very white colonisers against whom they had fought. It is perhaps possible to say that it was an inevitable consequence of the 'colonization of the mind' because in the effort to overthrow the colonial
rule by accepting and practising the ideology of nationalism, the natives themselves were inheriting unpleasant aspects of cultural domination which, in the absence of a true nationalist consciousness, would only continue and perpetuate the earlier coloniser – colonised game.

The political freedom that came to these countries did not change the lot of the common people or the masses. It is for this reason that the ideology of nationalism, following the nationalistic ideal could not necessarily be the 'true' homecoming for those who pursued that ideal. The post-colonial situation in some of the colonised countries was even worse as the very leaders of the nationalist struggle opened doors to capitalist countries, multinational corporations and gave them free rein to plunder the natural resources and hold these countries as their captive markets in an unchecked manner which ruined their young fragile economies. A new kind of 'economic slavery' replaced the political slavery and the essential malaise of the colonial situation continued in a perhaps more pernicious manner. Political freedom was thus shallow and without substance. It was a false dawn or in the context of the present discussion, a pseudo-homecoming.

2.4.13 Socialism and Marxism

Besides nationalism (and its varieties) there were several other modern western ideologies. There was, for example, the ideology of socialism, of Marxism (as it was
practised in the USSR. Some who had entered into a compromise position with the colonial rule but had not quite accepted either nationalistic trends or the ideologies of socialism or Marxism turned to yet another set of non-native ideologies such as secularism-capitalism under the umbrella of the colonial presence. Again these attempts may be looked upon as efforts to come to terms with a subjugated, downgraded existence imported by the colonial rulers. Socialism and Marxism (Communism) attracted a large number of sensitive young natives in the colonies. The reason for this attraction is fairly easy to understand. These two ideologies provided a better understanding of the economic and political aspects and in this way provided new intellectual equipment with which to fight the colonial rulers. Another reason was that both these ideologies championed an active resistance to the oppressive regimes - which like the nationalistic resistance brought a sense of meaning to their condemned existence. That is why in some countries socialistic, Marxist movements for a time at least co-existed before they fell out. But what has been said about nationalistic movements - and their degeneration into oppressive neo-colonialism - above is also true of these western ideologies. Precisely because they had originated in a different soil and had been nurtured in a different intellectual climate they were not properly internalised in the colonies. The graft was very often superficial and precarious. The liberating, idealistic aspects of these
ideologies and, more than that, perhaps the promise of forming an international community of an ideologically committed groups fired the imagination of a large number of individuals. The actual events were to belie this idealistic projection which gave rise to contradictions. A case in point is the plight of the Communist Party of India in 1942 during the Second World War when that party was forced to support the British Imperialists and denounce the nationalist movement at that time. In consequent years the inherent contradictions of the international movements have become more pronounced and the latent imperialistic tendencies have come out in some of the so-called socialist countries. And yet it is equally true that the ideology of Marxism - more than any other ideology - has appealed to a considerable number of thinkers and activists. As a 'vision' or a 'dream', Marxism has a very considerable allurement for them. It is only in recent years that with the disintegration of the USSR and a general setback suffered by the Communist (Marxist) ideology in Europe and elsewhere the 'dream' or the 'ideal' has come under a shadow of doubt. When disillusionment affected some of the erstwhile European Marxists, they often talked of 'God that failed'. The same perhaps is more poignantly true of those disillusioned souls in the colonies who looked upon Marxism as the pathway to a genuine 'home' only to find that they were still very far from it.

Acceptance of these western ideologies certainly enabled the natives to see what was 'positive' in the
western culture to help them to fashion a new identity for themselves. It made them aware that they could create a new 'space' which belonged neither to the fundamentalist, obscurantist aspects of their native culture nor to the blind and uncritical eulogisation of the alien culture. At the same time the very creation and awareness of this space enabled them to forge a new and positive identity with which to face the future. Nationalism, Marxism and Socialism did not quite live up to their full promise probably because the fusion of the positives did not come off for those who adhered to them.

So it seems that for a colonised, traumatised and stigmatised mind to overcome the psychological and spiritual numbness resulting from the colonial encounter and to forge a new identity for oneself and for one's fellow beings there must come about a superior consciousness and a superior mindset. For this to happen it is essential that one must calmly contemplate both one's own and the alien culture. A basic premise of such a situation is that one must be able to look at the positive aspects of one's culture, and be keen and intelligent enough to discern which aspects of one's culture can still provide the springs of vitality to the culture. That entails an intelligent appreciation of the need for preparing the soil for the new identity to take roots. In this sense, for anyone attempting such a fusion there will appear something positive in the work of the revivalists, ascetics and nationalists and internationalists too. Only
by bringing these various elements together and subjecting them to the tremendous pressure of one's intelligence and understanding of human nature and human destiny can one fuse them together and create a new state of consciousness which is at home with the past and the present and which contemplates with quiet confidence the future. A compassionate understanding of human nature seems to be the keystone of such consciousness. History of human cultures has, it is true, only a few examples of such fusions and great human beings who brought them about. The Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi in our country and figures like Jesus Christ in the western culture serve as assuring reminders that it is possible for human beings to bring about such fusions and create new visions of human creativity.

2.4.14 Gandhism

An example of an attempt at such a fusion may be seen in Mahatma Gandhi in colonial India. Gandhi was born in an orthodox Bania family, steeped in traditional Hindu ways of life. In his autobiography we are given a very candid and graphic description of Gandhi's early life and adolescent life till he went to England. We learn that when in England, Gandhi modelled himself on a typical dandy. He was quite assiduous in his imitation of the English ways of life to the smallest detail, including his attempt to learn to play the violin. Around the same time he came in contact with some vegetarian Christians and he was so impressed by their discipline and the teachings of Christianity that he
even toyed with the idea of embracing Christianity. Gandhi was a lawyer by training and when he went to South Africa to practise law, he was soon a notable figure in the community. It is important to note that Gandhi had encountered colonialism in India; he had seen in England the working of imperialism and colonialism; and in South Africa he had a personal experience of the ugliest manifestation of imperialism and colonialism, namely racism. While in England and in South Africa Gandhi had been tremendously influenced by Ruskin's 'Unto This Last', which brought home to him the evils of modern political economy. He was also influenced by Tolstoy and his reformist Christianity. Indeed, he called his commune in South Africa 'Tolstoy Farm'. In the latter part of Gandhi's stay in South Africa, he was more and more convinced of the horrors of the western materialistic culture of which imperialism, colonialism and racism were but partial manifestations. The same was true of the institutions such as the Courts of Law, Educational Institutions and other institutions that the materialistic culture had brought into existence. His Hind Swaraj (1909) is a thoroughgoing criticism of Western materialistic culture and a total rejection of the evils that he sees as inherent in that materialistic ideology. What Gandhi envisages as the replacement of the modern materialistic culture is not, it is worth noting, pure Indian nativism. Certainly Gandhi is a nativist and the movement he led is strongly marked by nativistic elements but he is not a fundamentalist. He remained a Hindu at
heart and proclaimed himself to be a Hindu from time to time. The Bhagwad Gita remained his guide throughout his life. Indeed he was able as he moved from one phase of growth to the next in his long career to combine the comprehensive, benign aspects of Hinduism. (While jettisoning such undesirable aspects as untouchability, inferior position accorded to women etc.) with the positive aspects of Buddhism, Jainism and even Islam from among the native Indian traditions. At the same time he was genuinely and positively responsive to those aspects of Christianity, which dovetailed with his vision of humanity and its destiny. The remarkable thing about Gandhi is that he does not start a counter-revivalist movement out of fear or out of a sense of confrontation aimed at self-preservation. His attempt, as can be seen from his own life style and the life style he laid down in his Ashram clearly shows that he was singularly free from fear and, therefore, from hatred. Out of the fearlessness and compassion for all he was able to forge a vision not for Indians alone but for the entire humanity. It is in this context that his constant admonition to his followers not to hate the British and not to resort to violence against them takes on a profound significance. Gandhi could see that if his analysis of the modern times and the spirit that moved them was correct, the British or for that matter the vast majority of the Westerners ensnared by the ideology of modern materialistic culture were victims of their own oppression and
exploitation, as much as the colonised Indians were. So in Gandhi one sees a unique coming together of the nativistic tradition, cultural nationalism, and modern western ideologies. Thus, strongly opposed as he was to violence, ill will and destruction attendant upon so many of communist and socialist ideologies, he was quick to accept the elements of universal brotherhood of man and the dignity accorded to human labour from these ideologies. In his acceptance of these elements too, we see his genius for assimilation, for these seemingly foreign elements are made to look like age old convictions to be found in various native sects so that the acceptance is not an uneasy graft but a genuine assimilation and in being an assimilation, it was an autonomous, universal vision.

Thus in Gandhi we have an example of true homecoming. In all his writing, especially in Hind Swaraj and An Autobiography: My Experiments With Truth we see the same vision informing every activity of life. He insisted on renunciation of anger and fear. In the doctrine of Satyagraha which he enunciated and practised according to George Woodcock:

the totality of Gandhi's achievement can... be expressed in three items:

1. The recognition, before the Japanese had shown the physical vulnerability of European imperialism, that the liberation of colonial people could be achieved quickly and without the self-defeating use of violence;

2. The demonstration, in a more thorough way than ever before, that non-violent action is not merely, as others have shown, an effective means of resistance, but can also become the philosophic basis of a total
reconstruction of society in such a way that excesses of power and violence are eliminated;

3. The demonstration that the individual in co-operation with others and even on his own, can deploy a moral power which may result in changing the general mental climate and hence the political and social shape of the world. (13)

Gandhi's vision works for the liberation of the enslaved soul of man and frees it for positive effort in co-operation with his fellow beings. It seems the most appropriate vision which makes possible the kind of homecoming I have been alluding to in this discussion. Another reason for dwelling at such length on Gandhi is that his vision and the strategies which he championed seem to have provided moral fervour to some of the most significant struggles against oppression and other social evils. Certainly the application of Gandhi's vision and methods has yielded varying success in varying circumstances. But surely the peaceful, non-violent movements of the blacks in the U.S.A. with their emphasis on non-co-operation with oppressive forces were inspired by Gandhi's teachings. So were the struggles against apartheid in South Africa and the protest movement against the nuclear weapons in England and elsewhere in the world. Recently his methods have also been used with significant results in the worldwide struggle to protect environment. The most significant achievement of these struggles is the dawning of new awareness of man's relationship with man and with nature and it is here that the relevance of Gandhi's vision is most striking.
2.5 Homecoming Vision - A Utopia?

It is possible to say (as the German philosopher Nietzsche said of Christ: there has been only one Christian and he died on the Cross) that there was only one Gandhi. But this is not quite true. There have been many Gandhians who have themselves achieved Homecoming and shown others how it could be done. The dignity of and the respect for self that one notices in the struggles of the downtrodden everywhere owes a great deal to Mahatma Gandhi's teachings. This in itself suggests that there is a path here leading to the Homecoming, to achieving peace with oneself, here and now. Martin Luther King Jr in the U.S.A. could be cited as an example of this kind of homecoming, where the essence of Gandhi's teachings is worked out by an imaginative and intelligent leader. Therefore, though this kind of fusion of what is enduring in one's nativism and one's contemporaneity may appear a utopian dream, it is not so. This consciousness, doubtless expressed in the past by the great masters in art - to speak of literature, by such poets as Goethe, Kalidas and Wordsworth - both in the West and in the East, is increasingly being experienced in the literatures of those countries which were till the other day colonies. Practically all the types of responses that have been discussed in this chapter have manifested themselves in literatures of these countries. There has been, accordingly, violent denunciation and vitriolic mockery of the alien culture, just as there has been apish simulation of the western attitudes. There has also been literature
produced by writers influenced by nationalist and Marxist ideologies. Some of these display a very high degree of sophistication. However, significantly — as is perhaps to be expected — in the literary works in which the 'homecoming' vision is discernible, there is an almost nonchalant unconcern with Western aesthetic theories or criteria. Native modes of narration and presentation are tried perhaps deliberately. Obscurity, allusiveness and a high degree of consciousness of the form are given up and the presentation is simpler.

These works are in their own way no less effective and provide a good example of assimilation. To take the example of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, we can see that he takes over the novel form from the west but refuses to subordinate himself to that form and weds it to his native traditions with the result that what we have is a highly educative novel. It would be utterly irrelevant to judge such a work in the light of usual bookish aesthetic criticism. When we read Ngugi's novels such as Devil on the Cross or Matigari, we are affected by the extraordinary impact they produce on us. Such an impact demands simplification of the narrative form. The point to note is that such simplification does not necessarily reduce the artistic merit of the narrative. The vision embodied in the novel and the novelist's conception of what the form of the novel is supposed to do for his people helps him to create a work which demands a different set of criteria for its evaluation.
The foregoing discussion, as can be easily seen, is especially relevant to African, Caribbean and Asian countries which were victims of colonisation. All of them except the West Indies may be said to possess a more or less monolithic and continuous culture. In the West Indies, the absence of a single, continuous and monolithic culture and tradition has created some special and peculiar problems and challenges. The sensitive minds in the West Indies felt the cultural vacuum, for they found the West Indians to be perpetually in a state of exile. The reason for this perception was that again and again the West Indians realized that they lacked a solid tradition to fall back upon. In such a peculiar situation, there cannot be any meaningful talk about nativism and thus an important component essential to the process of 'homecoming' was apparently absent. That being so the tasks before the natives, particularly before the artists, were quite daunting. Some artists accepted, as a fact of life, their being attached at once to two diverse cultural strands – one emanating from Europe and imposed by the colonial masters and the other from Africa, from where the slave population had originally come. We see, however, that for a truly gifted and truly original artist the co-presence of two diverse strands in his cultural make-up served as a spur to his creative energies. We see an example of this in the poetry of the Caribbean: "Derek Walcott, who was able to produce great poetry out of such a predicament. Indeed, it
is a measure of Walcott's significance as a poet in our times that he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1992. Edward Brathwaite, another contemporary great Caribbean poet, also accepted the same challenge of creating a new tradition by assimilating various disparate cultural inheritances and relics of dying traditions. In the works of these poets, we once again have a very confident and poised manifestation of what I have called the homecoming vision.

2.6 The Artist as a Socio-cultural Leader

In the situations, like those in colonial Africa or in the Caribbean Islands, a special responsibility devolves upon the artist. He is, no less than a visionary, a political and socio-cultural leader, a teacher and a guide with a special mission. Not only must he hand down in a revitalised form the enduring aspects of his native culture but acting like sensitive cultural antenna, in the contemporary world, he must assimilate what is wholesome and nourishing in other cultures including the erstwhile oppressive colonial culture. The artist is, thus, a kind of a new creator.

It is equally evident that for an artist to be the creator of a new vision, it is essential that he displays in his work both at the levels of form and thematic vision the same resilience of which we saw examples in Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. In the works of literature produced in the colonial countries, there is a large body of
works which embodies the theme of exile, the theme of loss of self or identity, just as there is a body of works in which various avenues to overcome that sense of loss are explored so as to be able to assert one's own self in a spirit of counter rhetoric (what I have called literatures produced under the influence of nationalism, marxism etc.) These are, as it were, 'purgatorial' measures, and there is a small body of literary works which embody what I have called the vision of 'Homecoming'. This vision goes beyond the partial understanding of the human condition revealed in the former two classes of works, and lends the quality of greatness to these works. It is for this reason that I should like to accord them a special and superior place in the discussion of post-colonial literature.

It is needless to stress that the necessary condition for all these works (belonging to the three groups mentioned above) is that they must have literary merit; they must be satisfying, first as literary works. A word of caution may be necessary here. The literary merit must be judged not according to some preconceived, western aesthetic or literary criteria. The situation in the West is vastly different for in the past two hundred years or so the considerations regarding the nature and function of literature, the role of the author vis-a-vis his readers/audience have resulted in bringing about an aesthetic, a system of judging literary works (the ideology of 'art-for-art's sake' itself is seen to have its roots in certain cultural 'nonliterary' ideologies) which are often
unjust to those authors who take a radically different position on all these issues. A case in point is Bertolt Brecht, whose comprehensive vision of humanist-marxism has been ignored for long because his plays were considered polemical or didactical. It is instructive to recall Brecht at this point for another reason. As is well known, it is in his most effective plays such as *Mother Courage* and *Her Children* or *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* that Brecht's message shines most touchingly and poignantly because these are extremely accomplished plays from the point of view of affective aesthetics. The special and superior place I should like to bestow on the works with great literary merit embodying the vision of 'Homecoming' is due to the presence in them of the sufficient condition, namely, the well wrought art, a vision of human condition where man's creativity and his humanity will be fully realized. It is this 'sufficient condition' that imparts 'greatness' to their literary works. In this context, it is well to remember what T.S. Eliot said in his essay 'Religion and Literature' (1935), 'The greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards.'(14)

2.7 The Writers With Homecoming Vision

In the chapters that follow, I have analysed, at length, the works of Edward Brathwaite, a Caribbean poet and dramatist and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan novelist and
dramatist. I have also analysed the novels of Chinua Achebe, a novelist and poet, very briefly. These three have in their different ways, embodied the vision of homecoming in their creative work. There is in their work the same fusion of the nativist and non-nativist elements that we considered in the activities of Mahatma Gandhi on a non-literary plane. Brathwaite begins from, what for an original poet like him must appear a bleak situation, namely, absence of a living tradition of poetry, a ready mine of idioms, images and conventions to quarry. Yet undaunted by the bleakness, Brathwaite, displaying a tremendous artistic intelligence and imaginatively re-working the situation creates a new idiom and a new tradition. It is not so much to purify the dialect of the tribe as to create a dialect for the new tribe. But the need for a new idiom and a new tradition is felt so expressly because only then can Brathwaite embody his patience, forbearance, compassion and empathy. Just as Gandhi found in Christianity and in Sufism elements that strengthened his vision of man, Brathwaite at the level of expression finds creative and expressive potential in the idiom of Jazz. Like Gandhi he had, during his exploratory journey to and stay in Ghana, tried to tap what was still vital and enduring for the black man in the latter half of the twentieth century. He had to absolve himself and his ancestors of their ancient guilt so that a new compassionate understanding could replace the sinful sense of guilt and shame. Through formal and stylistic virtuosity which is
never allowed to dominate the theme Brathwaite presents an exquisite vision of 'homecoming' in his poetry. He does for his contemporary ex-colonial fellow beings what Dante had achieved for the medieval Christian by presenting in his poem *The Divine Comedy* beatific vision, the vision of Paradise and of Godhead. Brathwaite in his comprehensive poem presents the no-less beatific vision of a true 'home' for mankind.

With Ngugi wa Thiong'o the creative experience takes a different shape. His is also a psychological journey towards the achievement of a decolonized state of mind. The creative imagination that informs Ngugi's work is also visionary but that vision is largely romantic and idealistic. Ngugi is in a way a political writer because in the course of his psychological journey he has come to identify himself with the Kenyan masses and has developed a strong conviction that 'decolonization' is a state of mind which cannot be achieved if the American and Japanese Imperialism or for that matter the neo-colonialism of his fellow Kenyans replaces British colonialism.

Ngugi, in his relentless search for a new vision of 'home' for man rejects western models, sets right contradictions that have entered into his lifestyle (he changes his name from James Ngugi to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o) and in the process sheds elements of anger and hatred and replaces them with an understanding of human weaknesses, compassion and empathy. His vision of oppression-less humanity is similiar to that we find in Brathwaite. Ngugi
is a political activist and he has been a formal student of English literature. He has had his share in shaping the educational curricula in his country and in Africa as a whole. The point of mentioning this is simply to underline his exposure to Western ideologies and western aesthetic literary norms. When he came to contemplate the condition of his own people and through them the human condition in the closing decades of this century, he realized that there were positive aspects of what he had inherited just as there were sterile and destructive aspects. At the same time he had immersed himself in the history and the cultural — including literary — traditions of his land so that there too a similar sifting process had been rigorously undertaken. Out of the fusion of the native and non-native elements are forged literary works of extraordinary power. Like all true, genuine nativists Ngugi, in the course of his growth as an artist, discarded English and took recourse to his native languages to give shape and substance to his vision of 'homecoming'.

The case of Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist, presents a rather interesting study in a colonised mind's groping for a 'home'. Achebe's early novels may be seen as straightforward narratives modelled on English or European novels. They are 'realistic', and are constructed along the principles approved of in Western aesthetics (Okwonkwo as a tragic hero). Even the titles of the novels show the influence of modernist writers like Yeats (Things Fall
Apart), Eliot (No Longer At East) but in the latest of his novels 'Anthills of the Savannah' both in terms of the form and the theme, Achebe appears to be disturbed by the need for finding 'a home' and exploring ways and means of achieving 'homecoming'.

It is certainly true that the formulation of the concept of homecoming that is prescribed here may seem Utopian. I have tried in an earlier section to partly answer this argument by pointing out that whatever has been practised with full or nearly full success by maybe, a handful of men, cannot be called utopian. There is in these matters always an ongoing journey towards the final goal. It is certainly true that in Gandhi's India there are many marked instances of neo-colonialism and the mindsets that are typical of a colonial situation. Repression and exploitation continues but surely there is a growing awareness among those who have inherited Gandhi's gift of fight and those who continue to confront oppression that they are not fighting an isolated particular problem but are taking part in a crusade to establish the dignity of the human being and to establish a 'home' for him where he can fully realize himself. Realities and exigencies of practical life very often make invisible even the real successes and achievements for the failures are so glaring. But in all such matters what is important is the changed consciousness.

The achievement of the vision of homecoming perhaps appears precarious in real, that is in socio-political,
life, for want of concrete models. It is here that the literary works under review serve a salutary purpose. They create, at the level of imaginative experience a parallel world and this is not to be derided as abstract or utopian, for as Louis Althusser said:

Art (I mean authentic art, not works of an average or mediocre level) does not give us a knowledge in the strict sense, it therefore does not replace knowledge (in the modern sense: scientific knowledge), but what it gives us does nevertheless maintain a certain specific relationship with knowledge. This relationship is not one of identity but one of difference. Let me explain. I believe that the peculiarity of art is to 'make us see' (nous donner à voir), 'make us perceive', 'make us feel' something which alludes to reality. If we take the case of the novel, Balzac or Solzhenitsyn, as you refer to them they make us see, perceive (but now know) something which alludes to reality.(15)

Literature may not start social action but it certainly prepares the reader's mental attitude and makes it more amenable to the desired change. Writers like Brathwaite, Armah, Ngugi or Achebe present to the post colonial man a vision of home which is within their grasp only if they mentally prepare themselves for it. Literature of homecoming urges action through a change in mindsets. If we today find an international scene in which some of the insights we are going to investigate in detail here are at work and 'working well' that is probably due at least partly to the vision that writers like Brathwaite and Ngugi (and leaders like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.) provide.

Tukaram, a seventeenth century saint poet in Marathi, presents in one of his exquisite and moving poems (abhanga)
a picture of an ideal community. He envisages the members gathered on the banks of the sacred river Chandrabhaga at Pandharapur where Vithala the deity of the warkaris in Maharashtra stands awaiting the devotees. The message of the warkari sect is for the total elimination of evil which means, in practice, elimination of all kinds of inequalities, caste distinctions and oppressions. In the poem Tukaram depicts the scene of the assembly of the devotees on the sandy banks of the Chandrabhaga river. Here is a community which comes together, forgetting the caste and sex distinctions, each embracing the other as the manifestation of Vithala, each touching the other’s feet in humble obeisance (willing renunciation of egotism). There in that moment of co-operation and union each has a glimpse of his or her true home. (16)

Now it is possible to say that the picture of an ideal community that Tukaram draws here is fragile and three hundred and fifty years after his death, it is still a vision but this would be to ignore totally the subtle changes that have come about in the psyche of those who have read or tried to follow Tukaram’s vision. Whenever we speak of man’s ability to create a space within himself from which he can launch his, if need be, one man crusade for his true home, it is surely partly due in the first place, to there being a Tukaram and his being able to create that space.

It is for this reason that it seems very instructive to see how these writers present their vision of ‘homecoming’. 

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It is to this exploration through their creative as well as discursive work that I now turn.

NOTES

1 T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets - East Coker (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), lines 140-141, p. 25.


6 Ibid; p. 156.

7 Ibid; p. 158.

8 Ibid; p. 158.

9 Ibid; p. 159.


