Chapter 5
Conclusion

Once external security forces are removed and full sovereignty is restored, a great constructive work of building a Nation begins. The main purpose of building a Nation is to leave behind a society likely to remain at peace first with itself and then with its neighbors. When this task of building a Nation into the Nation is taken in hand, at that time the molding of people into the citizens goes simultaneously. In this process the cultural, ethnic, lingual and educational diversity are not put through a sieve to separate the desired from the undesired, but separately entwined in order to amalgamate them which can bind the Nation and the citizens as a whole. This is a basic requirement for a Nation to stand alone in the stream of change.

Nation-building is a team work in which a set of bodies separately gives contribution to the distinct work. A responsible government is very much required to run all these bodies simultaneously and successfully, and to conduct the humanitarian operations like maintaining security and delivering assistance. Thus, the first and foremost responsibility of the intervening authorities is to provide security to public because security is the key to create peace and at the same time it is an essential precondition for productive investment. For this the government can take the help of police force. Soldiers are equally important elements. They are expected to perform many functions.

Corruption is a gigantic challenge in the postcolonial period. It shudders to the very foundation of democracy. It undermines democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes and by perverting the law. It retards the economic development by regulating the scope of encouragement for the investors. At the same time it
contributes to political instability. Thus, to combat with the corruption becomes the first and foremost task while Nation is under development process. And therefore, after independence an applicable law system must be introduced immediately.

In order to reform the society in the independent Nation of the postcolonial period, a collective effort should be made to rebuild a judicial system, first at the national and then at the local level. The law and order should be tested every now and then to ensure its validity in the contemporary stream. That gives a clear cut idea to the newly arriving troops and police of what rules are to be enforced. At the same time the government should be enough capable to maintain economic stability in the Nation. These various bodies of public security are very important in an independent Nation to maintain peace and harmony and to win trust of the citizen to assure them that their votes have not gone in vain.

In postcolonial period, the task of building a Nation cannot be confined to the Nation itself. Apart from the military and civilian capacity, it also requires national, multinational and international participation.

These are the things expected in the postcolonial period. In the countries like Nigeria and South Africa, which are now independent, the homogeneity amongst the ethnic diversity can be built by introducing a unified language and education. Then only they can face the challenges of the Age.

However, in Nigeria and South Africa the reality is disappointing. Somehow the governments have failed to bring stability in the postcolonial period. Unfortunately judicial independence is missing in the judicial systems of postcolonial countries. It is used to serve personal interests and to entrench corruption by the men in power. Uncertainty of the applicable law has created chaos in South Africa during apartheid and post-apartheid period. In the preceding chapters, the history of political
upheavals of Nigeria and South Africa with reference to the past and present, colonial and neo-colonial period, apartheid and post-apartheid period, to the characters, themes, symbols, and various literary techniques as depicted in the selected novels of Achebe and Coetzee, are studied.

Two yearning phrases, ‘we must have’ and ‘of our own’ commonly felt by the natives, have succeeded to bring independence, but failed to maintain it. During nationalist movement people were persuaded that the political independence would solve all the social problems. So much was promised, but unfortunately so little was to be realized when the political independence was really achieved.

Nigeria has a long history of coups and counter–coup. From the novels of Achebe the readers come to know that neither civilian government nor military has succeeded to maintain the goal of independence. They have come into power with a promise to provide the basic needs of the citizens and with a humanitarian attitude, but power has corrupted the both. The political leaders have compromised with the major goal of independence, i.e. of building Nigeria into a new desiring form that can challenge the world in general and the colonialists in particular. They have confined themselves to their personal share from the national cake. People have disgracefully forgotten the atrocity of the colonial period and the sacrifices given to achieve independence. They hopefully wait for their turn to come to have their own share from the national cake. Their indifferent attitude to the national issues are equally responsible for the political upheavals, economic instability, and stifling of progress of the Nation. At the same time Achebe has manifested a generation that is achieving higher education, honorable position in society and has audacity to raise voice against the perpetuation of exploitation in the postcolonial period. At the same time there are many discouraging sources which pull them back. Achebe, raising the curtain from all
these things, makes a point very clear that now the colonialists are not responsible for this condition of Nigeria. They are not responsible for the failure of four republics. It is the leader and the people as well who nibble away the Nation. The government has failed to unify the ethnic diversity in Nigeria. In another way one can say that the men in power have followed the British policy of divide and rule for personal benefit and segregated various races of Nigeria.

The postcolonial South Africa has also suffered from the racism. Independence had brought partial freedom in South Africa. The black South Africans were thrown out from their own land and as if they were hungry dogs, the government flung a piece of land at them to survive. While on the other hand the white South Africans were given all the privileges. This racial segregation created dissatisfaction and unrest among the black South Africans. It continued for many decades. Here, various bodies required for building a Nation and leaving a society at peace, as mentioned above, have failed to perform their functions in an expected way. And a time came when the black South Africans also felt the same yearning phrases, i.e. ‘we must have’ and ‘of our own’. As a result, though after many decades, they have succeeded to achieve their fundamental rights. But yet apartheid has its existence in the form of revenge. This is the black history of South Africa, which Coetzee has portrayed in an appealing way in his novels selected for this comparative study.

The characters of the novels of Achebe and Coetzee are compared from the Nation’s perspective. The way they are the representative writers, they have portrayed representative characters. The reader can feel the atrocity of the colonial period in their sufferings; the wrath of the natives in their struggle for independence; the insecurity in their threat of losing power and cultural identity and the quest for a good government in their fight to the men in power. Missionary activities in the colonized
countries were a direct assault of the foreign culture on the native religion. The worthiness of the native religious value was doubted. A need to rethink and reform the religious norms was also felt to give a call to the natives, especially the converts who took shelter under umbrella of the Christianity, to come back to their own religion. Thus, Achebe’s characters are found defending the cultural values.

On the other hand Coetzee’s characters struggle against the government which made racism a legal act by giving it the name of apartheid policy. Both the authors have put this major work on the shoulders of the aged characters, for instance, the Magistrate, Mrs Curren, Michael K., Okonkwo, etc. who have reached to the age of maturity. Christ, Ikem, Beatrice and Lucy are exceptional. Through these budding bubbles Achebe and Coetzee actually show the period after transition which is often expected in the independent Nation.

The titles that Achebe and Coetzee have given to their novels are quite appropriate and at the same time they are very thought provoking. They are relevant to the time, period, setting, characters and situations as depicted in the novels. The symbols depicted in the novels have not failed to give a word picture of the abstract ideas and feelings. By depicting these symbols they have expressed themselves indirectly on delicate or controversial matters. They are actually the outward signs of the inward feelings not only of the authors or characters, but of the period as well. They are having multiple meanings, depended on the psyche of the readers and the angles through which they read them.

In the postcolonial period thinkers of all prior colonized countries have felt that education is the only field that can re-built the Nation in the form that can stand alone to face challenges of the changing world. It can give a new vision, new shapes, fill new colors, challenge wrong notions of the Europeans, rationalize the wrong
religious and cultural perceptions and can create an accurate national identity. But unfortunately Achebe and Coetzee have observed the failure of education in postcolonial Nigeria and South Africa. Their novels reveal their beliefs that the collapse of education is the collapse of the *Nation*. Their characters, like David, Sam and even Melanie reveal the failure of education in the postcolonial and post-apartheid period, while by portraying the characters of Beatrice and Lucy, Achebe and Coetzee actually tell the reader that the main function of education is of character-building and making decisive to the person. While talking about the *Nation* which is under development, education is expected to produce efficient leaders who can justify and maintain the independence which is achieved after a great struggle.

Achebe and Coetzee have boldly raised their fingers at the degrading police force and military. They are expected to provide security. But security has become an illusion. The way Mrs Curren and Ikem are treated, school girl is sexually harassed, Christ is killed, David’s house is burglarized, etc. reveal the failure of the functionality of these government bodies. People have lost faith on them. They do not seek justice from bureaucracy as now they have accepted the reality that verdict of Goddess Justice is lopsided. Not only all these government bodies, but the hearts of the authorities are also corrupted. This corruption is full-fledged in the political field. The leaders, under the garb of men of the people, actually ransack the poor ignorant people, many of whom are not aware about their own rights and duties towards their *Nation*.

Achebe and Coetzee have explored the layers within layers to find out the causes and reasons and the ways out of the problems. They have scrutinized the colonial period very minutely and found that internal crisis has played a major role in making the foreign domination possible in their *Nations*. After many decades, people
revolted it, but their struggle proved to be very costly, as it was a scattered effort. There was no coherence in the strength applied to achieve independence. In Nigeria Igbo race has always been discriminated from their fundamental rights by the powerful races like Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba. The same racism has divided South Africa from within. The uitlanders sought their destiny on the African land when these brothers were fighting with one another. These authors, through their literary contributions, unflinchingly try to awake their fellow men and make them aware about their follies. At the same time through the characters, like Beatrice, Mrs Curren, Lucy, etc., Achebe and Coetzee make a humble request to the people of their Nations to develop a humanitarian attitude which only can bring the two parted races together so that the Nations can be blessed with independence in true sense.

Power has played a major role in the past and the present of the mentioned Nations. The uitlanders got power, and they explored and exploited Africa. With the passage of time the natives became conscious about their own losing power. This consciousness brought independence. But unfortunately after independence the men in power also continued the same exploitation. Thus, if there is any change after independence at all it is one of substitution. Formerly they were exploited by the foreign rulers and now they are exploited by their own elected representatives. In new history of the independent Nigeria and South Africa, what one finds is nothing, but the reverberation of the political history of the colonizer. The exploitation of the natives has been continued in various other new forms, by new hands and by new policies of government.

One man army is something a new concept that Achebe and Coetzee have introduced in their novels to inspire the reader that even a single man can, if he desires, bring about revolutionary changes. Even if he does not succeed, then also at
least he would have satisfaction of giving voice to the soul within his heart (Antaratma) and of doing something for the Absolute Soul (Parmatma). Moreover, it would make easy for him to face his next generation.

Achebe and Coetzee are also found such rebellious writers who have courage to raise their voice against all those elements which are responsible for the chaos in their Nations. They believe that one should not escape from the unfavorable circumstances. Escapism is an abuse to one’s own identity and suicide is also an act of escaping from the situation. No creature is meant to live an isolated life, as interdependence also contributes to maintain the chain of life giving sources in the nature. Without trying, one cannot blame to anybody or claim for anything. And moreover, in the Nations like Nigeria and South Africa, which have paid a penalty for inviting the European domination in Africa by their internal ethnic and racial conflicts, the youth of the postcolonial and post-apartheid are expected to be positive, enthusiastic and hard working. Their shoulders must be enough strong to lift up the responsibilities of their Nation of the future.

Achebe and Coetzee have underlined the role of the writer and the teacher as well. The writer must have courage to cater the reality to the public. His pen must be mighty enough to revolt against the tyrant. His writing must be revolutionary enough to hammer his reformative perceptions in such a way that they can kindle the still soul and bring it to life which can be conscious enough about own rights and responsibilities simultaneously. Erosion of moral values in education field is also criticized by Achebe and Coetzee. They have expressed their anxiety for Nigeria and South Africa as the children of these Nations have raised weapons and become rebellious at the age, when they must be nurtured with fairy tales and moral science.
In this process of nurturing a child, Coetzee believes that parents play a fundamental role. He believes that there are so many evils in the world which are always discouraging sources. However, the parents cannot bring up their child into a terrorist. The nurturing of a child actually begins since its existence is established in the mother’s womb. Its character starts taking shape from there itself. It is the right time for the parents for embedding the moral values in it. Coetzee has dexterously shown this through the character of Florence and Lucy. Florence’s wrong appreciation of Bheki encouraged him to take part in the moment against apartheid. And the day came when she washed her hands of her son. On the other hand Lucy is shown without any grudge bearing a child of rapists in her womb who have spoiled her life completely. It is a very clear calculation that first she will have to develop a humanitarian attitude in herself, then only she will be able to nurture it in her child and if she does not do, the history would be repeated. Coetzee draws attention of the readers at Lucy’s loneliness and insecurity by giving a word like picture of the duck family. Parents are undoubtedly responsible for the child’s existence. It is their responsibility to provide not only material needs, but also emotional needs and security. Home is not merely a place where one lives. But it provides privacy, intimacy and cosiness. It is a heaven on the earth. The presence of parents with the child in its crucial period makes the child confident and decisive.

To offer sacrifice to Gods and Goddesses is a tradition in Igbo society. It is a part of their culture. Whenever they have any occasion or any function or even if they have done something wrong, against the social norms, they offer sacrifice to express their pleasure and repentance. Achebe criticizes such superstitious, irrational beliefs of African people. On the other hand Coetzee also criticizes such inhuman slaughtering of the dumb creatures by the human beings to satisfy their empty tummy.
and sometime just for their pleasure. Through their literary contributions they have appealed to the readers to stop killing of animals and to be compassionate towards them. They believe that all creatures have a right to live.

Thus, Achebe and Coetzee have depicted the harsh reality of the colonial and the apartheid period. They have expressed their agony for the neo-colonial and post-apartheid periods. And they have also articulated their anxiety for the Nations in future. But the true writer is like that the sun, whose even the first ray of light can collapse the empire of pitch-dark night. He must be able to kindle a ray of hope in the reader. He must be optimistic in spite of all despairing and harsh reality of life. It is his duty to give the real picture of the time. However, he cannot be pessimistic.

And here also Achebe and Coetzee are optimistic in spite of too much negativity around them. Achebe is hopeful for peace in future. That can be noted in the naming ceremony of Elewa’s baby in which Beatrice gives to her baby girl a name of baby boy, i.e. Amaechina. Its literary meaning is ‘May-the-path-never-close’. Here, Achebe has justified two things by selecting this name. First to his duty as a representative writer of Nigeria, that he should be always optimistic for the future and secondly he has artistically expressed his perception for Nigerian women required in his postcolonial Nigeria. Beatrice, Mrs Curren and Lucy are the best examples of postcolonial and post-apartheid women characters portrayed by Achebe and Coetzee. Though Mrs Curren is aged, at the threshold of death, she does not deny doing what she can do to bring together the long parted two races of South Africa.

Like Achebe, Coetzee also has a hope that one day this line of racial segregation that marks the frontier on the map of South Africa, which has divided black and white South Africans, will grow hazy and obscure and peace will be restored forever.
Thus, after this genuine comparison of Achebe and Coetzee, and their ideological and philosophical parallels and dissimilarities as depicted in their works, a conclusion can be drawn that they have aimed at the same goal. They have intended to give a new vision first to the world about their Africa which is underestimated as a dark continent and then to their fellowmen about the changing world, so that they can calculate where they are, why they are there, where they should be and what they should do to reach there where they should be. This is an awareness, they believe, the people must have in the post independent era, when they have aimed to re-build their Nation in a new desiring form where Peace wakes them up, Harmony begins their work, Smile plays on their lips, Success cheers them up and Dream decks their future.

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