Conclusion

The present research has studied the relation between postcolonialism and imperialism in order to acquire an insight into the complex nature of postcolonial identities in the New World Order, analysing select South Asian novels that cover contemporary South Asian society, its problems, traumas, tensions, and other issues. Confronting postcolonial parameters in the context of imperial ambitions, a multidisciplinary framework is devised to study postcolonial culture, literature and films in the thesis. Through textual analysis I have attempted to show that postcolonialism becomes meaningful and vibrant when issues of contemporary global imperialism are given serious attention. Besides, it is also reflected in the dissertation that postcolonialism is not the last word in responding to the questions related to the Third World, but a thinking process evolving each moment, leaving options open to alternative interpretations and discussions. However, it is obvious that many aspects of postcolonial theory are developed in line with European models. Contemporary literary and cultural practices in postcolonial contexts are, in some cases, complicit with the project of imperialism. Postcolonialists often claim that “the process of cultural decolonization has involved a radical dismantling of the European codes and a post-colonial subversions and appropriation of the dominant European discourses.”\textsuperscript{117} Therefore, the common trend of postcolonial criticism is to be involved in discussing and discovering the dialectical relationships between cultural forces of decolonisation and dominant discourses of European hegemony.

\textsuperscript{117} Ashcroft et al, \textit{The Empire Writes Back} 220
while being oblivious to serious issues of power and hegemony in the context of global imperialism and multinational capitalism. While conducting research, my attempt has been to move away from this dialectical frame of discursive practice and come up with alternative approaches to the problems of postcolonial societies.

The stereotypical binary construction of colonial versus postcolonial is less meaningful to comprehend the nuances of globalisation and its wide range of diasporas. More recent issues such as the position of postcolonialism in the New World Order, the literary marketplace of postcolonial exoticism in the West, postcolonial subjects in the digital world, the movement towards globalisation or towards localisation etc. are now emerging as serious debates. In this regard, the research has responded to the gap in current theoretical construction of the term "postcolonialism", studying postcolonial discourse and culture, both textual and visual in South Asian contexts in relation to issues of the New World Order.

The first chapter has provided an overview of related theories dealing with identities in general and postcolonial identities in particular. From the review of varied perspectives and approaches to identity construction, it is found that identity in any sense is not a singular construct. While collective identities such as national, regional or ethnic identity are often studied in a form of binarism, the chapter has pointed out that identities cannot be judged through a pre-defined frame of reference. One of the key arguments is that identity is not fixed, there is no such thing as a fixed self, and identity can be found in a fragmented state as well. The factors constructing group identity are not easy to determine as identity is another name for negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganising that relationship across time and space. Gender, race,
class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, among other characteristics, negotiate with the process of identity construction, which is a complex process depending on the individual’s experience and moments of intentionality when s/he faces choices with regard to the direction of change. The psychotic dimension of identity is also discussed in terms of alienation and dislocation. “Reactive identity” constructed through confusion and inferiority complex renders a postcolonial subject into a split personality. The chapter examines the role of language and culture in evoking national consciousness and making national identity while referring to the Bengali Language Movement of 1952. The destructive effect of group identity in the context of “clash of civilisations” leads to religious and racial violence as was evident in 1947 during India’s partition and in 1971 during Bangladesh Liberation War. In a global context, diasporic, transnational and transcendental identities form a kind of global citizenship where hybrid identities emerge. It is also shown that globalisation can polarise identity and make individuals or groups seek refuge in religion and nationalism. In short, a person’s identity can have many dimensions deriving from his/her nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, cultural orientation, profession, group affiliation etc.

In approaching postcolonialism to come up with a theoretical frame for postcolonial identities, the argument I have attempted to establish is that when postcolonialism is regarded as a counter discourse to colonialism, it is not able to draw a comprehensive link between modernism, colonialism and postcolonialism in the post-imperial era and fails to address the present context of multinational capitalism. I have explored the relationship between globalisation and postcolonialism to locate the gap between discourses of postcolonialism and
imperialism and show that postcolonial discourses are inadequate when it comes to explaining global projects of imperialism. The changing interpretations of multiculturalism are also explored. The issues of spaces in the postcolonial condition are emphasised in order to have dialogical equality for conducting debates and for interaction and interchange of ideas, knowledge and theories. By pointing out the pitfalls of monolithic theorisation on postcolonialism I propose to exploit the heterogeneous nature of postcolonial theory to move away from Western directed definitions of postcolonialism and develop alternative discourses. The thesis offers an approach to postcolonialism that has obviously a strong concern for humanism, however, not European humanism on its face value. The approach does not imply that anything Western should be discarded, nor is it confined to any binary structure. It attempts to establish dialogical equality, an equal space, provoking a kind of responsibility in a globalised world in order to promote humanity.

The second chapter attends to the gap in postcolonial theories by investigating the global connection between postcolonialism and imperialism in the context of the dynamics of the New World Order. The chapter has analysed Foucault's definitions of power, discourse and ideology in detail to show how power functions in the web of local and global networks. Through Chomsky's political analysis of power, imperialism and the present world order it is found that the empire works for the interest of global corporatism. The chapter points thematically and theoretically how the USA, the central elite in the New World Order has created chaos through its doctrine of pre-emptive war, covert war, and recently the so-called war on terror. The US has been projecting its interests in South Asia since the end of the Second World War. On the other hand, post-colonial nation-states in South Asia
could never unshackle the burden of colonialism. There is little difference between colonial and postcolonial violence and no difference between power and violence when exercised by the legitimised establishments of the new-born states. The chapter shows the role of discourse and ideology in exercising power and hegemony. It is specifically pointed out that the imperial project has created a new world disorder across the globe with the assistance of elites from neo-colonial or peripheral countries, in which the formulation, function and exercise of power are enchained to “a net like organisation” and power is exercised both from “top-down” and “bottom-up” positions. The findings of textual analysis in the light of the theories developed in this chapter confirm that adopting this approach to deal with postcolonial tensions in the region is more nuanced and more comprehensive.

The third chapter has outlined how South Asian writing evolved from the Anglo-Indian aura to the Indo-Anglian endeavour. It is found in the review that historical events and issues are fictionalised in most South Asian novels which showcase the social and political changes through the characters. Identities are explored through cross-cultural encounters and colonial-postcolonial dilemmas in the South Asian novel. The chapter has traced the South Asian tendency and tradition of writing fiction in English to the beginning in order to locate the gap between the early South Asian novels and the most recent ones published especially after the incidents following September 11, 2001. The chapter has pointed out to the commodity value of South Asian texts in the global marketplace and the stereotypes with regard to the labelling of South Asian texts as postcolonial. It has shown that most new novels bring about the effects and consequences of imperialism, focusing on the global war on terror and the dynamics of the New World Order including
global capitalism, diaspora, multinational and marginalised identities, internal crises in South Asian countries, and the prospects of a new beginning. Besides, the South Asian novels of the 1980s and 1990s by and large engage with secularism as an ideology and underscore different aspects of postcolonial identity within the secular framework. Nevertheless, the recent novels tend to be influenced by the flow of the global literary marketplace with regard to the politics of publishing industries and are sometimes commodified in this respect. One significant change is that the recent South Asian novelists, concerned with factors of imperialism, are quite critical of the constructs of nationalism, nation-states and decolonisation. They are significantly moving from the ideal portrayal of nationalism and cross-cultural conflicts in order to discover other spaces in their novels.

The fourth and fifth chapters have studied two Indian novels to explore different dimensions of postcolonial identities. The discussion on *The Inheritance of Loss* has analysed the psychiatric identity of the Judge, showing an integral link between colonialism and psychological disorders. It is found that the effects of colonialism render a colonised subject mentally deranged and disordered. The Judge’s sense of sanity is erased in such a way that he can barely be called human. Through the textual analysis of *The White Tiger*, it is found that India as a postcolonial country still bears the legacy of British colonialism. Balram’s identity, which is refigured and reassumed in the course of the novel, has been discussed in detail. It is found that like the Judge in *The Inheritance of Loss*, he remains psychologically disordered though in a different context. By investigating issues of the New World Order such as multinational capitalism, global imperialism, the dynamics of deprivation and discrimination, caste, class-consciousness, the myth of
India shining or sinking etc., the fifth chapter has noted that Ashok fails to be a global citizen and Balram remains a neurotic.

The sixth chapter has studied two films *Brick Lane* and *Yasmin* and observed that the nine-eleven attacks and its aftermath restructured the perception of Muslim identity, fuelled racist violence against South Asian Muslims and reinforced Islamic radicalism or extremism. In the textual analysis it is found that though the process of globalisation makes multiculturalism thrive in diasporic contexts, the emergence of the New World Order tends to diminish the ontological sense of security among minority communities. Encompassing issues as diverse as globalisation, racism, radicalism, migration, multiculturalism, displacement, and identity mobilisation, both the films subvert the previous understanding of globalisation and multiculturalism. A strong conflict between the waning cultural identity of migrants and multicultural threats is evident in both the movies. We see in the chapter that the search for ontological security and religio-political shelter mobilises individuals such as Nasir and Karim to an extreme edge. Nazneen in *Brick Lane* and Yasmin in *Yasmin* discover the “self” and identity in different ways. While Yasmin faces and handles the male-dominated attitudes and remains enlightened as well as embittered, Nazneen’s boldness grows with a search for conscience in other spaces such as “the third space”, which is, of course, her discovery of self, agency and voice. Chanu’s and Khalid’s identities remain “ambivalent” leaving the scope for debates on the interstices of multiculturalism, “third space”, racial violence and religious radicalism.

The seventh chapter has discussed, with reference to the history of Bengali nationalism and nationhood, issues of identity politics along with polarisation and
the paradox of identity with the emergence of Bangladesh. It has outlined the historical and political discourses with regard to the development of Bengali identity formation. In the chapter one aspect made clear is that colonialism and nationalism worked together since the version of nationalism adopted by the Bengali intellectuals refused to topple the colonial government. Their demand for different forms of power sharing with the colonisers reveals that nationalism could be viewed as a Eurocentric project in South Asia. The chapter has pointed out that in the context of Bangladesh, identity does not work in a binary of two-nation theory or “clash of civilisations” theory. Though ethnic, language and religious affiliations clash with each other, the boundaries of identity overlap, merge, mutate and create a balance of identity politics in a culturally pluralistic society like Bangladesh.

Many facets of postcolonial identities in the New World Order are evident in the analysis of Burnt Shadows offered in the eighth chapter. From Hiroko’s epic journey from Nagasaki to Guantanamo the chapter has captured the crux of postcolonial predicament. One of the findings through a textual analysis is that the US was directly involved in the rise of Islamism in South Asia. Besides, the power-play of the two superpowers namely the US and the Soviet Union during the polarised era of the Cold War changed the identities, lives, and existence of South Asian people.

In the dissertation certain historical moments are revisited through theoretical discussions and textual analyses. Those moments are crucial in understanding the moving nature of postcolonial identities in South Asia. In the South Asian context, the year 1757 is important, which is the beginning of British colonisation of India. The year 1947 opened the scope for neo-colonialists and
imperialists to work together for the benefit of global capitalism. Up to the Cold War, the imperial projects were balanced, counterbalanced and more nuanced. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, anarchy prevailed in this region and after the events of 9/11, the entire world including South Asia entered a period of unprecedented disorder and chaos.

I would raise some debates to further the discussion I have initiated in my research so that the future researchers interested in this area of research could attend to those debates. For example, the issue of Russian or Chinese imperialism is generally overlooked in postcolonial studies. The study of imperialism also tends to concentrate mainly on US imperialism and its global domination in a frame of top-down functions of power and hegemony. But, in this research, as we have analysed both the top-down and bottom-up functions of power apparatuses, we are to encounter a numberless centres of empires, which set a network well-connected across the globe. The study of power and hegemony in the New World Order from this perspective would open the scope for analysing discourses of globalisation, global capitalism, corporatism, anarchism in academia and various other power organisations. One could raise few questions regarding this aspect: if the functions of power in sub-systems within a mainstream order remain the same, what happens when resistance movements such as the Gorkhas or the Maoists take over state power? What Gyan realises in *The Inheritance of Loss* after becoming involved with the GNLF movement and observing their activities is a real scenario. Some new people will be in power and new opportunities will be created for them but the system remains the same. One can recall what happened in India just after partition

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118 See footnote 48 of this thesis.
or in Bangladesh just after independence. A group of neo-colonialists emerged to hold power, suppress any resisting voice and plunder public wealth in order to carry out the project of global capitalism and imperialism. What happens if and when alternative sources of hegemony begin to emerge on a global scale? Therefore, the question still remains whether an effective change can be drawn upon in the world order without dismantling the system of inequality, injustice and oppression.

Since the present research was conducted in a theoretical frame with specific research questions, I could not include more South Asian novels as primary texts, which are of course quite well-known and deal with other contemporary issues of importance. This aspect is obviously one of the limitations of the research. I feel it would be more pertinent if I could, for instance, include texts by Sri Lankan novelists. As a postcolonial nation Sri Lanka has unique characteristics with regard to its internal conflicts on the issue of language and ethnicity in the era of decolonisation. Besides, the global and local empires are found to be involved in power politics in the context of Sri Lanka. The role of the status quo and the priority given to expatriate writers over local writers in the global literary market are factors evident in the Sri Lankan literary scenario. The discussion can be carried out further in the light of the theoretical frame developed in the first and second chapters of this dissertation. Besides, as the research focused on certain areas of academic scholarship, I could not include more than what is required in terms of the goals of this research project.