Roots lie deep in us, and quietly too, till we try straying away from them. It is then that we realise their pull and it is at a time like this that we witness the drama of the soul between tension and resolution inside us. Roots are our traditions, our culture and our history. Roots are our soil, too, with its peculiar fragrance and flavour. Roots are also the centuries that have gone to form the mankind what it is today!

To find one's place in the infinite, man must realise the wholeness of his existence. Unless a man realises the continuity of existence and its significance he will never be able to get the complete view of man and the myth that forms our roots. As far as roots are concerned, every human being is special and different from his or her fellow human beings. We differ in our actions and reactions. We have on us the peculiar stamp of our backgrounds. Roots are not dead; they keep growing, evolving, changing. Tradition and culture stand for the process of eternal growth and continuous change. 'Modernity' is only, yet another face of tradition. If tradition is a step firmly rooted on the soil, modernity is a step taken to move ahead. One has to be in tune with the other.

'Modernity', or being modern, stands for new ideas. It may shock, startle or impress one, depending upon the
receptiveness and the sensitiveness of the individual sensibility. 'Modernity' also stands for coming to terms with the reality. But till the harmony between the new and the old is established, tension or the drama of the soul is inevitable. The fascination for the new is easy to understand, but the idea that one is walking away from one's beginnings is painful from the ideological, emotional, religious or national and even from the language point of view.

The Indo-English poet, positioned precariously on the borderline of tradition and modernity, is faced with a painful dilemma. Emotionally, he finds himself living in two worlds. He is unable to dwell peacefully in one, or attain security in the other. Past, with all its traditional and cultural glory, fascinates, yet the poet is unable to ignore the storm of progress. He has got to deal with the 'now' that surrounds him with all its pressing problems, making him discard those backward glances, so full of longing. Infact, the poet feels overwhelmed and cut up into two.

The poet experiences a definite divide in his consciousness. On one side, there is the reality of the present in all its resonance; whereas on the other hand, there lies in his veins the feel of the eternal, unbroken chain, uniting him with his cultural dreams. The cultural
dreams never die. They may lie dormant for a while; yet remain in a state of tremulous hope, always waiting to be reborn.

The poet who dares to move away from his roots, experiences subtle pain and pangs of guilt for having fallen a prey to the foreign or 'colonial culture' and of his having become a mere part of the colonial culture and of even possessing a colonial mentality. It becomes a very emotional issue for the Indo-Anglian poet, writing in the Post-Independence era. It also rakes up bitterness, connected with the colonial rule. The poet realises that the democratic set-up of the west and the authoritarianism of the communist ideology are in fact nothing but merely two different aspects of modern civilisation, e.g., many modern sensibility poets who had so enthusiastically associated themselves with communism, are now feeling disillusioned and experiencing a sense of loss. They are now faced with a new reality. They have to adjust to this ever-changing face of reality which makes an essential part of this mobile, urban world. For every poet, the reality becomes very personal.

For the poet, the problem becomes existential and full of ambivalence. The poet, too, is human and can not afford to stay in an ivory tower. He makes an attempt to compromise, yet he finds himself in a spiritual vacuum because of his sensitivity. The Indo-English poet today is

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standing between this feeling of hollowness on one side and his dreams of purity and completeness, on the other.

In Indo-English literature, specially of the Post-Independence era, we are face to face with a consciousness, caught in the cross-currents of two different systems. We have the poets desperately groping for a niche and also trying to reconnect their past with their present. It brings about a turmoil in the psyche of the poet which can be agonising. Although the poets have this intense longing to belong, yet they can not disown the deep desire to explore new pastures. They are generally left with the feeling of being suspended between two cultures. They become lonely individuals as a result of their alienation.

The poet has this innate desire to experience new minds and cultures and is unable to conform to the expected mould. The ugly underbelly of the Indian scene repels, suffocating the sensibility and the creativity. The familial pressures threaten to asphyxiate. Besides the usual heat and the dust, there is the abysmal poverty of the mind and the environment to contend with. The Indo-English poet is forever troubled by the question, "Why, Oh, why did I have this desire of expressing myself in a foreign language, 'putting my tongue in foreign chains'!

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Should the Indo-English poet make an attempt to define his roots in India, with reference to the changed reality of his interest, in an alien culture, or else should he redefine his response to the Indian Past? These and many other questions continue to dog the steps of the Indian writer writing in English today, never letting him be at peace with himself and his environment.

The underlying assumption has been that in all Indo-English literature there seems to exist a clear hiatus between the cultural experience and the language through which it is expressed. It is up to the writer to exploit the ensuing tension. He may use it to his advantage or he may stagger pitiably under the strain and end up a psychological wreck. The poet may bring up the clash of two cultures in the East-West encounter, or he may be able to achieve an endearing element of quaintness that will make his work stand out in the midst of both Indian and western literature or in some cases achieve a semblance of some neutrality.

The fact remains that these borderline poets are in the process of transition from their familiar frames of reference to new ones which is marked by acculturation rather than assimilation. These 'marginal' poets living with varying degrees of unease in a no-man's land find themselves between conflicting cultures and pulls. They are
the possessors of a sensibility 'unhoused'. Their euphoric sense of access to two cultures runs parallel to their overwhelming feeling of nostalgia, giving rise to a feeling of uprootedness. A constant motif of the Indo-English writer is of journeying, from a state of pristine innocence to a higher state of mature experience. Throughout the journeying is that backward glance, searching for roots and always haunted by the past, yet hunting for the self in a divided world.

The present thesis tries to consider and evaluate the work of these significant contemporary Indo-Anglian poets, viz., Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, Kamala Das, R. Parthasarathy and Jayanta Mahapatra and to analyse their tendency to look back longingly to their roots and trace and retrace their journey from the beginning to establish their specific mode of self-discovery. The very fact that these poets are Indians, proves that they have an identical outlook, an essential basis for comparison. Their conscious or unconscious search for some universal, larger reality makes their poems dramas of soul. Their style is modern, elliptical and conversational. All kind of knowledge and a vast variety of experience have slowly been imbibed by them to become a definite part of their poetry. Indians now read Pablo Neruda, Rilke, Rimbaud and Sylvia Plath. Allen Ginsberg and Leroi Jones are being translated in different regional languages. Besides, Indian writers today have an
access to the prominent literature of the world. Their urban, metropolitan influences force them to take a new look at everything around them, bringing about a fantastic change in the vision and the values. All this has added to the confusion of the Indian writer. It has also made him sit up and examine critically and even reevaluate his own society and culture.

These poets are discovering new realities, new worlds, and new Gods beckon them. But is it possible to be at peace with any kind of present, without knowing about one's past and even the Gods that were? So all these poets seem to be carrying the burden of being a human being, trying to find a niche for oneself in the universal scheme of things, besides the burden of being an Indian, writing in a foreign language and the resulting conflict and the ambivalence. The present study aims at establishing and revealing that all these modern Indo-Anglian poets are highly individualistic. Their poetry is a conscious or unconscious manifestation of their quest for roots. This quest may take any form, enabling them to cleanse themselves of the tension which their particular crisis of identity has bestowed on them. It can either drive them away or take them even nearer to their roots, meanwhile helping them to attain great poetic heights.

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In the first chapter of my thesis I have discussed the concept of roots, tradition, myth, history, collective unconscious, thereby contrasting it with the concept of modernity and how from thereon, the knowledge of roots leads to self-discovery resulting in peace and serenity. The spirit of the poet is too independent and cannot be measured or curbed. These poets are individuals and they have their individual concerns and personal histories, making them go their own way in their pursuit of roots. If it is 'love' in Kamala Das, discovering for her the 'core' of her self; Nissim Ezekiel, finds it in the most personal and intimate experience, talking about it in an extremely detached and objective manner. He does it in a seemingly indifferent manner, yet the desire to belong is there. There is no wish in him to dissociate himself with his environment which is Indian.

Ramanujan's poetry expresses an Indian sensibility, sharpened and conditioned by western education. His poetry is rooted in family. In his poetry we find a deep textual affinity with the traditional literature of India. Similarly, in Parthasarathy the sense of responsibility which he expresses in his poems weighs on his mind as also the consciousness of his roots - all this making the theme of his poetry.

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Jayanta Mahapatra, with his typically Indian, provincial Oriya sensibility uses irony and silence to bring out his sombre vision. The final chapter of the thesis, tries to draw out a balance sheet, in order to point out similarities if any or the contrasts which distinguish these poets from each other. An attempt has also been made to make an estimate of their achievements in poetry, through conflicts and dilemmas to action by making their poetry a vehicle, in their quest for roots and finally helping them to resolve their identity Crisis.