Chapter - V
CONCLUSION
The present thesis deals with issues in culture and national identity with a postcolonial perspective. These issues are addressed with special reference to writers like Fanon, Said, Bhabha etc. Of these writers, Frantz Fanon, the spokesperson of the Algerian revolution, in his revolutionary writing reveals the concerns of national culture and national identity. Fanon speaks about the native French culture where he was treated as Negro and discriminated on the basis of his race. Fanon argues that during colonialism there was discrimination in French culture in which Algerians were ill-treated on the basis of their colour. Fanon highlights that colour becomes the identity rather than culture and due to this there were cultural divisions such as Black culture and White culture. Fanon not only argues about native Algerians but also reveals the fact about the death and burial of its local culture. Fanon realized that the natives develop inferiority complex due to the onset of imperial culture which was considered as superior. Fanon insists on national liberation for nation building. According to him for nation building national consciousness and national liberation are the basic factors. The realization of the self and of the existence of others can develop the national consciousness.

Fanon is considered as the chief exponent of postcolonial theorizing because of his critical inquiry in this field. In Fanon’s view the cultural problem in colonised countries runs the risk of giving rise to serious ambiguities. In *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon formulates two protean models of cultural belonging:
two incompatible views on cultural assimilation, underwritten by two nationalistic discourses that are mutually exclusive. In "On National Culture," an essay collected in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon foregrounds the paradox of "national identity," which in his opinion is vital to the emergence of a Third World revolution. Fanon encourages a materialist conceptualization of the nation that is based not so much on collective cultural traditions or ancestor-worship as political agency and the collective attempt to dismantle the economic foundations of colonial rule. Fanon argues that the passion with which native intellectuals defend the existence of their national culture may be a source of amazement; but those who condemn this exaggerated passion are strangely apt to forget that their own psyche and their own selves are conveniently sheltered behind a French or German culture which has given full proof of its existence and which is uncontested. According to Fanon the search for a national culture which existed before the colonial era finds its legitimate reason in the anxiety shared by native intellectuals to shrink away from that Western culture because they realize that they are in danger of losing their lives and thus becoming lost to their people.

Fanon takes into account the Algerian women as revolutionary and holds Algerian men responsible for not allowing the women in revolutionary struggle for liberation. Fanon mocks these men for being victim of the colonisers and their ideologies. The colonisers deliberately projects women as bombs, weapons, barbaric and so on. The writings of Fanon demonstrate the concerns about the women for their revolutionary
spirit which they kept alive at home. Like men, the Algerian women were the victims of coloniser’s ideology. The much admired philosophy among the colonisers was to conquer the land while conquering first the women of that particular region. Here Fanon wants to draw our attention to such facts during the colonialism in Algeria. Therefore we can say that it was Fanon who stood against colonialism in Algeria, third world and capitalism in the post independence period. Fanon started earlier thinking on economic independence in postcolonial period. In brief, Fanon’s *The Wretched of The Earth* is the analysis of political development in the third world, specifically Algeria and Africa in which the question of violence plays an important role. Through this text Fanon speaks about “pre-colonial” cultural heritage and attempts to recover national continuity throughout history. According to him national culture can discover the people’s true nature and colonial domination very soon manages to disrupt the cultural life of a conquered people. This text can be read as the banishment of the natives and their customs by the systematic enslaving of men and women. For Fanon, national culture under colonial domination is a contested culture.

In other words Fanon’s *The Wretched of The Earth* is a story of the Algerians struggle for independence from colonial rule, in which Fanon explored the psychological effects of colonialism on the psyche of a nation as well as its broader implications for building a movement for decolonization. Apart from the views on national culture it also deals with the violence of colonialism, national consciousness, native subjugation, exploitation of women by coloniser, national liberation
struggle, black liberation struggle, cultural hegemony, the unlawful and unjust treatment given by the colonisers and soon on. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, he subscribes to the colonial doctrine of assimilation, attempting to reconcile his personal destiny with that of the French nation. *Black Skin, White Masks*, explores the interrelationship between psychoanalysis and politics, and the issues of colonialism. His *Black Skin, White Masks* captures the ambivalent relationship with the land of his birth (Martinique) and that of his adoptive culture (France). It also explains the feelings of dependency and inadequacy that black people experienced in white world. It also reveals the loss of native cultural originality and imitation of the culture of the coloniser. Edward Said takes these issues to their logical conclusion by developing a discourse on *Orientalism*.

Said also evaluated the issues of culture and national identity through his path-breaking works such as *Orientalism*, and *Culture and Imperialism*. *Orientalism* is a ground-breaking analysis of the stereotypes and colonial assumptions that are inherent in western representations of the ‘Orient’. In *Orientalism*, he argues that the Orient has been represented as the binary opposite of the West or occident. In many respects, the Orient as discussed by Said is everything about the West which it finds uncomfortable or unsettling to its superior image and which it projects onto its negative conceptualisation of the Middle-East. Here, the Orient is seen as the occident’s other. Said argues that ‘orientalism’ is a western fantasy of the Middle-East which is based on this ‘otherness’ and which is institutionalised through western
representations in all media. Said discusses how these Orientalist representations function to re-impose colonial domination through suggesting that Western values, beliefs and forms of culture are imposed to counter the inherently negative ‘traits’ of these so called inferior cultures. The ‘Orient’ is represented as strange, odd, bizarre and weirdly irrational in contrast to the ‘rational normality’ of the West. The Orient is ‘feminine’, that is possessive and submissive in opposition to the West’s ‘masculine’ features of activity and domination. The Orient is ‘degenerate’, or lazy, weak, lustful and peopled by criminals and shady immoral characters. In short, the East is everything morally negative in comparison to the West’s moral superiority. An important source on the East-West encounter is Homi K. Bhabha.

Homi K. Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* and *Nation and Narration*, also reveals the issues of culture and national identity. Bhabha’s concept of cultural hybridity deals with the hybridization of native culture. Bhabha puts forth his idea of hybridity to explain the very unique sense of identity shared and experienced individually by members of a formerly colonised people. He maintains that members of a postcolonial society have an identity which has been shaped jointly by their own unique cultural and community history, intertwined with that of the colonial power. Bhabha has coined a number of the field’s neologisms and key concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, difference, ambivalence. Such terms describe ways in which colonised people have resisted the power of the coloniser. One of his central ideas is that of “hybridization” which describes the emergence of new cultural forms
from multiculturalism. Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations. His work transformed the study of colonialism by applying post-structuralist methodologies to colonial texts.

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha examines the displacement of colonialist’s legitimizing cultural authority, the complex cultural and political boundaries. It is the construction of social authority and cultural identity. In it Bhabha questions about the negotiations of differential meanings and values within colonial textuality and cultural practices. Bhabha provides a controversial theory of cultural hybridity which comprise rethinking questions of identity, social agency and national affiliation. In fact, *The Location of Culture* is a collection of twelve essays which includes Bhabha’s writings on the formation of [anti]colonial subjectivity. Among these are his analysis of racial “stereotypes” in terms of the Freudian theory of fetishism, his theorization of mimicry (almost the same but not quite) as a mode of disruption of colonial authority, his reading of several texts of British colonial administration to indicate a fracturing of colonial strategies of surveillance. His concept of ‘hybridity’ describes the pluralization of colonial discourse.

Bhabha’s *Nation and Narration* offers the articulation of gaps and fissures that have been long denied and silenced by the grand narratives of history operating in the hegemonic code of linear western
imperialism. This book speaks to us in a special way by virtue of our colonial experience which allows us to question the very foundation of most historical discourses that have been in our curricula and educational system. It is a classic collection of essays providing an excellent introduction to the many different narrations of the nation. *Nation and Narration* is Bhabha’s inquest into who speaks for a nation and how they do so. His subjects are literary writers from various canons, including Australia, Latin America, Afro-America and English speaking writers. In *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha seeks to refine our understanding of the relation between the emergence of the nation and the role of narrative. He notes that the emergence of what he calls “the political rationality of the nation” can be depicted as a form of narrative that is, though its use of textual strategies, metaphoric displacements and sub-texts which leads to a more subtle understanding of the indeterminate nature of nation building. In order that these postulates are adequately tested, a detailed analysis of two prominent writers, Conrad and Achebe is taken up. These writers have written excessively on the coloniser-colonised paradigms.

Joseph Conrad’s novel *Heart of Darkness* and Chinua Achebe’s novel, *Things Fall Apart* has been selected to assess issues in culture and national identity with postcolonial perspective. A symbolic reading of the novel, *Heart of Darkness* indicates note that contrasts between light and dark have been part of life since the origins of humanity. Light equaling good, dark equaling evil plays an important part in the novel. Symbolic comparisons are also made between the River Thames and the
Congo River, between the City of London seen at the start of the novel and the African settlement where Marlow lives for a time during his journey. Marlow is symbolically compared to the maverick Kurtz and Kurtz can also be seen as a symbol of the imperial, ignorant and callous European mind. *Heart of Darkness*, explores and comments on the ideology of imperialism. Marlow's reference at the start of the novel to the actions of the Romans is a comparison to the actions of those exploring the Africa in the novel's context, particularly the Congo River. The text can be interpreted as a satire of the greed and ignorance of Europe. It could be argued that Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* is a devastating critique of the colonial order.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe depicts the Igbo as a people with great social institutions in accordance with their particular society, i.e., wrestling, human sacrifice and suicide. Their culture is heavy in traditions and laws that focus on justice and fairness. The people are ruled not by a king or chief but by a kind of democracy, where the males meet and make decisions by consensus and in accordance to an "Oracle" that should be written down. It is the Europeans, who often talk of bringing democratic institutions to the rest of the world that upset this system. He also depicts the injustices of Igbo society. No more or less than Victorian England of the same era, the Igbo are a patriarchal society. They also fear twins, who are to be abandoned immediately after birth leading them to a death by exposure according to their tradition of human sacrifice they should have killed the twins rather than let them die of exposure. The novel attempts to repair some of the
damage done by earlier European depictions of Africans. The coming of the white man had already destroyed many aspects of indigenous culture and destructive belief patterns. *Things Fall Apart* deals with the theme that individuals derive strength from the societies they belong to, and societies derive strength from the individuals who belong to them. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo, an influential clan leader in Umuofia builds his fortune and strength with the help of his society's customs. Likewise, Okonkwo's society benefits from his hard work and determination. Achebe also projects that the contacts between other cultures, beliefs about superiority or inferiority are invariably wrong-headed and destructive. When new cultures and religions meet, there is likely to be a struggle for dominance. Achebe’s writing about African society is intended to extinguish the misconception that African culture had been savage and primitive by telling the story of the colonization of the Igbo from an African point of view. In *Things Fall Apart*, Western culture is portrayed as being arrogant and ethnocentric insisting that the African culture needed a leader. As it had no kings or chiefs, Umofian culture was vulnerable to invasion by Western civilization. It is felt that the repression of the Igbo language at the end of the novel contributes greatly to the destruction of the culture. Although Achebe favours the African culture of the pre-western society, and attributes its destruction to the weaknesses within the native structure. Achebe portrays the culture as having a religion, a government, a system of money, and an artistic tradition, as well as a judicial system. Irrespective of how Conrad and Achebe assess the colonised world, both are deeply concerned with